

Schedule analytics tool



As capital project spend increases and aggressive deadlines are built into project schedules, the reliance on accurate, transparent and meaningful schedule practices is growing. Too often, major projects suffer from missed milestones, schedule slippage and delays with no way of determining recovery plans or realistic forecast completion dates.

Quantitative risk analysis

To help develop and maintain accurate, meaningful and timely schedules, engineering and construction (E&C) firms should consider combining quantitative schedule analysis with qualitative schedule review performed by experienced schedulers.

Quantitative schedule analysis provides our clients with additional insight into their schedules, including:

- Compliance with schedule provisions,
- Inclusion of all project scope,
- Monitoring of critical and near critical tasks,
- Modeling interface dates and milestones,

- Evaluating progress achieved, and
- Ability to re-sequence activities to mitigate delays and identify areas where acceleration will most efficiently benefit the project.

PwC's scheduling specialists have determined that most commercially available software is unable to perform complex, time-phased analysis on large schedules. Most have the ability to compare two schedules and provide only limited analytical functions to independently assist the E&C firm on complex projects.

Schedule analytics tool

PwC has used industry-leading database techniques to develop a proprietary tool to extract, organize and analyze high volumes of data from a variety of scheduling tools.

Results of the analysis provide:

- An indication of the underlying schedule design and integrity;
- Identification of slippage that is occurring to an activity or sequence of activities;
- Identification of critical paths, sub-critical paths or concurrent critical paths;

- The changing nature of the project and supporting schedules; a comparison of any individual schedule against all others; and
- A comparison of the schedules and trends against a number of relevant industry standard metrics and benchmarks.

PwC's tool allows the user to develop custom analytics but also includes a number of standard time-phased reports, including:

- **Constraint analysis**—allows the PwC team to identify areas of potential schedule manipulation and constraints that may be preventing true critical paths from emerging and being managed by the project team.
- **Changing logic, open ends and logic integrity over time**—allows analysis of potential preferential logic, re-sequencing, excessive leads and lags.
- **Criticality over time**—provides visibility as to which areas of a project have float. Float is a relative, quantifiable value which can and should be treated as a resource.
- **Float degradation**—identifies areas of the schedule where float is reducing over time. The tool allows certain sections of the schedule to be flagged and evaluated.
- **Activity progress analysis**—shows activity progress in particular sections of a schedule and facilitates the projection of the current state to help determine estimated completion dates.
- **Float density analysis**—evaluates the difference between total float and remaining duration and provides insight into areas of the schedule that are compressing.
- **Activity duration analysis**—including analysis of the difference between original and actual durations over time and excessive activity durations. Altering activity durations or historic as-built start/finish dates is the simplest method of float sequestering. It is also the simplest to detect, but requires diligent adherence to schedule management and review procedures.

When combined with our qualitative analysis, our schedule analytics provide our clients with the transparency and information they need to determine if schedule information provided by project teams is accurate, reliable and credible for the purposes of critical decision making.

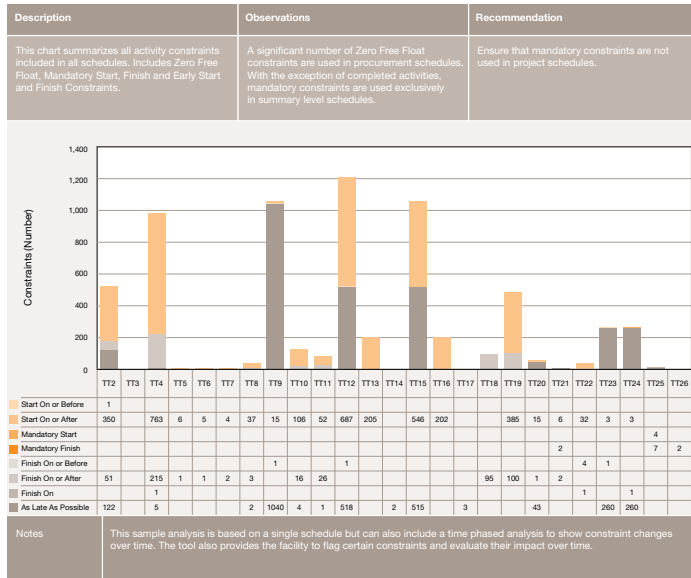
A quantitative analysis should not be considered in isolation and should form part of an overall schedule assessment that includes an evaluation of the general control environment, the nature of the schedules and the underlying processes and procedures.

Schedule analytics tool: sample output

Each chart contains a Description, Observations and Recommendations heading to provide context to the analysis and suggested action to take in order to mitigate any risks associated with the observations.

