Chapter 14

Production project management in practice

14.1 Summary

Once the decision has been made to produce the programme, it is the role of the project manager to take the production project successfully from initiation through to delivery. In partnership with the production team, he or she has to have a clear view of the entire project from start to finish. A successful project is dependent upon each step being completed successfully. This can only be achieved by negotiating with all parties, keeping to the original scope and timetable, and being able to track all elements within the project lifecycle.

This chapter gives an overview of project management in practice using the production project cycle (PPC) approach, and sets out the key stages and steps with the associated production tools and techniques. The practical issues that concern production project management are also addressed. Whilst theories and processes may appear very lucid and clear on paper, in practice (as most experienced production managers would report) there is always an element of ambiguity and risk involved. The true skill of the experienced production manager is to be able to note and recognise the 'pinch points' at which risk is at its highest. The production manager then has to make decisions that are the most effective in overcoming them. However many systems you put in place for signing off, for defining terms, for agreeing methodologies and procedures throughout, audiovisual projects are high-risk endeavours. If the client or producer doesn't like the outcome at a particular stage, the production manager will still be the person to take the responsibility (and probably the blame) for the mismatch between vision

and reality. The experienced production manager is able to review the project at each step, recognise most if not all of the issues and, working with the producer, suggest already developed alternative scenarios for completing the stage of the project successfully. The production management templates presented and discussed in this chapter are offered as guidelines to assist the production manager; the rest is down to experience.

If we apply business analysis terms to this process, it could be said that a successfully completed programme is the strategic intent of the project. Production management is all about the tactics to achieve this outcome.

Included in this chapter are matters relating to negotiating, managing meetings, having answers, checking credentials, scripting terms of reference and budget analysis. The precursor to this chapter is Chapter 13. Discourses on human resource matters are found in Chapters 7 and 8. Legal matters are referred to, but details can be found in Chapters 10 and 11.

14.2 Objectives and key issues

The key objective of this chapter is to illustrate how the production project cycle (PPC) can be used to manage media projects. We illustrate this with examples taken from hypothetical projects. We would like to think that you, the reader, might apply the PPC technique to a project you are currently managing or are considering managing in the near future.

A second objective of this chapter is to establish the idea that formal project methods are essential tools in managing media projects. The more detailed aspects of project management are discussed as they would often naturally arise within the project lifecycle.

14.3 The PPC in practice: introduction

If you accept the concept and framework of the PPC as a useful device for production project management, then this chapter provides some of the tools and techniques that support that process. In themselves, these tools are not unique and have been applied across many project management applications. Here they have been adapted to serve as templates for the PPC model.

If challenged on the effectiveness of this seemingly mechanistic approach to production project management, the retort has to be: 'What can you offer

instead?' To paraphrase another management system, it offers a disciplined environment in which to be creative. This chapter takes you through the PPC using the illustrative template guides that can be applied by the reader. More detailed versions can be downloaded from the associated website for this book.

14.4 Initiation: ideas, evaluation and assessment

14.4.1 Ideas

Ideas for potential production of projects can come to the media producer from many sources. Whether from musings on a Sunday afternoon watching an old black and white film on television, a walk through the back streets of the city to gain inspiration, team brainstorming or the need to communicate a new industrial technique, they all need evaluation and assessment. You will need to convince someone that this project is worth doing, even if only yourself. Several models can be applied to make this initial evaluation and assessment. In this model, the evaluation step attempts to frame the project in the broadest terms. Assessment tests its viability.

14.4.2 Evaluation

Start by applying SWOT (strength, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) and PEST (political, environment, social, technical) analyses to the idea. This could or should be done to shape some of your thoughts about the idea and the project. Then get a group of people together who can help you 'brainstorm' the ideas you have had to date. Though a much-derided technique, it is still very useful to bring people together to discuss what is going on. One person needs to co-ordinate the session; it is important to have one person able to drive the debate and help generate an outcome. Get a piece of paper and do a mind map (see Glossary) to scope out all the potential links to the idea of the project.

14.4.3 Assessment

This step of the production project is all about assessing the opportunity. It is about setting boundaries and clarifying the impact of the risks involved. It is the output of the assessment step that produces:

- an assessment of the opportunity
- the response to the proposal
- the tender proposition for risk assessment
- the level of commitment
- the range of costs and pricing
- resource implications.

All of the above become an input to the pre-production stage, should the project go forward. It would be a very foolish production house or project manager who had not made some form of initial evaluation and assessment prior to the commitment required of the pre-production stage. A production company could find themselves in serious trouble if they submitted budgets devised without a clear policy and process of evaluation and assessment. The reality could be a contract awarded by a BBC, Channel 4 commissioning editor or a corporate producer for a high-risk project with a poorly crafted budget.

In Global Television and Film Hoskins, McFadyen and Finn[1] say of film production: 'A high degree of risk translates into a high rate of failure'.

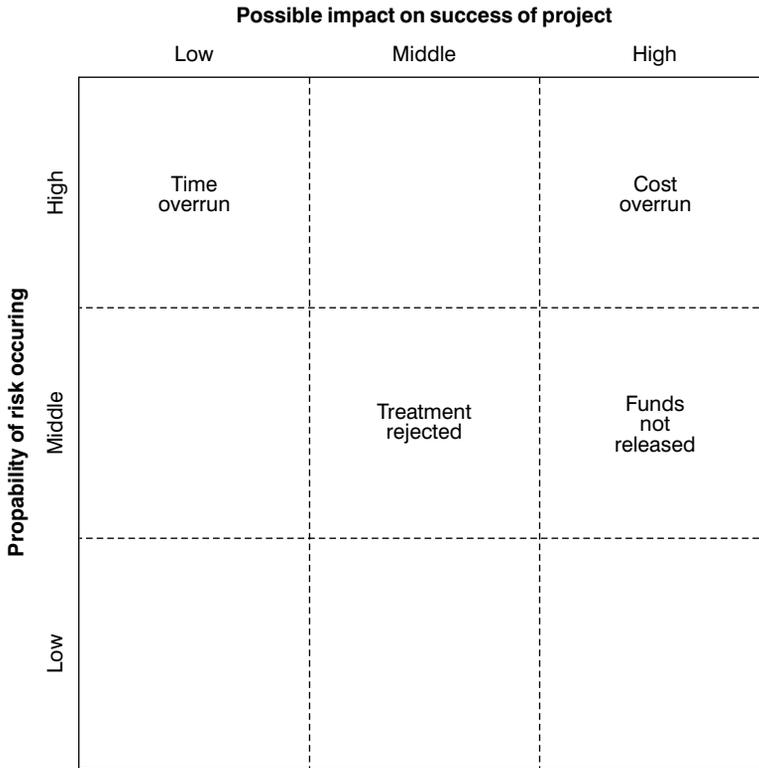## 14.4.4 Risk and impact assessment

The level of risk in any project has to be assessed. A basic form of assessment lists all people, processes and activities associated with the project. Often project workplan (see later) tasks can form the basis of this list. These elements can be divided into internal and external influences, and then further subdivided into manageable/controllable and unmanageable/uncontrollable components. Table 14.1 illustrates how some estimate of the risks attached to a media project might be displayed for consideration.

