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STEVE NEW

Stop Wasting Time: Computer-Aided Planning and Control

NORMAN SANDERS

Prentice Hall, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1991. xvi + 141 pp. £14.95
ISBN 0 13 850462 8

This book is intended as a simple and up-to-date guide to the subject of computer-aided project management. It outlines the background and requirements of planning in general terms, leads into more in-depth discussions of constructing plans, maintaining them and reporting from them, and later provides a short overview of computer hardware and software considerations.

In a short book written with an engaging style, Sanders appears to have achieved the impossible; the nitty-gritty of planning and scheduling is explained and placed in a variety of contexts in a manner which can be enjoyed by the novice and experienced practitioner alike—enjoyed, because the style in which the book has been written makes for easy reading and the text is punctuated with pertinent cartoons. The author draws on his wide international experience to give a coherent description of the subject matter which is both instructive and entertaining.

It is a shame that this title appears under the banner of manufacturing, which implies a particular set of industries. The constructs and techniques it describes apply to a much wider audience, from IT development projects to process and service industries. Indeed, many of the examples in the text are anything but manufacturing—a little more generality in the title would perhaps be less likely to put potential readers off. Moreover, those seeking definitive information about the role of the computer might be disappointed in this title; while this is referred to frequently as an aid to planning, the book does not set out to provide a definitive review and, as is the nature of this industry, printed matter is always out of date.

This book makes the subject accessible, introducing the complexities of networks, critical paths etc in a concise, well-structured way. This book is to be recommended, both as an excellent background introduction for the newcomer, and as light entertainment for the more experienced—at least it will reassure you that the problems are universal!

MARTIN DAVIES