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Project Management

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. There are many possible answers. Project management is essential to large construction jobs, the implementation of new software systems, in new product development/marketing, in creating a new secondary line, and so on.
2. Project organizations make sure existing programs continue to run smoothly while new projects are successfully completed.
3. The three phases involved in managing a large project are planning, scheduling, and controlling.
4. PERT and CPM help answer questions relating to which task should be on or off the critical path and to which specific activities completion times for the overall project. Some specific questions include:
 - Which are the critical activities or tasks in the project that is, the activities that will delay the entire project if completed behind schedule?
 - Which are the noncritical activities, that is, those that can be delayed without delaying the whole project? How far behind schedule can these activities run without delaying the completion time?
 - What is the probability that the project will be completed by a specific date?
 - Is any particular task in the project on schedule, behind schedule, or ahead of schedule?
 - On the critical task in the project, could you be late, but not greater than the budgeted amount?
 - Are there enough resources available to finish the project on time?
 - If the project is required to be finished in a shorter amount of time, what is the best way to accomplish that?
5. WBS is a hierarchical, alphanumeric list of effort required to achieve an objective. It defines a project by breaking it down into manageable parts and cost for each subtask.
6. A Gantt chart is a visual device that shows the duration of tasks in a project. It is a bar chart of progress that (1) all activities are planned for, (2) shows order of performance in planned for, (3) the activity times are recorded, and (4) the overall project time is displayed.
7. The difference between AOA and AOA in this activity are shown on arrows in the former and on the task in the latter. We primarily use AOA in this chapter.
8. Any late start or extension of an activity on the critical path will delay the completion of the project.
9. To crash an activity, the project manager would pay money to add resources (workers, materials, etc.).
10. Activity times used in PERT are assumed to be described by a three probability distribution. Given optimistic (o), pessimistic (p), and most likely (m), completion times, average or expected time is given by:
$$t = \frac{o + 4m + p}{6}$$
11. and the variance by:
$$\text{Variance} = \left[\frac{(p - o)^2}{36} \right]$$
12. Early start (ES) of an activity is the latest of the early finish times of all its predecessors. Early finish (EF) is the early start of an activity plus its duration. Late start (LS) of an activity is the earliest of the late start times of all successor activities. Late finish (LF) of an activity is its late start plus its duration.
13. The critical path is the shortest time possible for the completion of a project or activity, but the longest time in the longest path through the network. Only the longest path affects time for all activities in the network; any smaller amount will have activities unaffected.
14. Dummy activities have no time duration. They are inserted into a PERT network to maintain the logic of the network, such as when an activity must precede the one following and ending occurs. A dummy activity is connected with one of these so that the completion of one can handle the problem.
15. They are (1) optimistic time estimate (o), an estimate of the minimum time an activity will require; (2) most likely time estimate (m), an estimate of the normal time an activity will require; and (3) pessimistic time estimate (p), an estimate of the maximum time an activity will require.
16. No, by network, there is no possibility that creating a non-critical task can reduce the project duration. The critical activities define the possibility of reducing path length. However, other activities for reducing may occur in activities, which might reduce the time of the activities may also be needed to handle.
17. Total PERT expected time is computed as the sum of the duration of all activities on the critical path.

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