Another technique is the risk cluster grid (Figure 14.1). A grid is devised that places probability along the y-axis and the possible impact on the x-axis. How finely divided these axes are or what scales are used depends on the amount and detail of data available to analyse. As with the media project risks, we are often limited to guesses that fall in the broad range of low, middle and high.

Using the media project risks, all known contributing factors to the project are listed. Once done, we examine the possible chances they might occur and consider the scenarios for action should this happen. The gap in all risk assessment processes is finding the unknown!

Table 14.1 Media project risks

Project stage	Risk element	Internal	External	Controllable	Uncontrollable	Risk level			Action	Status	Contingency plan
						low	middle	high			
Initiation	When the business framework of the project is agreed		X					X			
	When scope and delivery methods are agreed										
	When outline design is agreed										
	When initial plan is agreed										
	When investment proposal is approved										

Possible impact on success of project

Figure 14.1 Risk cluster grid.

The risk cluster grid does more or less the same task, but by clustering the issues graphically sometimes a class of risk becomes apparent. These relatively simple exercises can form the basis of a team discussion on how to manage the risk and develop a contingency plan.

The production team can then decide:

- how they might shift the probability of the risk factor occurring
- how they might minimise the impact
- how to modify the scope of the project.

With the ideas discussed, the business case established and the risks assessed, a formal set of outcomes for the project can be agreed:

1 You have gathered the key personnel to form the core members of the project team.
2 There is a general statement about the named project.

3 Some form of treatment, script or storyboard has been devised as a working document.
4 Some aspects of the risks and the rewards have been addressed.
5 Those who manage the finances have been approached and have enough information to commit funds, subject to the details of the definition and planning stages. Sometimes final agreement only comes after the planning stage, but at this time pump priming or prototyping funds should be made available.
6 There is some form of consensus of understanding between the stakeholders and project team regarding what the project is trying to achieve.
7 There is commitment.

14.4.5 Selecting the supplier

Where exactly in the PPC the supply company or companies are appointed is dependent on many factors. These factors can be summarised as:

- the company's production strategy as (see Chapter 13)
- the production framework
- the clarity of the project (at this stage)
- business requirements (tender round as part of business process)
- the relationship with the retained subcontractor
- the partnership arrangements
- the style of prototyping options (several companies could be tested)
- the time to do any of the above
- the stability of the project, the budget
- assessment of risk by the project manager
- obligatory subcontracting arrangements (the advanced partnership arrangement of, say, having staff in both offices).

The task of selecting the main subcontractor and other suppliers should start at the beginning of the pre-production stage. If there is no real clarity of content or the script is still very much in an embryonic stage, there is little point in lining up production companies to carry out the work. You and your team need to be clear as to the scope of production work actually needing to be done.

If a company has one or two retained subcontractors, this allows the producers to work on various prototypes or pilots to test out the idea. If a high degree of technology and technology prototyping is required, then some budget will have to be allocated to test these concepts.

If there is some ambiguity in the budget, then the only way forward is to try and get funds allocated to test out some of the issues and processes. Ideas for storyboards, animations or other visual techniques have to be shown or demonstrated to the stakeholders as a means of explaining what can be done. In multimedia production, it is very easy for a great deal of misunderstanding to take place. A demonstration Director Movie (a multimedia authoring software tool) can shift the understanding and appreciation (perception) to a point where meaningful decisions can be made.

14.4.6 The selection (or tender) board

Managing a tender round carries a great deal of responsibility. Commissioning a programme could require you to invite up to 10 companies to bid for the work. This means that you will be asking a number of staff across these companies to commit and potentially 'waste' between ten (one day each) and hundreds (a team is allocated to bid for the project) of days in preparing a proposition. Usually no payment is made for this process. The media industry recognises, therefore, that all buyers pay for this in the end by increased fees and supplier overheads. This 'sunk cost' is a high-risk factor for the companies who intend to make the pitch. Though a much maligned and debated process (independent production companies through PACT – Producers Alliance for Cinema and Television – have campaigned for alternative models for years in their bids to the broadcasters), the tender board is often the only real opportunity for new entrants to the industry to bid for work. A favoured alternative option is to maintain a set of retained subcontractors who will automatically receive the next project work as it comes to the production stage.

The objections to this approach are:

- How does a company get onto the list?
- Fresh ideas and approaches are not easily brokered
- All parties can become complacent
- It is anti-competitive.

On the other hand, the advantages are:

- Faster development
- The supply company is more willing to test ideas prior to contract
- A reduction in the negotiated charge-out rate
- Production planning of resources is possible
- Trusting relationships are developed.

Whatever model you apply, managing suppliers (whether freelance or large enterprises) demands integrity and a strong ethical approach to the process. It has been suggested that some of the larger players in the film and television industry do not subscribe to a clear ethical policy when dealing with potential suppliers.

To help you through the tender process, here are a few steps you might like to apply in running a tender board:

1 Contact the possible candidates who may be to invited to tender. Informally explain to them the scope of production project. Identify the kinds of responses you expect. Establish and clarify their interest in the project and their wish to be considered for the tender round.
2 By a defined date, issue treatment, prototype, storyboard or whatever is needed to explain to the contracting companies what the contents of the project are actually going to be.

Companies that offer submissions to the tender board will require:

1 A terms of reference document that will set up the context in which the programme will be used.
2 A product or programme overview.
3 The criteria under which the bids will be judged.
4 To know what company credentials are required (you don't want to see 50 VHS video tapes with all their past programmes. If you've done your homework, you should know whether the companies are capable of doing the job in the first place).
5 Tender bid materials – this might include a written expression of interest from the company, any initial contractual arrangements such as signed non-disclosure agreements and ownership, their proposal for the programme or project and how it might be achieved, any unique or innovative features they think they can bring to bear and, finally, the kinds of costs that they believe the project will entail.
6 The time for the production and the expected production values.
7 Occasionally, the expected price range.
8 Contract terms – this would express standard project milestones and payment periods, asset and product ownership.

It is important that companies are not persuaded to waste their time. Often companies are approached to bid as 'make-weights' to the tender round. It has been said that a good idea submitted to Channel 4 on a double-sided A4 sheet of paper would be sufficient to secure a contract. Few companies have ever believed that to be true. Even so, it is important for you as the

potential production project manager to establish a clear and open relationship with supply companies.

Sometimes companies get in touch with you during the first phase of the bid round with questions requiring clarity on the original documents. If you are inclined to answer their questions (assuming that they are reasonable ones to pose), it is incumbent upon you as project manager to share the reply with the other bidding companies. As a precursor to the written documents, there could be a presentation session. At this session the producers/ production contractors present to the potential bidding companies an outline of the programme or project they hope to produce. The value of these sessions is very dependent on the clarity of the original concept and completeness of the tender documents. The greater the ambiguity of the papers, the more useful the presentation session to both contractor and potential supplier.

