Project Management Tools
~ By Duncan Haughey

A Gantt chart, Logic Network, PERT chart, Product Breakdown Structure and Work Breakdown Structure are standard tools used in project planning. What follows is a short definition for each:

Gantt Chart

A Gantt chart is a popular project management bar chart that tracks tasks across time. When first developed in 1917, the Gantt chart did not show the relationships between the tasks. Since then, it has become common to track both time and interdependencies between tasks, which is now its everyday use.

Since their first introduction, Gantt charts have become an industry standard. They are an important project management tool used for showing the phases, tasks, milestones and resources needed as part of a project.

One of the first uses was on America's Hoover Dam project started in 1931.

Logic Network

A Logic Network indicates the sequence of activities in a project over time. It shows which activity logically precedes or follows another activity. It can be used to identify the milestones and critical path of a project. It will help you understand the dependencies in your project, timescale, and its workflow. Valuable information that you may otherwise overlook can be revealed using this technique.

PERT Chart

The Program Evaluation and Review Technique, commonly abbreviated to PERT is a model for project management developed by the United States Department of Defense's US Navy Special Projects Office in 1958 as part of the Polaris mobile submarine-launched ballistic missile project.

PERT is a method for analysing the tasks involved in completing a given project, especially the time needed to complete each task and identifying the minimum time required to complete the total project.

Product Breakdown Structure (PBS)

In project management, a Product Breakdown Structure (PBS) is an exhaustive, hierarchical tree structure of components that make up a project deliverable, arranged in whole-part relationship.
A PBS can help clarify what is to be delivered by the project and can contribute to building a work breakdown structure.

The PRINCE2 project management method suggests the use of product based planning, part of which is developing a Product Breakdown Structure.

**Work Breakdown Structure (WBS)**

The United States Department of Defense (DOD) created the Work Breakdown Structure concept as part of the Polaris mobile submarine-launched ballistic missile project.

A Work Breakdown Structure is a hierarchical decomposition of the deliverables needed to complete a project. It breaks the deliverables down into manageable work packages that can be scheduled, costed and have people assigned to them. A Work Breakdown Structure is a standard project management tool and the basis for much project planning.