

# The Value of Weekly Project Meetings

## *A Whitepaper on Computeration's Implementation Process*

### **Advantages and Benefits to Keeping it Simple**

- Simple documents and processes insure that “less is more.” Small and mid-size company executives are more likely to look at 1-2 pages of documentation a week than more complex documentation requiring intensive study.
- The Gantt chart is the visual cue that “this project is complex,” which helps recruit more executive sponsorship.
- The Action Plan polishes the implementation, ensuring details aren't omitted. It tracks responsibilities and ownership of detailed steps and keeps a straightforward list in front of project stakeholders at all times so they know what they're doing and when they should be doing it.
- The Q&A regarding the documents in the Weekly Meeting insures that project stakeholders are paying attention to their responsibilities and that they have “heard” the important information provided to them.
- For the benefit of future employees, auditors for the client, and the consultant, the documents become the history of what transpired within the implementation.

More complex project management tools and methods are available, but I tend towards using the simple, useful, and brief tools for small and mid-size companies. For large, complex projects involving months and years of implementation, it's appropriate to have personnel whose sole function is project management. The project manager is the glue that holds the team together, facilitates communication, tracks costs, and keeps everyone on schedule.

### **Methodology**

Weekly meetings with easy-to-understand reports takes project management down to the detail level of small and mid-sized implementations.

The most common attitude I encounter in small companies is, “Just do it.” Owners don't want to take the time to talk about the project; they just want it completed. Small company owners and managers frequently think they can save money by cutting the line item for project management.

I've learned all too well that cutting costs by cutting project management is a path to disaster. Project management in these implementations becomes an art in keeping it brief but effective.

### **Gantt Chart**

I use Microsoft Project so the decision makers can see the complexity of the project. The Gantt chart on the wall, printed on 2 to 20 pieces of paper and taped together, can be scanned quickly and marked up with colored markers. I've seen my Gantt charts on customer office walls for years, their badge of success. The Gantt chart is the visual cue that “this project is complex.” Executives are more supportive of personnel involved in the project; an executive-sponsored implementation is always more successful.

### **Action Plan**

In order to insure nothing is overlooked and we have 100% completion on all tasks and resolution of issues, I keep a running detail of items to be completed on a document I call the Action Plan. This is the lowest level of detail developed from each step on the Gantt chart. Keeping the focus on the current week, the columns show:



- Manufacturing and wholesale distribution companies that manage inventory and may also provide service for their products.
- Holding and family group companies with asset management needs, and
- Not-for-profit, municipal, or tribal agencies requiring asset, property, and powerful financial reporting.

Computeration relies upon proven prototype procedures designed to lower your risk by testing your implementation prior to live deployment. We provide exceptional service, training, customization, and support as a Microsoft Gold Certified Partner.

## **About Gloria Braunschweig**

Gloria has over 30 years of experience as an internal and external project manager implementing and operating systems on local area networks, wide area networks, hosted co-locations, minicomputers, and mainframes. She has held positions as a CFO or controller, or consulted for companies in software development, discrete and process control manufacturing, wholesale and retail distribution, service, high-tech, law, not-for-profit, education, entertainment, and hospitality.

Initially as a purchaser of systems, Gloria learned the value of good support and project planning. Holding to her values as a consumer, for over 18 years she has established long-term relationships with clients and managed consultants involved with the implementation of business information systems in mid-sized organizations. As a business owner, Gloria has experienced the full spectrum of business operations and management. This facilitates her relationship with her clients and increases her understanding of business challenges.

Gloria helps her clients economically justify their system cost and leverage information into knowledge. She has been a Certified Management Accountant for over 25 years and holds numerous Microsoft Dynamics certifications along with certifications on a number of products which tightly integrate to Dynamics.

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