Once the bids have been received, the next step is to select two or maybe three companies who will present their programme proposal. This initial selection should be based on the criteria stated in the tender document. With these companies, the project is discussed in more detail. The tender board does inevitably become 'a beauty parade'. You need an agreed day and slot for each company selected, and this is their opportunity to present programme ideas in some more detail. If this is managed with any sense of commitment to the companies, your own company and your colleagues who may be sitting on the panel, you should not attempt to see more than four companies in one day. This will give each company 30–60 minutes to make a presentation, with a further 45-minute question and answer session, and allows the team the opportunity to discuss the supply company's proposition for about 30 minutes before the next presentation is due to start.

Companies must be assessed on the previously established set of criteria. Although it may seem obvious, number one on the list should be that the tender response answers the programme brief. Often project bids do not. What follows is a list of possible criteria you might like to include:

1 Creative contribution
2 Innovative ideas
3 Cost-competitiveness – how sections of the programme are cost-balanced against the proposed production values applied
4 Technical competence – relevant to whichever arena of media you are working in
5 Their own project management resources, if they are taking on a substantial element of the production.

There will then be company credentials which, if this particular company is a new joiner to the industry, you will need to check:

1 Other product competencies – does the company have a proven track record in the area of the media industry in which you are working?
2 Does it have named individuals who will provide quality and add gravitas to the project you are working on?
3 Does it have the critical mass and resource bank and the capacity to undertake the work without the stability of their company being at risk? Many a media company has been known to go into receivership whilst in mid-project. If the project has been a speculative pitch, what level of financial exposure has the supply company got at this stage?

Once all these criteria have been assessed and, if necessary, given appropriate weighting in your deliberations, a company should be chosen as swiftly as possible and this communicated to them. It is just as important to let those who failed know why they failed and to discuss the project with them. There should be a commitment on behalf of the project team to make sure that this task is completed in a timely manner.

The selected company now becomes a partner in the project.

14.5 Pre-production

The pre-production stage has two steps; definition and planning.

14.5.1 Definition

There could be some uncertainty as to which elements of the project are approved or signed off by the start of the definition step. One way or another, certainly by the end of the definition stage, all these elements need to be in place. A key factor is whether the money has been approved. A formal request for investment may not have taken place until the definition step is over, or it may have been approved prior to the definition step on the basis that the project is clear and unambiguous.

The definition phase is where the full scope of the production project is defined. This includes:

• the reasons why you are doing the production
• who the audience are
• why there is a need for the project
• some idea of the contractual obligations and implications
• more detailed planning

- an outline of the timetable
- resource implications.

14.5.2 Production team meetings

There is no right or wrong time to assemble the production team. Budget is often a determinant (to delay recruitment), and any cost savings have to be balanced with time saved in a having a more effective team. This has special relevance if there are members of the team with no media project experience. For those new to a media project, much has to be taken on trust. These initial sessions are as much about team building and developing partnerships with all concerned as they are to do with project methods.

The first task is to make sure that all those party to the project understand what the team is trying to achieve. Obvious? Not so! Try some of the techniques set out in the assumptions test and the paired list (see boxes) to examine the assumptions team members have made about the project. These 'games' are a useful and non-confrontational method by which you can check that all in the team have a shared understanding of the project. If the diversity often revealed by these exercises is a concern, then just consider how different the views of suppliers might be to the 'clearly defined project'.

The assumptions test

There are many techniques that project managers can apply to help clarify the terms of reference for members of the team on the project.

Suggest that each member:

- gives the project a working title
- defines five benefits for the business
- defines five benefits for the audience
- defines five outcomes from the project.

Select a style approach from a give list. This is often presented as a paired list (see below).

Write a 25–50 word (or the shortest) description of the programme for a marketing exercise. Reduce the limit by five words, and do it again and again.

What you actually use is not really important. What is vital is that the session establishes a consensus on what the product actually is. This should help make sure the specifications are agreed by all.

The paired list

This 'game' helps flush out attitudes of the core production team and their vision for the production. Each member is given this list or an equivalent and asked to scale the paired attributes. This technique can be used across all media and the list is not aimed at any one channel; it is a thought-provoker to generate discussion. If a master chart is then presented on which members explain their choice, you are guaranteed an interesting debate!

Simple	Elaborate
Restrained	Electric, visually loud
Monochrome	Multicolour
Land Rover	Volvo saloon
Practical	Conceptual
Constable	Salvador Dali
Herbal tea	Double espresso
Ben Elton	Laurence Olivier
Perrier	Gatorade
Earthy	High-tech
Visceral	Exploratory
Frank Sinatra	Frank Zappa
Homely	Night club
Safe	Dangerous
Fantastical	Realistic

14.5.3 Project specification

The project specification becomes the blueprint against which the project may be measured. The specification is the final outcome from the definition step in qualitative and quantitative terms.

It might include the following:

- scope of the project
- reasons for the project
- objectives for the project
- time-scales
- staffing
- capital cost
- preliminary design.

14.5.4 The planning step

Project planning is all about what needs to be done. In media projects, it is vitally important to know who should (or will) do what. Standard texts on planning set out five elements to the planning process that can be applied to any project. These are:

1 Set clear objectives
2 Clearly define the scope of the project
3 Break down the work into smaller tasks and activities (known as chunking)
4 Devise an outline schedule for the whole project
5 Prepare a detailed plan for each stage.

The initiation stage of the PPC has dealt with the first two elements. Stage two, the planning step of the pre-production stage, now tackles the remaining three elements.

With this five-element planning technique in mind, it is probably more advantageous to look at the types of tools available to the project manager than to go through a detailed analysis of the technique. These elements are embodied in the PPC. If you refer to Figure 13.2, you will see that the four stages of the project are subdivided into themed strands, or areas of management responsibility, such as risk, legal, technology and people. As the project progresses, the concerns of the project manager move from the strategic (business, stakeholders, risk, legal) to the operational and tactical (production processes, people, quality assurance and feedback). During the planning stage, we are particularly interested in organising the production process and the people engaged in the project.

14.5.5 Project workplan

The production project cycle (PPC) itself is the first tool that you would use in planning a project. It provides an overall model for the development of the media project.

Project planning can be paper-based, but it is now fairly common practice to use some form of computer-based project workplan tool. One of the most widely used software packages for the non-specialist project manager is Microsoft (MS) Project. This is relatively straightforward and easy to use. Given the current state of affairs in the PC market, its advantages are that it is compatible with all other Microsoft products, and it can probably be shared with most of the people with whom you work.
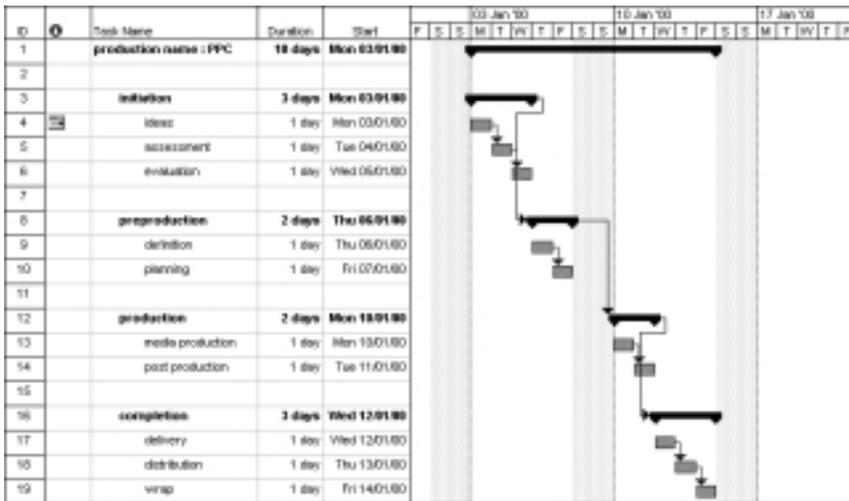
Figure 14.2 The production project cycle workplan (a typical screen from MS Project)

Figure 14.2 shows a typical screen from this software. Here the PPC is illustrated, with one day allocated to each task associated with the four phases of the PPC.

