



GUIDE

Enterprise Resource Management: The Complete Guide to Managing Talent and Time

The digital revolution

Technology has always played a crucial role in human achievement. The Agricultural Revolution brought humankind out of the Stone Age. New challenges and opportunities arose as food surplus provided for the development of specialization and the division of labor, and required complex political and social structures.

Similarly, the Industrial Revolution led to unprecedented accomplishments in manufacturing, transportation, and global economic systems. It also had negative impacts on the environment and society.

Why reflect on how technology contributes to achievements and impacts humanity?

Because we've entered a new phase in human history—a third Revolution: Digitization.

“Alongside its great benefits, every technological revolution mercilessly destroys jobs and livelihoods ... well before the new ones emerge.”

– Mark Carney, Governor of the Bank of England³

Challenges and opportunities

Studies indicate that in the past 15 years, modern organizations across multiple industries have increased digital transactions, customer and supplier interactions, and internal business processes, by almost fivefold.¹ And according to Ernst and Young, digitization represents a change even greater than the internet.²

There are many positive impacts of this new revolution, such as enabling remote work, establishing a new way to participate in the economy through independent gigs, and improved productivity. This new mobility allows workers to complete tasks from anywhere instead of being tethered to a desk all day. However, there are many challenges arising from digitization.

Managing resources in the digital world

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More, faster

Digitization has enabled tremendous accomplishments, but has also drastically increased the velocity and volume of work. Today's organizations benefit from a workforce that is more informed, technologically enabled, and knowledgeable than ever before—and yet, in part because of the digital technologies that have reshaped modern work, many workers find themselves mired in meaningless tasks, hopelessly disengaged, and entirely overcommitted.

Like the revolutions before, in order to survive and thrive with today's technology, your organization needs to focus on making the most of your available resources, and specifically the people in your organization. Instead of improving how you're using natural resources or mechanical processes, it's the human capital that needs to be carefully protected. Talented people working on the most important tasks will differentiate your organization and determine your success.⁴



Gaps in technology burden people unnecessarily

Technology impacts the way your enterprise sells products, communicates internally and externally, manages customer information, performs accounting tasks, and maintains personnel records, but have you adequately enabled your people for digital work? Emails and spreadsheets are not productivity tools—they aren't optimized for granting end-to-end visibility into strategically

setting priorities, managing, planning, assigning, and scheduling resources, and executing work. Even so, the average enterprise worker reports spending an astonishing 26% of the workweek on administrative tasks, managing emails, and sitting in wasteful meetings—those inefficiencies account for nearly 500 hours per employee, per year.⁵

“Just as you would not permit a fellow employee to steal a piece of office equipment, you shouldn’t let anyone walk away with the time of his fellow managers.”

– Andy Grove, former CEO of Intel

The gaps between disparate tools leave your organization’s talented workers without a viable way to be both productive and provide the level of real-time visibility into workload and project status that’s required for sound business decisions. The tools they have are often siloed, making collaboration difficult and increasing the likelihood of mistakes and delays.

More than that, inability to manage your organization’s operational capital is likely causing employee burnout, poor performance, and unnecessary bureaucracy.

Sharing resources creates complexity

To resolve these challenges, many organizations are incorporating aspects of the “gig economy,” where resources are allocated to multiple teams in Hollywood-style project work. This is often referred to as multi-teaming, and is meant to improve resource utilization and offer more flexibility to your employees. However, despite the benefits in efficiency and utilization rates, there are significant risks—resource dependencies cause delays or failures in projects that share resources spread to otherwise healthy projects.



95% of workers in knowledge-intensive industries report concurrently working on more than one team.⁶

Ideally, this flexible model would allow for greater choice and autonomy for employees, and could be a major driver in improved engagement and retention. In the real world, though, employees can be negatively impacted, as they struggle to prioritize work, and constantly feel as though they're being pulled in different directions.

For more traditionally organized teams—and especially for shared resource teams—getting real-time visibility into performance, strategic alignment, and how your people are assigned to projects when managing work through outdated, disconnected tools is nearly impossible. Without a centralized way to track work, your team may spend an outrageous amount of time switching between tasks and tools or focused on the wrong work entirely.