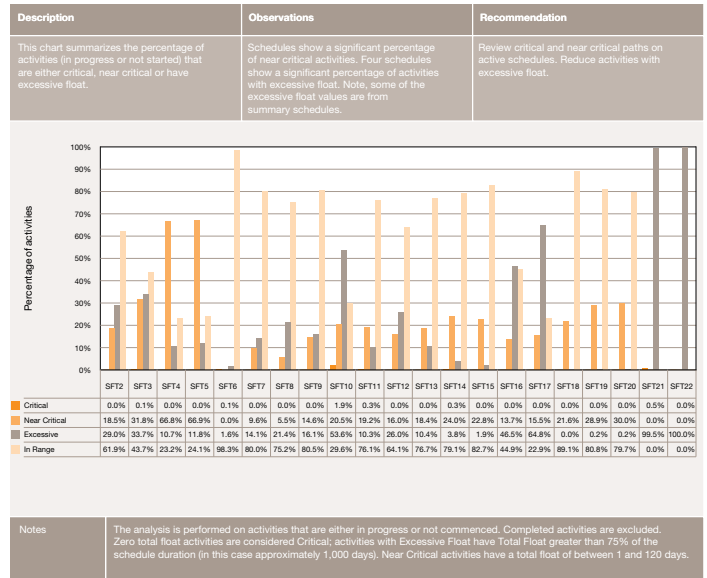
Constraint summary

This chart summarizes all activity constraints included in all schedules. Includes zero free float, mandatory start, finish and early start and finish constraints.



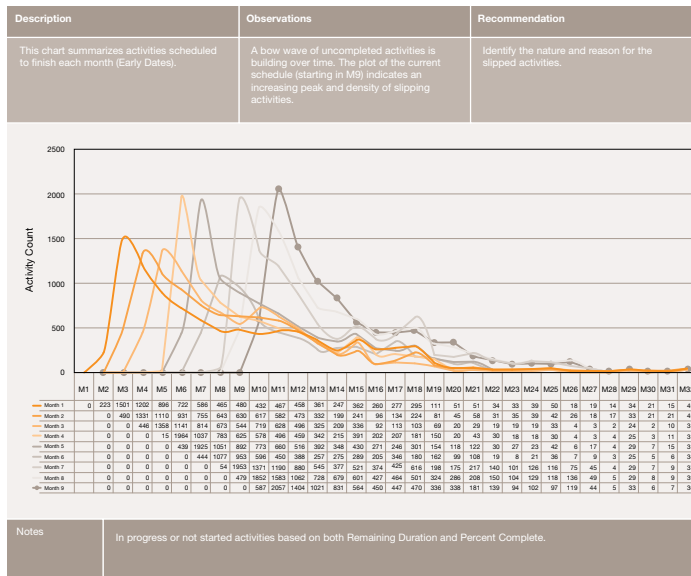
Criticality summary

This chart summarizes the percentage of activities (in progress or not started) that are either critical, near critical or have excessive float.



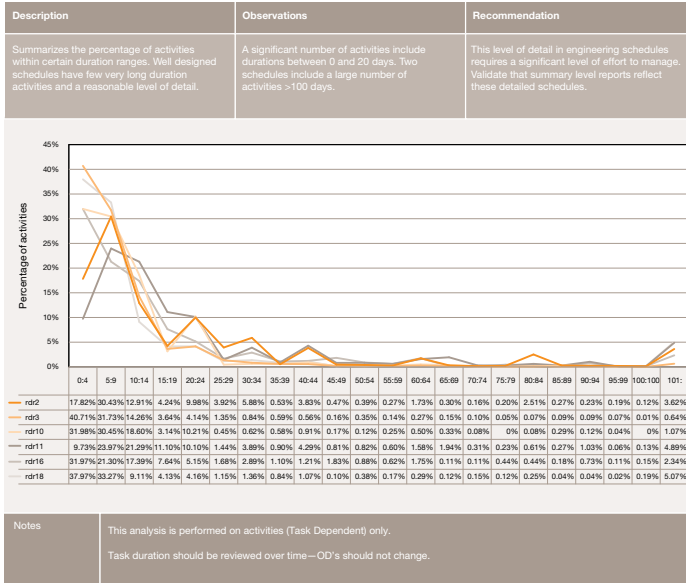
Time phased early finishes

This chart summarizes activities scheduled to finish each month (early dates).