MS Project provides the options to:

- set start and finish dates
- list all the activities that need to take place
- identify those that have to happen before another (precedence)
- establish the resources that will be required to carry out those particular tasks (video directors, programmers, script writers, graphic artists etc.
- modify the time allocated to each task to assess the impact on the overall project.

By setting out the workplan in this manner, whether as a paper-based flow chart or using MS Project (or an equivalent package), the project manager can establish time, resources and complete budget projections for the whole project.

14.5.6 Source of funds – managing the budgets and making the money

Let us be clear on this; in a commissioned programme, it is probably in the last 20 per cent of the project that 100 per cent of the profit is made. This is why it

is so important to get the funding formula for productions right, whether commissioned by a commercial organisation or by a broadcast company. How the budgets are managed is a crucial element in the success or failure, not only of the production, but also possibly of the company itself.

A funding formula for a video production could be as follows:

- one-third on script acceptance
- one-third on completion of the principal photography or commencement of the initial (rough cut) edit
- the final one-third on delivery of the completed programme.

During a 9-month project, this establishes a reasonable cash flow for the programme-maker at 3-monthly intervals. Many production companies attempt to cover all direct costs (known as 'above the line') over the first two elements of payment. The overheads are recovered and the profit acquired at the end of the final period. If for any reason the final product is rejected, with this model of payment the production company has at least covered its running costs. Figure 14.3 illustrates the cash flow waves through the life of the project. This simplified model shows how financial exposure and risk increase towards the end of each production period. The shorter the time between payments, the smaller the deficit on the project. As funds
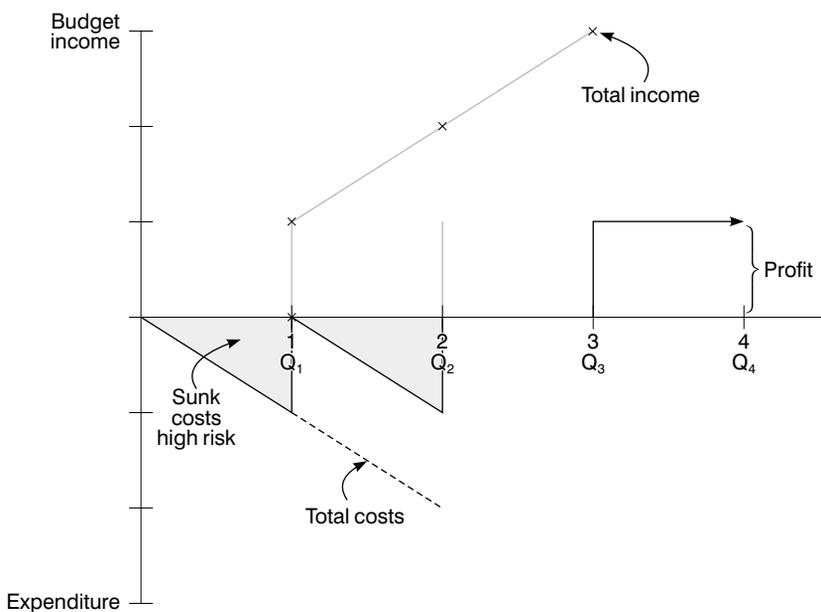
Figure 14.3 Production project cash flow.

are released at the end of each completed project period, ideally finances become balanced once more. If a project is being fully funded by a broadcast company, then agreed funds can be released on a monthly basis into a production acoount. These funds will be based on the final production budget model.

With retained subcontractors, a more complex model can be applied. Tranches of money are allocated according to the step reached in the production. This can sometimes even be before the staged work is completed. For example, 'pump priming' funds might be released before formal contracts are issued to provide the cash for a development prototype.

The amount of these funds might be based on:

- a percentage of the total budget anticipated
- the time and materials required for this stage (should be used with some care)
- a fixed price prototype project that will be written off against the full contract – whereby payment for this work is only due if the full contract does not materialise.

In a high-risk industry, these three strategies are contained approaches and relatively low risk. However, projects do over-run or have delays for which the suppliers are not responsible, and strategies for accommodating these eventualities are needed.

The options given above are based on a negotiated fixed-price model of subcontracting. In principle, if all runs to time there will be no overheads or over-run costs to be considered.

There are four other models that can be used in contracting freelancers or subcontracting companies. In each case, the exact scheduling of payment is open for further negotiating and approval by both sides.

The five models of contracting are:

1 Negotiated contract – as previously discussed
2 Time and materials, plus agreed expenses – the contract job
3 Bracketed time – a defined product
4 Fixed time – an ambiguous product
5 The fixed price 'buy out' deal – the production catch-all.

Let's consider models 2–5 in more detail.

Model 2, the time and materials model, is often used for individuals with whom you have contracted to do a defined task. This is usually over a known

period, although there may be over-runs. For example, you might hire a director for a specific number of days for location recording (the same could be true for a sound recordist or camera operator) where overtime agreements have been made for the work.

Model 3, the bracketed time model, is often used with writers, graphic artists and possibly storyboard artists. It is for a defined product, but the full scope is unclear; it could be reworked and refined. You know there is going to be a minimum contract time for the project and a maximum over which you will not go. With a good relationship with these individuals, you will both be seeking to minimise cost and keep the number of days down on this project. The anticipation on the supplier's side is that there will be more projects in the future, and that this work is part of an ongoing relationship.

Model 4, the fixed time model, is a useful production method when the scope of work to be done is ambiguous. The expectation is to see 'what can be delivered' in the time available. It does not necessarily require the work to be done in one go, and an overall time frame can be set. For example, a script budgeted as 5 days work could be delivered in 1 month from the commissioned date. It enables the freelancer or subcontractor to feel confident of a minimum number of days over the working period. There is a strong possibility that both parties may need to negotiate more time. By being open with the suppliers, you are giving them the opportunity to plan their working schedule.

Model 5, the 'buy out' deal, is usually applied to those members of production who are working on the project for a reasonable length of time. This approach is decried by the media trade unions. They view the approach as an inevitable consequence of production costs being driven down. The option is used for many reasons:

- it is a way of offering a package price with no overtime or weekend payments involved
- the team works as agreed and when the production demands
- it is a way of providing secure staff costs over an agreed period
- contracts do not have to be renegotiated at every new step in the project
- it gives good budgetary control
- it is not explicitly time-driven, but implicitly there is a time cap (certainly in the view of the subcontractor).

