

Evolving Project Control Practices

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What will it cost and when will it be finished? How many times has management asked these questions? It's no longer as simple as asking the estimator, cost engineer, or scheduler, as the project control engineer has replaced these traditional roles. A project control team (PC team) is evolving on major projects, consisting of a project controls manager, cost engineers, scheduling engineers, technicians, trend engineers, specialists, and estimators. Moreover, document control and management information systems are being added to the task list of PC team duties.

The PC team involvement on projects can now include planning and scheduling, estimating, value engineering, constructability reviews, cost control, change management, trending, earned value, information systems, reporting, document control, dispute resolution, and financial management. However, the primary project controls mission still remains the same - the PC team must be able to put in place the software, systems, and processes necessary to enable project completion within the approved budget and schedule.

A PC team can be a major project commitment, one that requires total management support to ensure successful implementation. The "no surprises" philosophy is key to earning the trust of management. Thus, the PC team's main concern is avoidance of cost and schedule surprises. To make this happen, the right people and systems must be in place to empower the PC team to alert management early enough to make informed decisions.

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