Lack of visibility results in unbalanced workloads

Most managers lack visibility into who is working on what or how much capacity their team has to take on new work. They assign work randomly—by skill set, by who is walking down the hall, or by who seems to “answer the call.” The result is that some team members end up over-allocated and overwhelmed while others have little to do and feel undervalued.

Because resource management and capacity planning are haphazard exercises for most enterprises, there’s no way to control perceived fairness in workload distribution, which damages employee morale and erodes productivity. Worse yet, executives become frustrated without visibility into progress on corporate initiatives. The modern enterprise needs a process for strategically aligning and optimizing team members to meet organizational needs.



Issues with project staffing account for 19% of enterprise budget overruns.⁷

How to strategically manage resources

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It's not all bad news

Even in the disruption, flexible resource management is the key to unlocking the full potential of your company's most precious resource—human capital.

Outlining clear priorities based on strategic initiatives and assigning the right people to do that work is easier said than done. Your organization may struggle to connect strategic ideation to tactical execution, and aren't able to prioritize or plan work efficiently. Even worse, if you don't have any method for making adjustments, you won't be able to respond to market changes or take advantage of last-minute opportunities. The complexities of communicating flexible prioritized strategies leave your company unable to adjust resource allocation, ensure the right people are working on the right tasks, and know when your team can take on new work.

The ability to align resources strategically while maintaining flexibility depends on three main capabilities. First, your organization must have data on what people are working on, with granular insights into the types of tasks they're accomplishing and how long each task takes. Second, you need to have a way to clearly articulate strategies to your team in real time. Third, you need to be able to connect those strategies to the execution of work and track the entire process as it happens.

“The biggest opportunity for big companies has come by far in the digitization of internal processes.”

– Jack Welch, former CEO of General Electric⁸

Once those components are in place and your people are managed strategically, your organization can realize these benefits:

- Improved productivity and organizational efficiency
- Greater ability to respond to market changes
- Reliable data and better-informed decision making
- Less duplication of effort
- Reduced operating, supply, and labor expenses
- Highly engaged team members who are focused on the most important work

Tip 1:

**Know how resources
are currently being
utilized**

Monitoring utilization rates, the percentage of time spent doing strategic work, helps you determine how well the team is operating and where improvements can be made. A 70 to 75 percent utilization rate is usually appropriate, but look at your team's unique situation and research industry utilization benchmarks. Then, assess how each individual resource is trending compared with the utilization benchmark you set and try to keep the workload balanced.

Here are some best practices that will help improve resource utilization:

1. Define the difference between productive and busy

To determine whether your team is meeting its goal to devote 70 percent of its time (or whatever percentage you determine is right for your situation), you need to track all of your team's time. Only then will you know:

- How much time your team is spending on each type of work
- How much strategic work a team can take on each week, and how much time they have for administrative tasks or unexpected assignments
- Which tools and processes should be eliminated or changed

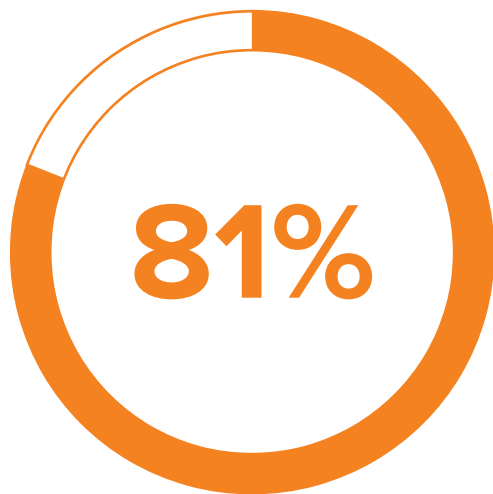
2. Check your long-term corporate initiatives against capacity plans

Consider long-term projects and how many resources they will require over time. Then, determine on average, your daily resource needs. Take into account normal variations of sick time and other paid time off. If you can see that you will not be able to supply both long-term projects and regular projects with enough resources, you need to consider reprioritizing some of the work or hiring additional staff.