In all of these options, if overtime rates can be negotiated out of a project then greater control can be maintained over the production finances.

However, this should not be achieved at the expense of losing the goodwill of all working on the project.

There are other ways of funding projects. Low-cost British films have been funded by deferred payments, profit shares and any other method that postpones or removes actual cost to the production. However, the only comment we can make regarding these options is – seller beware!

14.5.7 Budgeting tools

As with the project workplan, there is a range of computer solutions for budget management. Project management budgeting is an iterative and dynamic process. It is a method by which you can:

1 Prepare a preliminary budget based on best-guess values. This can be initially set by averages based on past projects. As the project proceeds, these figures are replaced by the final agreed costs and then by actual payments.
2 Predict costs.
3 Track costs.
4 Manage the cash flow for the project.
5 Warn of overspend or, more unusually, underspend on elements of the production.
6 Apply and maintain any of the standard business financial ratios that will help the stakeholders or sponsors understand how the money is being spent. (It is sometimes difficult to clarify how financial ratios will assist the producer of an internal project, but they can prove useful for comparative studies – for example, a production company's average location shoot costs.) Key performance indicators (KPIs) in analysing the budget include the following:
   - fixed costs
   - variable costs
   - above the line costs
   - below the line costs
   - the percentage spend on each aspect of the project (writing, storyboards, video shoot, graphics etc.)
   - overheads
   - profit (to date and predicted).
7 Track staff utilisation; to gauge effectiveness and how to allocate staff resources in the future.
8 Note when to invoice in accordance with the cash flow or staged payment model required by the sponsors or programme-makers.
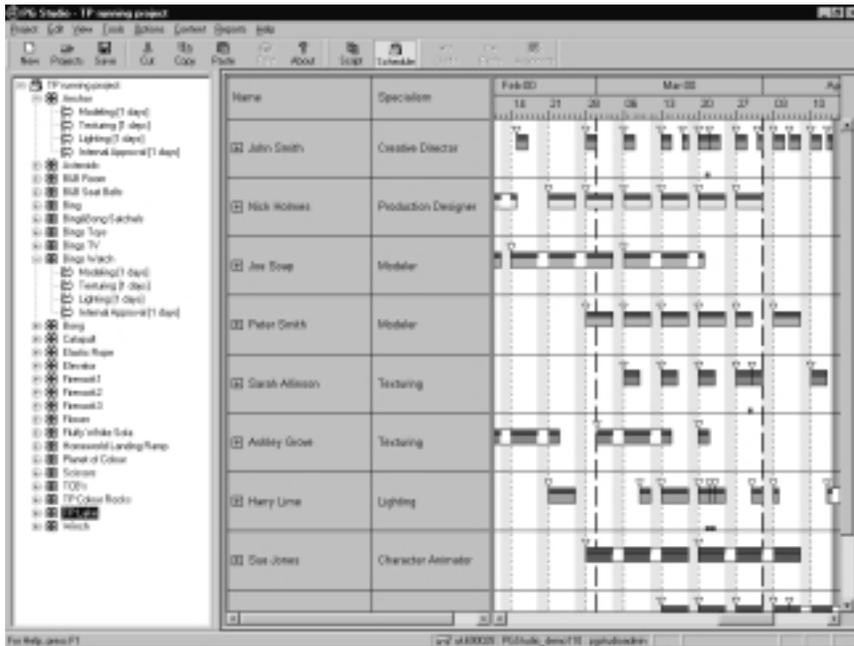
Figure 14.4 Budgeting software: typical screen shot (PG Studio Copyright 2000, Pepper's Ghost Productions Limited).

9 Compare project performance against given budget models.
10 Produce tailored reports for the producer, project managers, heads of department etc.

Budgetary control has to be applied irrespective of the department or organisational managerial framework around the project. It also enables the project manager and producer to plan and change resource management across the production by applying 'what if' scenarios.

A fully integrated budget should track the time that individuals have put into the production. This could be by timesheets, invoices or by 'call off' (the term used to describe a form of model 4 contract where time and costs have been agreed but the actual days/hours are requested as required by the project). All of the above form essential management information for the business or sponsors who are the overall management stakeholders for the production. Any organisation that is funding (see references to British Film Fund and other funding bodies) or underwriting by Completion Bonds will want regular and pertinent workplan and budget data.

14.5.8 Project responsibility charts

The project responsibility chart (PRC) is based on the concept applied in goal-directed project management (GDPM)[2]. A project workplan is defined by milestones; these are points at which it has been agreed that an aspect of the work should be completed. The philosophy behind GDPM is not to define a series of tasks, but rather a series of outcomes. It is true that the end results should be the same, but there is a conceptual difference between the two project management methods. Tasks define what needs to be done (processes); outcomes define what needs to be completed (deliverables).

Whichever way you feel most comfortable, in determining and defining the project workplan there is still the need for a PRC to accompany it. To an extent this can be worked into the project workplan layout. It has been done using Microsoft Project, with mixed success.

Table 14.2 illustrates this approach as applied to the PPC workplan set out in Figure 14.2. The PRC shows the key personnel and companies who are part of the project. In this simplified illustration, we have identified just the broad areas of responsibility. For example, milestone 6 (M6) is complete when project definitions have been agreed. A series of letters (explained in the accompanying legend) define the roles and responsibilities. So for M6, the work is managed (P) by the production project manager, and executed (X) by the manager with the writers, directors and subject specialist. The internal stakeholders are consulted (C), as is the key supplier. All stakeholders will take joint decisions (d) to approve the steps completion. Others with an interest are informed (I) of progress. As the production becomes more detailed, so the value of this model in clarifying roles and responsibilities becomes an essential tool to effective project management.

> **The project responsibility chart explained**
>
> In Table 14.3 we have highlighted a small segment of a project responsibility chart (PRC) to illustrate this in more detail.
>
> Table 14.3 shows a hypothetical segment of a PRC for one episode of a broadcast comedy drama programme. This is shown just to illustrate the concept; we do not suggest that this is what actually took place in the production. The diagram indicates that the writers made the decision about the story line and then had to write it.

