

WBS 4.4

PM Crosstalk “Critical Path Method”

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CRITICAL PATH METHOD CROSSTALK

The critical path method is a scheduling method based on the estimation of time required to complete activities on the critical path. The method computes early late, and slack times for each activity in the network. It establishes a planned project duration, if one is not imposed on the project (Larson & Gray, 2004).

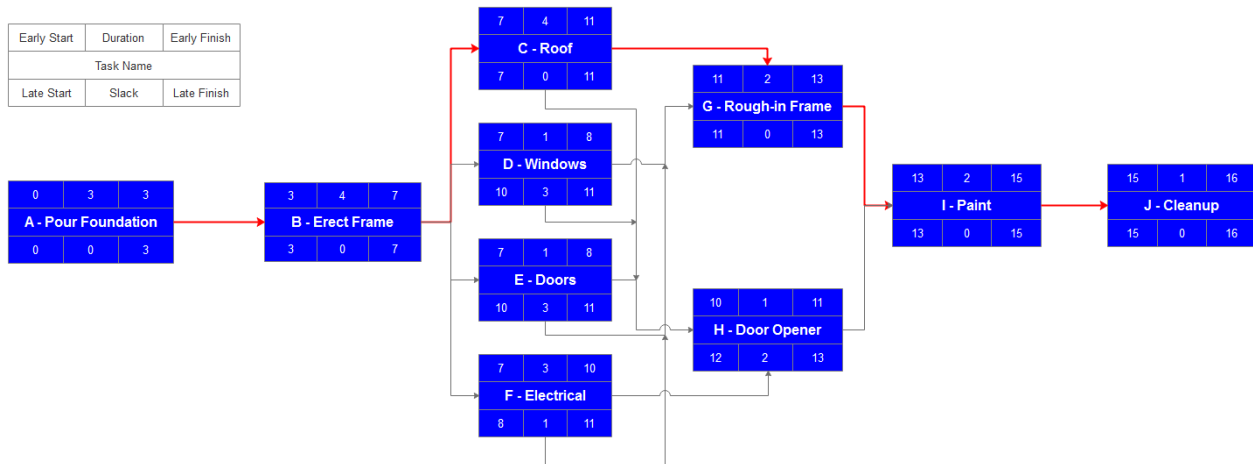


Figure 1. Sample Critical Path Technique

I wish I could say that this is a method of project management utilized where I work, but I can't. Most managers, within aviation maintenance, are not formally educated and not familiar with this method of managing time. Our facility is driven by the squawk load and when the supporting shops can provide manpower to correct the discrepancies under their control It's as if they were doing the complete opposite.

Since completing my undergraduate degree, I utilize the critical path method for a great deal of the projects under my control. When I receive and approved work proposal, I begin to establish the project flow (timeline) and identify those items which need immediate attention in order to prevent any delay in delivery. Recently, I managed a maintenance visit in which the aircraft was scheduled to be down to 6 weeks. By utilizing the critical path method and focusing on those work items within the critical path itself, I was able to coordinate and deliver those items in less time than was originally allotted. The aircraft delivered in just over 4 weeks squawk

CRITICAL PATH METHOD CROSSTALK

free. The enjoyment with this project was that I was able to mitigate any delays by identifying and coordinating the needed support to prevent not only delays, but the need to crash the project with additional resources. This is a very helpful tool and one that I use for each of my maintenance projects.

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References

Larson, E.W. & Gray, C.F. (2014). Project management: The managerial process (6th ed.). New York, NY: McGraw Hill.