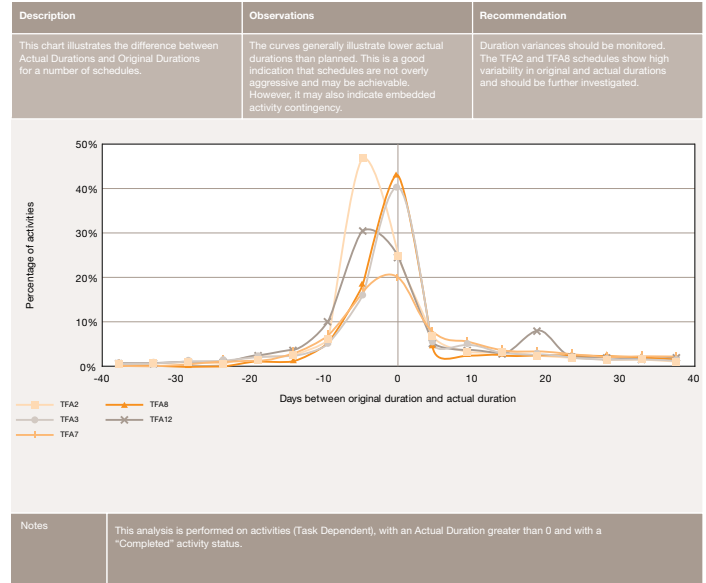
Activity duration analysis

This chart summarizes the percentage of activities within certain duration ranges. Well designed schedules have few very long duration activities and a reasonable level of detail.



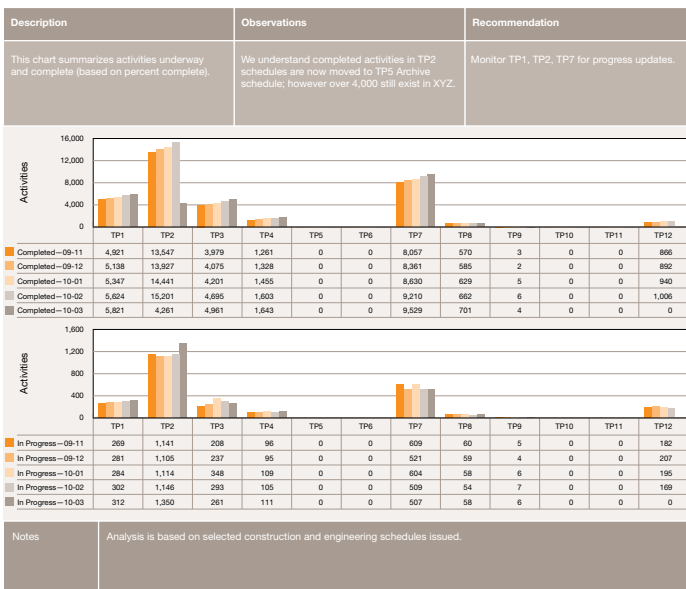
Activity duration variance

This chart illustrates the difference between actual durations and original durations for a number of selected schedules.



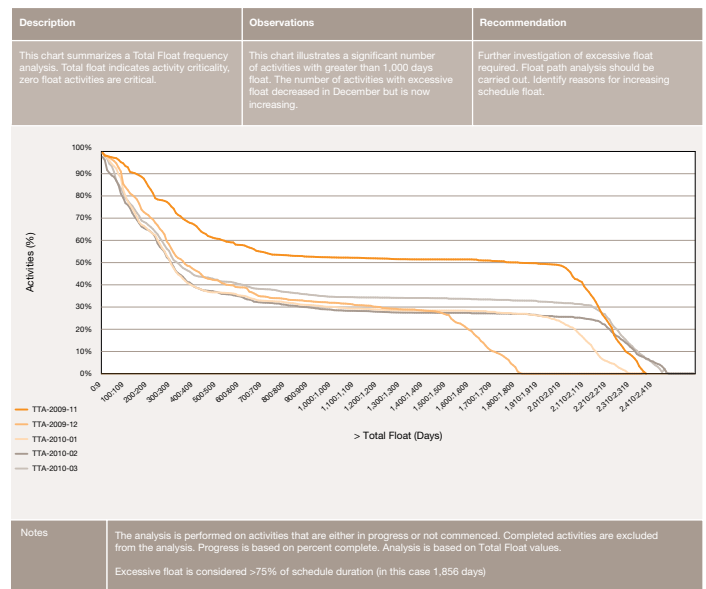
Activity progress summary

This chart summarizes activities under way and complete (based on percent complete).



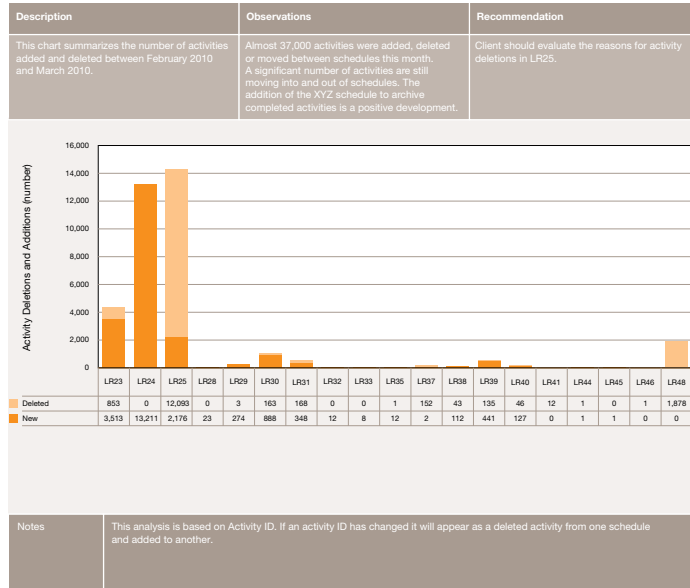
Criticality summary

This chart summarizes a total float frequency analysis. Total float indicates activity criticality; zero float activities are critical.