Table 14.2 Project responsibility chart for the PPC

M#	High level milestones	All milestones and some activities	PLAN dates	Comments	External stakeholders: usually finance	Producer(s) production project stakeholder(s)	Internal project manager	Writer/content owner	Specialists on topic	Director	Media production manager	Key supplier	Other sub-contractors	Marketing/packaging		Audiovisual producers	Graphics designer	Software	Notes	M#
M1	when initiation phase complete																			1
M2		when ideas have been formulated			C	D	P/X	X	X	C		C								2
M3		when evaluation has been completed		the sub tasks of risk vs. reward and other strategic business analyses have taken place	d	d	P/X	X	X	X	X	C	C							4
M4		when project assessment has taken place		this usually implied that ??????have been allocated and that there is commitment to the ??????	d	d	P/X	C	C	d	C	I	I	C						3
M5	when pre-production phase is complete				d	D	P/X		C	C										5
M6		when project definitions have been agreed		scope, reasons, objectivesa, timescales and initial design	d	d/C	P/X	X	C	X		C								6
M7		when all planning tools have been initiated		budget, workplan and PRC are completed	d	d	P/X		C	C										7
M8	when production phase is complete				I	C			C	C	A					P	X	X	Test CBT training		8
M9		media production		This will become a more detailed area once project workplan has been completed	I	P		C	X	X	A	X								9
M10		post production		rough cut, alpha, beta, or print copy	C	P/d/X		d	d/X	X	d					d	C	C	measure stakeholder ??????		10
M11	when completion has been signed-off																			11
M12		delivery		has been shipped to agents or supplied direct to customers/clients		P			C	X	A				A				Produce packaging		12
M13		distribution		when product has been exhibited and viewed/used by audience	d	P			C	X	A								Produce packaging		13
M14		wrap		when review of project has been agreed and all accounts closed																14

X = Executes the work; D = Takes decisions solely; d = Takes decisions jointly; P = Manages progress; C = Must be consulted; I = Must be informed; A = Available to advise.

Table 14.3 Segment of a project responsibility chart

	High level milestone	Detailed milestone			Mr B Elton	Mr R Curtis	Producer	Director	Project manager	Mr R Atkinson: Blackadder	Mr T Robinson: Baldrick	Mr S Fry: Col Melchit	Other members of cast	Comms/Distrb. team
M10	When script is finished			This might change up until location recordings have finished										
		storyline/storyboard			d/x	d/x	I	I	I					
		script			d/x	d/x	c	c	I	I	I	I		
		script edit (before or after read through)			d/x	d/x	d/x	c/d	P	c	c	c		
		shooting script		the script is prepared for recording – tests make changes necessary	c	c	c	x	P/x	c	c	c		
		location changes		although the direct decided on location the actors may assist	I	I	I/d	D/x	P/x	c/d	c/d	c/d		

x = executes work; D = takes decisions solely; d = takes decisions jointly; P = manages progress; T = provides tuition on the job; c = must be consulted; I = must be informed; A = available to advise.

> At the script edit stage, there are joint decisions made between the writers and the director. The writers still execute the work, yet consult the producer. The project manager, who is also consulted, is managing the progress of the whole production. By the shooting stage, some script changes may have to be made. The writers do that task in consultation with the producer. By this time, the key performers have been given a copy of the script and they may make comments. Star performers are inevitably consulted about their role.
>
> Once on location, the project is in the hands of the director, who will make decisions on how to interpret the script. The performers will execute the script that they have been given, and this is managed by the production manager. If required, the producer is there to advise, and both writers are consulted on changes that might be made to their work. This will vary from project to project, and is dependent on the role and influence that the writers have on the production – in the case of this example, probably quite a lot.

The importance and use of a PRC cannot be overstressed. It will:

- determine roles and responsibilities for every step of the project
- define the particular tasks for each project member
- set out the relationship between the team members and the task
- clarify who the decision makers are at each milestone.

By applying this technique, everyone knows 'where the buck stops' before actions and decisions are taken.

14.5.9 The critical path and shooting schedule

In a drama production, the availability of a key performer will be a main determinant of a programme's production timetable. This is an example of a project dependency, known as the critical path. Other time-dependent activities, such as filming the opening of Parliament, recording the fireworks for Labour Day or having to record someone turning on a gas pipeline, will impact on the project workplan. In a multimedia project, the video shooting schedule is only part of the larger planning process; it forms only one element (however vital) of the whole project.

Critical path analysis (CPA) is built into planning tools such as Microsoft Project. For example, the marketing and packaging of a film can only really begin once some principal photography and graphic design for the entire

project have been completed. The conflict occurs because a product mock-up will be required for the marketing campaign some months before the production is complete. This requires images, designs and typographical layouts to be planned and completed. The packaging mock-up will enable those in the marketing department to make a start on their campaign. They will want to release flyers or other marketing collateral to distribution agencies. With the use of proper project planning, these critical path dependencies can be factored into the production.

If the planning has been conducted successfully, you should be in a position where:

- the overall scope of the project is known
- budgets are established
- contracts have been issued
- key production staff and crew have been contracted
- the key performers are cleared and available
- the script/narrative has been completed
- all technical strategies and processes have been set in place
- subcontractors are standing by.

The project is now ready to run.

14.6 Production

We are now at the production stage of the project cycle. Tasks have been allocated and people deployed to their allotted roles within the team. Rigour, routine and monitoring help the project manager to keep control of the project's progress. Some of the tools that will help you through this process are described here.

14.6.1 Status reports

At the end of agreed periods, status reports are provided by the project manager. On short run projects of, say, 12–16 weeks, an ideal situation could be that the production team meet at the beginning of the week to:

- look back on the previous week's achievements
- consider the project plan and how well the project is staying on track
- look forward to the coming week and consider the activities (maybe just the highlights) that the team is going to undertake
- examine the status of any identified risks on the horizon.

At the end of the week, the project manager issues a status report. Different organisations use differing reporting processes and techniques, but whatever system is chosen it should be clear, concise and understood by all. Be sure that team shorthand and acronyms, if there are any, are understood by all who might read the document. This can be distributed through email, group management software, Lotus Notes Databases, or by placing data on a shared website. Whatever method you use for distributing it, the most important things to be clear on are that information is:

- accurate
- pertinent
- told in time, and
- appropriate to those who need to know.

It should also highlight the strengths and weaknesses of the project to date.

By making succinct reports a feature of the project process, and by explaining this process to all concerned, as project manager you will be able to:

- keep people up to date with the achievements so far
- identify any drift in the project at the earliest possible opportunity
- keep all team members aware of their responsibilities and tasks for the project
- track and report changes in areas of risk, whether lower or higher.

If kept simple, status reports can be very effective.

Once the project manager has the process methods clear, the human factors become a prime concern. The relationship between team members is a vital element to the success of a project. Chapter 8 considers organisational behaviour and explores some of the issues regarding:

- team behaviour (forming, storming, norming, performing)
- cultural variations and issues
- global projects and teams
- the organisational culture
- networking in the media industry.

Managing creative teams will always remain the most challenging task for the media project manager.

14.6.2 Asset management

Most productions acquire a range of materials and resources, digital, analogue and physical in nature. These could exist in a physical form as

location master tapes, pre-edits, alpha and beta copies of CD ROMs, word documents, voice-over tapes, DAT recordings, logos and graphics. Other resources will only exist in an electronic form. In addition, script and project documents will have several versions throughout the life of the project. A means of tagging and organising the assets is vital to the smooth running of a project.

Whether the resources are physical or electronic, the first task is to build some form of spreadsheet that identifies the asset by:

- what it is
- when and who generated it
- the version number
- the current location (if physical)
- the current user (if electronic).

