

To call attention to the differences between the role of the professional scheduler, as it was once regarded, and the schedule data entry clerk, as the role has predominantly become, we use the analogy of the author versus the typist. It conveys an easily understood, readily agreed upon distinction of importance to the written project, (which also parallels the schedule as a project).

Many aspects of the author parallel those of the professional scheduler, and the typist parallel those of the schedule data entry clerk. These parallels clarify the scope of each role.

The professional scheduler is the author of the biography of the construction project, which is the schedule, and has a unique skill set and perspective that assist with:

1. planning
2. schedule design
3. schedule development
4. coordinating key personnel for critical input into the plan and schedule
5. creating a baseline schedule that accurately represents the project's execution
6. tracking progress
7. updating the schedule
8. issuing reports to key decision makers

9. supporting the project manager with recommendations.

### As An Author, the Professional Scheduler is:

- an artist
- an inquisitor
- a researcher
- a problem solver
- a communicator
- a designer and
- a schedule data entry clerk



The schedule data entry clerk's skills involve software proficiency, business communications, collaborative, and organizational abilities. This position is very useful when coordinated with the professional scheduler.

After defining these roles, the question of how the professional scheduler's role became diminished was discovered to be the result of a lack of proper priority given to the schedule design and development by a significant portion of construction management leaders; a lack of appreciation for the simplicity of CPM schedule; and technological advances in software that

created many additional uses for the schedule, as well as attractive reports that executives need less thought to read.

**This diminishing of the professional scheduler's position resulted in trouble for the construction industry.**

A myriad of challenges ranging from overburdened project managers to competing factions within projects continually plague construction projects, causing costly delays, budget overruns, poor quality of work, and expensive claims.

**Thirty percent of construction projects either run over budget or fail to complete on time.**

If your projects are consistently faced with these challenges, we present a helpful survey of ten questions useful to evaluate the need for change in your planning, schedule design, schedule development process; including the upgrade of the scheduler's role.

**1. How often does your company develop a formal baseline schedule during planning?**

**2. If it is not developed for every project, does the size of your project determine whether a formal baseline schedule is developed or not?**

**3. How often is your schedule updated?**

**4. Who is involved in creating the schedule?**

**5. Who manages/updates the schedule?**

**6. Are subs included in the planning/updating of your project's schedule?**

**7. Does the project team have a dedicated scheduler?**

**8. Which of the following functions is performed by your scheduler?**

**9. What percentage of your projects finish per the baseline dates (on time)?**

**10. Of the percentages of your projects finished on time, what percentage met the budgeted dollar amount?**

**Also, consider the value of the following benefits that result from having a professional scheduler on the team.**

- The project team will be guided by a baseline schedule that accurately represents the project's execution timeline.
- Adequate attention is given to schedule design, development, completion, updates, and timely reports.

- The PM receives complementary support via quality scheduling, reporting and analysis.
- With his load lightened, the PM has the needed time and focus for informed decision making.
- The fragmentation of the sector is alleviated by the professional scheduler's collaboration with the owner, managers, stakeholders, and subcontractors in the planning, scheduling, and schedule updating process.
- Project communications are improved.
- A professional scheduler calls attention to contractor incapability in a timely enough manner for the contractor to do the job right.
- A quality designed, developed, and maintained schedule will support and add credibility for or against claims.
- More clarity results in the better analysis of the most beneficial risk allocation of a contract for all parties.
- The lack of design information is more likely to be brought to the attention of the appropriate leaders in a timely manner.
- Contractual ambiguities are caught during the schedule design process.

- Work quality within the project is improved.
- A higher percentage of projects are delivered on time and within budget.

These benefits are worth any additional costs key project decision makers may balk at regarding the salary of the professional scheduler, or in the case of large complex projects, a team of professional schedulers.

**We offer these three tips to effectively leverage the talents and skills of the professional scheduler:**

- 1. Define the qualifications and responsibilities of the position within the organization or for the project. Hire applicants according their abilities and successful experience with meeting these requirements.**
- 2. Invest in the training and mentoring of existing schedule data clerks to develop the needed skills and help them adapt to their additional responsibilities.**
- 3. Partner with a third party that has the skills and reputation for providing professional schedulers.**

As an author has the power to inform and motivate readers, effecting change through her work, so, too, the professional

scheduler, who generates the foundations of effective project planning, scheduling, communication, collaboration, and controls, which motivates the project team to perform with quality work, timely completion and within budget goals, simply by doing her job.

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**References**

1. Satinder Baweja and Lori Vidak, Author vs Typist: A Reflection on the Role of the Scheduler in Commercial Construction, Copyright ©2018 Milestone Consultants

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