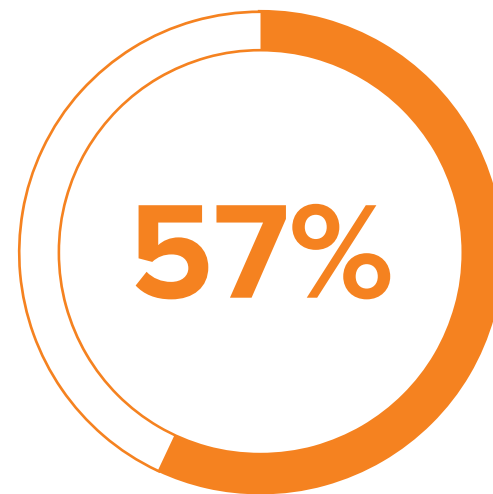
3. Consolidate data

Having a uniform system that tracks all aspects of resource management, including capacity planning, will provide you with greater visibility and the clarity you need to make good decisions. More importantly, it will provide you with a single and accurate version of the truth—letting you see a true picture of who is available to complete the task at hand. Also, by consolidating information in one place rather than on a myriad of spreadsheets, you gain visibility of account and project progress across the organization.





81% of senior executives agreed that data should be at the heart of decision-making—but only 31% said they had significantly restructured their operations to incorporate analytics.⁹



57% of enterprise projects overrun either budget or duration, or both.¹⁰

Tip 2:

**Align work to
corporate strategies**

For today's business leaders, ensuring project-level initiatives are aligned with the strategic and financial goals of their organizations is a major challenge. Even when your strategic goals are validated and communicated, most organizations lack a viable tool or method for tracking work and enforcing strategic corporate alignment.

To fix this, implement the following steps:

1. Communicate corporate and team strategic goals

Every project and portfolio should be clearly aligned to a specific company goal or initiative. Keeping all of this information in a single, central tool will ensure everyone has reliable and up-to-date information to form sound strategies.

2. Establish a formal process

Once the strategy is set, communicate a formalized process for evaluating potential and current projects based on alignment to corporate strategic and financial goals. Create a process that requires every potential project to meet predetermined criteria for acceptance. For example, set up a rating system for project priority based on the due date, requestor's role, and approval status. Outlining a checklist from the beginning will prevent many of the delays and confusion that plague your work.

3. Make real-time visibility a priority

Setting a strategy is the easy part, but many organizations overlook the importance of making sure there's a method in place for tracking real-time progress. Executives need visibility into what's happening on a global level in order to make informed decisions about the overall objectives of the organization. Using a project and portfolio management tool that tracks what each individual contributes against targeted goals is the simplest way to make sure your operations are aligned from top to bottom.



Only 65% of organizations report high alignment between projects and strategic goals, and executive leaders said 40% of projects failed to meet strategic goals.¹¹



Resource constraints account for 10% of enterprise project duration overruns.¹²

Tip 3:

**Link strategies to
execution**

Once you have visibility into the prioritized list of strategic initiatives alongside information about how your people are working and when they can take on more work, ask all teams and individuals to commit to the project deadlines, estimated hours, and the overall duration of the planned projects. If a resource or team cannot commit to the planned schedule, discuss the restraints, redefine the estimates, and make adjustments as necessary to the schedule or budget.

To prevent overworking resources, assign work and corresponding deadlines according to the amount of work that can realistically be completed during a regular workweek without requiring overtime. Allow for sick days, paid time off, and vacation days as well, and figure these into your estimate.

Many projects and initiatives include multiple tasks that need to be completed at different times by different people, which makes it difficult to keep track of everything and make sure the process continues smoothly. Instead of relying on abstract status updates like percentage of tasks completed, break the tasks up into phases or set milestones that make sense and are consistent. For example, designing a website may have several phases like design, copy, development, quality assurance, and launch. Each of these phases encompass a number of smaller tasks that will involve multiple teams.