After this, whether you apply the technique of the 'job bag' used in the print and publishing industry or whether it is just in a box somewhere is not significant; the important aspect is to be able to track the materials. On even the simplest of video shoots, it is possible to misplace one of 10 Betacam tapes. Tapes are often in transit – between off-line and on-line editors, on their way back to directors for reviewing or turning into burnt-in time code (BIT), or for copying to a VHS tape. With electronic documents, the problem is not owning a copy, but rather maintaining control of the version being edited.

Let us deal with version control first. Start by giving the file a name that is meaningful to the project, for example b_ adder v1.doc. This becomes the first script version for this particular programme. As the script goes through edit cycles, each individual who is performing the edit can do so in whatever way they wish but must change the file name by putting their initials within the file name – for example, b_adder(BE)v2.doc means that one of the scriptwriters has edited the script and it is now in its second version. Some agreement as to how the team tracks document changes must be applied. Effective use of editing techniques in word processors helps to identify those parts of the script that have been changed from previous versions.

Where a production group all works within one company, they can share either the email system or hard disk space for resource management. This becomes more complicated when people are working not only in different companies but also across the world. Many organisations can now use the Internet or an Extrant as a means to store shared data. Project files, asset databases and spreadsheets on a password-protected website can provide
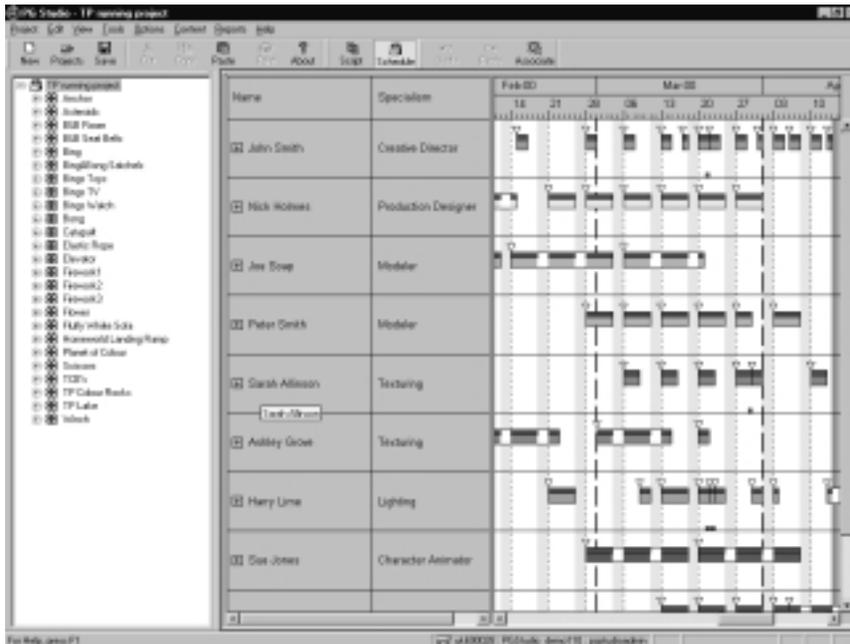
Figure 14.5 A project team tool (PG Studio Copyright 2000, Pepper's Ghost Productions Limited).

an effective resource management tool (Figure 14.5). Individuals share project communication and work lists, and they can download project files. Depending on the configuration of the website access rights, team members can upload revised documents. Alternatively, they may have to send them to the site web master to co-ordinate new versions being uploaded.

14.6.3 Negotiating

Production managers are called upon to negotiate at almost every stage of the PPC. From the start they will be negotiating with the 'ideas generators', who are very enthused about the project. Their team members will have sensitive blind spots about the weaknesses of their proposals and insights regarding the production. Tailoring their proposals without curtailing their enthusiasm whilst still meeting the business need can require careful handling. Making ideas applicable to a budget that the project can stand and defining a programme that can be feasibly filmed and recorded is all part of the project manager's remit. The project manager will also be called upon to allocate tasks to the project team. If done in a rather cavalier manner

without understanding the needs and wants of the individual, this can lead to problems in the medium and long term. Contracts and terms of employment have to be agreed with subcontractors and freelance staff. All these activities require some form of negotiation. Given the type of companies and individuals one is working with on creative projects, it is important to build a high degree of trust and commitment on all sides. The endeavour to complete the project as efficiently as possible should not be sacrificed for price at the expense of performance. If you enter any negotiation with this policy of openness and even-handedness, most individuals in organisations will respond favourably.

Given the nature of the audiovisual industry, two expressions embody the outcomes from successful negotiation with subcontractors or suppliers; partnership sourcing and obligatory subcontracting. In both cases, the outcome is to derive a mutually beneficial relationship based on respect and trust. Both terms imply an open approach in all matters. Partnership sourcing is about building relationships with key suppliers who will support all the projects your team undertake. Obligatory subcontracting may be for a single project, but the contracting parties have representatives working in one another's firms. They cross the barrier between the financial entities to enhance mutual understanding and speed the production process.

Negotiating: hints and tips

Let us never negotiate out of fear. But let us never fear to negotiate.

(John F Kennedy, inaugural address, 20 January 1962)

If you want to pay too much, settle for too little and give in too soon, then don't prepare for negotiating. If you want none of the above outcomes, then consider the following.

There are three main environments that typify negotiation:

1 To explore and create a new relationship
2 To examine and redefine the current relationship
3 To analyse and recover the damaged relationship.

Whichever of these environments you might find yourself in, negotiating skills can be broken up into four themes: strategy, issues, behaviour and outcomes.

Strategy
First you need to establish whether you should be negotiating. If you have nothing to negotiate with, your position is very weak. Ask yourself, is there flexibility and/or ambiguity in any aspects of the deal on matters such as:

- contract?
- quality, cost, time?
- terms and conditions?
- reciprocal arrangements?

If so, you can negotiate. If you are only considering the price, it is bartering.

Be prepared. Have a checklist. What you need to know, with a few amendments, is drawn with permission from *The Leadership Toolbox*[3]:

1 What is it I want? Know what you need to achieve; otherwise you could end up giving away the very thing you need to keep.
2 What is it they want? Know what your 'opponent' is after and what realistically you can afford to give.
3 With whom do I have the pleasure? Find out if you're talking to decision-makers or messengers; you need to know if they can close the deal; get to know them and what makes them tick.
4 What are my options? Work out your BATNA (best alternative to the negotiated agreement); don't go in fighting with one arm tied behind your back; know at what point your alternative kicks in.
5 What have I got to trade? Make sure you have a few cards up your sleeve – these are your bargaining base; both sides must be seen to make some concessions, so know how high/low you can go.
6 Do they trust me? Build that trust; call when you say you'll call; if you agree to bring Tom, Dick and Harry, don't turn up with Tom, Dick and Joe.
7 Do I trust them? Find out as much about them as possible; check the information they give you; test their reliability; ask someone else who's been in your shoes.
8 Is this just about price? Take away the price to see what is left; is there anything else of interest? If it comes down to price, you're buying/selling, not negotiating.
9 Take their side. To reach a reasonable understanding of the other party's position, it can be useful to put yourself in their shoes. First figure out your own position, and then try putting yourself in theirs.

