Refining a Project Schedule
Chapter 12
What is the “critical path”?  

If I spend extra money to reduce the time it takes to complete a task which is not on the critical path, what have I accomplished?

Critical Path – Longest sequence of tasks in the project. Dictates earliest completion time.

I’ve just spent money and haven’t shortened to the schedule.
What is “slack time”?

Slack Time – The amount of time a task’s finish date can move without affecting another part of the project.

A.K.A. Wiggle Room
What are some of the most common cost reports used by project managers?

Budget Report – text based hard copy of the Cost table

Cash Flow Report – Total costs by week


Cash Flow Report visual report – one Excel-based pivot and two Visio
Even your superstars can only multitask so much. Keep them focused so they don’t drop the ball on critical path tasks.

Don’t pay for a rocket scientist when you don’t need one.

Even if they are twice the price, if they can get the job done in 1/3 the time, you come out ahead (and often with better quality).
How can splitting a long task into several shorter tasks help you shorten your schedule?

When does this work?
When doesn’t this work?

Break it up and assign different resources to each task.

Sometime, even when you break a task up, the steps are still performed sequentially.
New system, needed to finish earlier than originally planned. Was following the SDLC. We were going to develop the system, produce the training materials, and train the users. Delays in development pushed us to fast track and overlap development of training materials and training users.

Unfortunately, we need to make changes in the system and the training materials and retrain the users! Ouch!

Expensive, embarrassing, made us later than ever!
What is “crashing”?  

What are the problems with crashing?  

What does a “crash table” show me?  

Shorten the schedule by throwing more resources at tasks.  

Usually drives up costs.  

Sometimes it can’t be done. If it takes one woman 9 months to have a baby...  

Crash table helps me analyze “bang for my buck”. How much will each option cost and how much time will it save.