Summary of activities added and deleted

This chart summarizes the number of activities added and deleted.



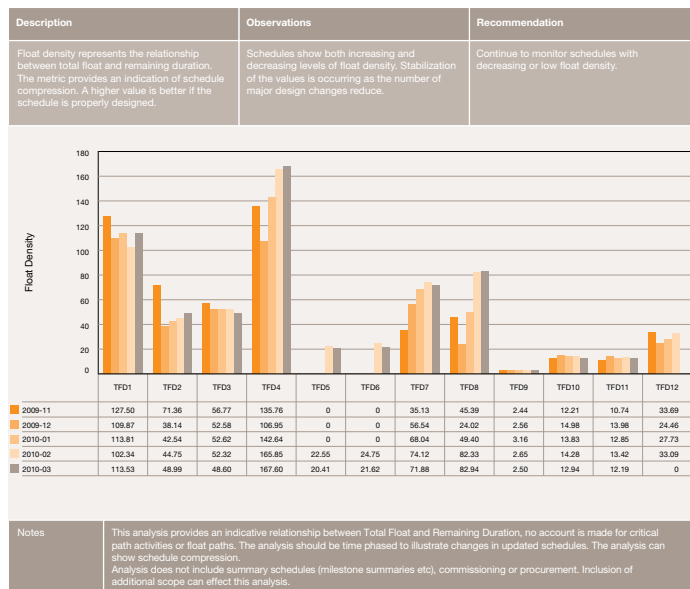
Detailed breakdown of activities deleted

This chart details the number of activities added and deleted, their type and status.



Time phased float density

Float density represents the relationship between total float and remaining duration. The metric provides an indication of schedule compression. A higher value is better if the schedule is properly designed.



Early finish date change summary

Early finish dates reflect the earliest date an activity can finish based on schedule logic. This chart illustrates the movement of early finish dates for various schedules.



Schedule analytics tool: examples of use

Power plant construction project

PwC used the schedule analytics tool to evaluate numerous schedules, including those with over 120,000 activities per month. Analysis was used to evaluate the quality of the schedules and assist with the development of a revised baseline. Many of the features of the schedule analytics tool were used on this engagement, primarily due to the limitation of the scheduling software's ability to support the rapid comparison of key schedule characteristics across multiple schedules. Analysis included the following:

- comparison of key schedule characteristics against industry standards over time;
- evaluation of the contractors' coding structures, the consistent use of activity code libraries, and the application of a WBS across all schedules;
- time phased analysis of changing original durations, total float, logic links, descriptions, activity status and other variables;
- evaluation of slipping activities and activities starting and finishing early and late.

Liquid natural gas (LNG) plant construction

PwC's analytics tool was used to analyze numerous contractors' schedules developed to support the construction of LNG plants around the world. The tool was used to import schedule data from all projects into a single SQL server database and allowed comparison across projects. This provided our analysts with insight into key differences between the schedules on similar projects. By identifying scheduling factors associated with successful and unsuccessful elements of these LNG projects, our analysts were able to highlight potential risk areas and provide the contractor with alternative scenarios.

Refinery construction

PwC's schedule analytics tool was used to evaluate the design of a refinery construction schedule. PwC analysts utilized system functions that allowed evaluation of key schedule characteristics against industry standards. The results were then used to establish likely areas of schedule risk and development of a plan to mitigate these risks. In addition, the tool was used to identify areas reflecting potential resource conflicts, logic inconsistencies and status problems.

Construction disputes

PwC's schedule analysis tool has been used to support a number of schedule disputes and provide analytics detailing the quality of schedules for a variety of construction projects including railways, power plants, airports and hospitals. Our analysis has been used to assist with the development of expert witness testimony and provide graphical representations of key schedule characteristics for the purposes of developing positions in formal proceedings.

The PwC difference

We believe PwC is uniquely positioned to provide independent advisory services on, and the assessment of, large-scale and mega-projects. Our Engineering and Construction practice comprises nearly 5,300 professionals who serve more than 20,000 engineering & construction companies around the world. Our Capital Projects & Infrastructure specialists provide services related to the full value chain. This includes acquiring, financing, investing in, planning, designing, procuring, constructing, commissioning, operating, and maintaining complex programs or portfolios.

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