Getting creative with the way you're assigning work enables you to take advantage of multi-teaming capabilities while maintaining balanced workloads for your people. Doing so provides added flexibility for both you and your team. For example, consider the following ways to assign work:

1. Assign phases to teams

Break the tasks into phases and assign those phases to a team instead of an individual, making it easier to track the status to clear up any confusion about when someone should be involved. This allows for flexibility in assigning specific people to those tasks as they come up instead of making inaccurate assignments at the beginning.

2. Assign by job roles

Add job roles to each task early in the process. This way, you can allocate resources accurately without assigning specific individuals until the task is ready to work on. For example, a job may require a copywriter, designer, and developer. Even if you don't know who

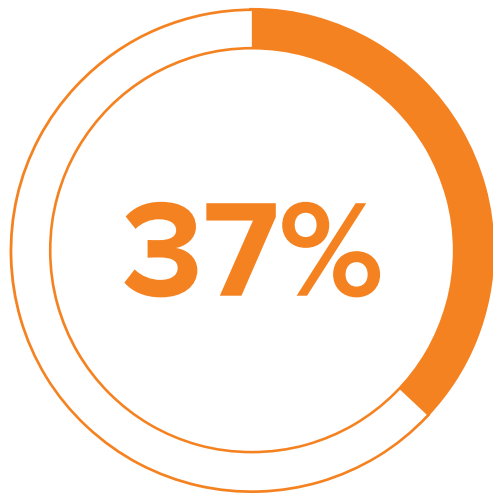
specifically will work on that task when you're planning the project, managing people based on their role helps to ensure you can plan without locking in anything concrete. Once the phase is assigned to the team, they can choose which copywriter or designer to add to the task.

3. Assign by availability

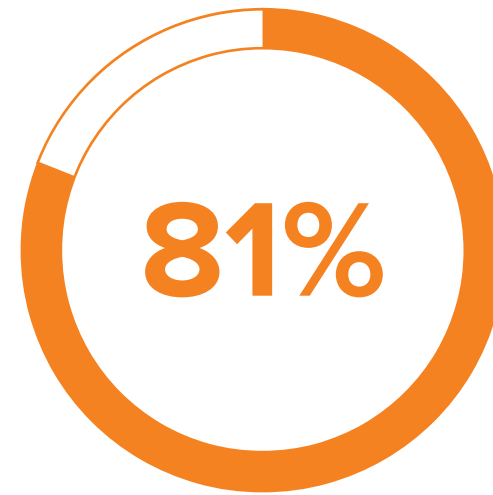
Once you know many hours each person has available for strategic work and how many hours each task takes, a project manager can look at each team member's availability holistically and make assignments that even out your workload. Planning ahead using job roles ensures that if you do need to make adjustments like increasing headcount, you'll know exactly which skills you need and when you'll need them.

4. Assign by choice

Let team members volunteer or sign up for tasks. This gives people more ownership of the work and helps alleviate managers of the resource planning burden.



37% of projects fail due to a lack of clearly defined and/or achievable milestones and objectives to measure progress.¹³



81% of enterprise workers believe that data should be at the heart of all decision-making but only 31% of companies have significantly restructured their operations to help do this.¹⁴

Investing in resource management technology benefits everyone

Assigning work strategically is good for your people, your productivity, and your profits

If you're able to harness the power of your people through the conduit of digitization, the potential savings in time, energy, and money are astronomical. But more importantly, when work is assigned in a balanced way, team members avoid burnout and are engaged with their work more often. What's more, because resource assignments are balanced, your team can move into the next steps of the workflow successfully—without the delays and chaos that often occur when teams are overburdened and managers lack insight into who is doing what. This level of control, visibility, and efficiency inevitably leads to increased profits, better collaboration, higher ROI, higher quality work, and faster delivery.



Companies in leading sectors have workforces that are 13 times more digitally engaged than the rest of the economy.¹⁵

Optimize resource management with Workfront

Workfront offers AI-enabled resource management that streamlines resource capacity planning, allocation, and scheduling, providing leaders and their teams visibility into all aspects of the entire workflow. With your work tools and processes connected in a single location, Workfront will help your team to:

- Unleash your team's potential while avoiding burnout
- Spend more time on important, innovative work
- Make sure you're saying yes to the right things

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