

Rolling wave planning approach beneficial for developing WBS



What we can't see (Project plans, etc) clearly in the long term will be left for future detailed planning but less detailed planning for now.

What we can see clearly in the near term ("waves") will enable us to plan in detail for a particular project milestone.

Generally, IT projects' requirements vary often and are less regulated, this may introduce complexities into IT projects, especially large ones.

Firstly, by adopting a divide-and-conquer work planning approach, there will be a shorter timeframe for work iteration. In this way, we can increase the granularity and clarity of our work breakdown structure and produce more quality end results for each work's iteration.

(PMcrunch, 2008)

Secondly, with competing resources often the case among different project teams, using the rolling waves approach would help Project Managers (PM) effectively identify and select resources for a current work iteration.

Lastly, similar to the real waves where they come at intervals, PM could have some buffer time (although not always) to avoid project schedule risks/mistakes and not lose sight of the project's critical paths or checkpoints. Project schedule risks include spending excessive time planning detailed work breakdown and/or on out-dated project plans.

One way rolling wave planning could lead to scope creep

One of the pitfalls for rolling waves planning: the PM and his team could experience what I consider "scope near-sightedness", it might cause the project team to lose track of the long range plans set out in the beginning and this leads to scope creep. Losing track of long range plans may also occur when the PM created an overly detailed WBS (as a result of using rolling waves planning strategy without sound methodological skill) as a replacement for the project's plan or schedule (Mathis, n.d). This would most likely occur when it comes to long-range plans as they are more likely to change than shorter ones (Preston, 2008).

How can an ITPM minimize the likelihood of this scope creep?

As an IT Project Manager (ITPM), one of the most direct and sure ways of preventing a scope creep is to have a well-defined project scope and vision (what it is supposed to solve or do) from the start (Project Management Knowledge, n.d). In addition, the ITPM got to have sound methodology skill, organization skill, communication skills and lastly, understands the organization's change requests procedures (Doll, 2001) and be accountable to the project sponsor(s) and steering committee.

References

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