If you just busk it, think on your feet and haven't analysed what is best for all concerned, your advantage in dealing with the detailed issues will be lost.

Issues
Be clear on your position over the issues; the earlier risk analysis should have identified the specific concerns regarding this project. Do not fall into the trap of persuading suppliers to over-scope, only to have them under-deliver. Specifics will fall into one of the three aspects of project control; quality, cost

or time. You might like to refer back to the section on tender documents – the criteria list (page XXX) provides a useful starting point for further detailed analysis.

Behaviour

Skilled negotiators check that they've understood what is going on. Some expressions you might use include:

- to summarise: 'just to recap where we are …'
- asking for reasons: 'how can you justify that?'
- asking for terms: 'what would your ideal volume be?'
- creating doubt: 'have you considered the implication for …?'

Poor negotiation can be revealed when you:

- want something too much and are too keen; people who look like they want it least get the most – desperation shows
- think the opponent has all the power (this gives them the upper hand) and don't realise what they have to gain from you
- get hung up on one issue, fail to see the big picture and get bogged down in detail; the result is winning the battle and losing the war
- have no alternative and go in to bat with no other options to fall back on, putting all your eggs in one basket so you have to get a result no matter what
- compete and don't negotiate, taking a win or lose approach where the aim is to score points; your victory will be fleeting and their revenge, when it undoubtedly comes, will be sweet.

Effective negotiators:

- ask more than twice as many questions
- give 40 per cent less factual information
- do more than twice as much testing, understanding and summarising
- use fewer support arguments, sticking to one or two good reasons rather than a whole string of excuses, which will weaken their case.

Research shows that skilled and average negotiators devote the same amount of time to preparation; the difference is in how the time is used. Average performers spend the vast majority of time gathering data and working out the numbers, while their more skilful counterparts spend much more time considering soft issues and strategy, and working out what the numbers tell them.

Outcomes

Even with the best preparation, the actual process at the table can still be a fraught experience. Overall, it's best to aim for a win–win outcome and resist the urge to beat the other side. Remember, the other side probably knows all the tricks you do, and sensible negotiators quickly put the game playing to one side.

Do:

- start high – it raises the perceived value of what you have to offer
- take plenty of breaks – pauses can be used to take control
- separate fiction from fact – beware of bluffs and beware bluffing yourself; you can lose credibility when found out
- be generous at the end – let them leave feeling as good as you do; offer something of value to them and of little consequence to you
- learn to lose face early – if you forget this point and are faced with the choice of losing face or losing money, you'll surely lose money; be seen to back down with grace.

If negotiations have broken down and the other side has said 'no', find out what this really means. It could be that they:

- need more information to decide
- cannot afford it at that price
- do not trust you – yet
- cannot justify the current outcome to their boss
- find you (as an individual) difficult to deal with – remember Prime Minister Thatcher's famous expression of Mikahail Gorbachev: 'we can do business together' (from the *Times*, 18 December 1984)
- do not understand the terms etc.
- cannot say 'yes' without losing face.

Do not:

- concede – trade instead, and give them what matters to them and what doesn't matter to you
- pick on the person – probe the problem and avoid getting personal
- aim to get even – in anger, you'll make the best deal you'll ever regret
- assume – ask
- react – respond
- side step – ignore attacks and move onto a new topic
- burn boats – build bridges
- make it difficult for the other side to change their mind – disarm them; nodding and niceties can do the trick
- reveal trump cards until absolutely necessary.

A special note on when you have to negotiate at times of failure
You may be arbitrating between a supplier and one of your staff, between team members, or having to act on behalf of the production management team in discussions with stakeholders and backers. The issues can range from personality clashes to fundamental matters of the project's integrity.

This is another occasion when the perception of one individual, team or supplier is quite different from that of another individual, team or supplier. In all cases, it is important to start by taking a history of what has occurred. Take a status report from each side. Explore the outcome that each side requires in order to continue the work. Always seek to establish a high degree of commitment and trust. As indicated earlier, try to deal with the issues and not the individual.

Negotiating does not necessarily require formal meetings. Should a meeting be required, set out a plan for the session and clarify what you intend to cover and what outcomes you hope to achieve. Explain this to all parties before the meeting begins. It may prove advantageous to have an independent facilitator to lead the event. If no consensus emerges, give everyone a cooling off period of, say, 24 hours. If necessary, start again and set smaller goals. Look for the small gains and areas of agreement. Eventually a decision will have to be made, possibly by you. Be clear on the basis of this decision. Negotiating is not an easy task but, if you use the guidelines suggested, you will have a framework with which to work.

14.6.4 And finally . . .

There is a risk that once the resources are deployed and the production teams busy doing their allotted tasks, the production project manager will, to an extent, relax. Not so. You can never assume that all is going well. In a creative and high-risk industry you are up against people, technology, logistics, the weather and financiers. Each conspires to behave in an irrational manner. This is where you have to think, often literally, on your feet. Don't lose track of all the project planning tools you have put in place. There was no point in drawing up all these models, spreadsheets and workplans if you don't use them. Similarly, status reports are a living document telling you where you have got to and where you intend to go. You have to maintain the commitment and the trust of all concerned. If you have made good choices in the personnel in your core team and the subcontractors that you are working with, then the programme, CD-ROM or website should come together in a relatively trouble-free manner.

The Further reading section of this chapter lists some of the standard texts on production methods to which you may refer. These take you through the more functional aspects of media production. Many of the most well-known production handbooks are also part of the Focal Press imprint.

14.7 Completion

The completion stage of a production project has three subsections; delivery, distribution and wrap. This is not the post-production stage of the simple media production model. All media-related activities, such as editing and sound dubs, have been completed by now.

14.7.1 Delivery

One of the biggest challenges for anybody running a project, and more specifically a media project, is establishing when it actually closes. In engineering projects, such as the Channel Tunnel, the objective is to complete the Tunnel and have trains running along it. Its completion and project closure is clearly defined. In media projects, there is always going to be a high degree of ambiguity as to when the project is satisfactorily completed. There will always be a word, a phrase, a frame, an image or a graphic that someone will feel does not quite meet the needs of the production. It is the role of the project production manager, in partnership with the director and producer, to make that call. If the project manager is the individual monitoring and controlling the budgets, it is usually at this time that he or she will be reminding the rest of the team that funds are running extremely low. Budget and time remain key constraints.

It is also time to look back on the contract and confirm that all the elements of the project are prepared and ready for delivery. In modern multimedia projects, this can be quite complex. The main product, whether a website or a CD-ROM-based production, will be needed to be stored in some physical form and delivered as a master or gold disk. This will usually need to be supported by documentation that will set out the technical specifications and constraints alongside any agreed source code and third party warrantees. Any copyright clearance documents will also need to be delivered and signed off for music, voice-over artists, library footage and stills photography etc.

Distribution

Many texts have been devoted to the trials and tribulations of the film-maker, especially the independent film-maker who tries to get a programme distributed. Completing deals to secure exhibition of a speculative film project made outside of the seven Hollywood majors is a daunting prospect. Negotiations for distribution deals, whether through cinema release or by producing a project for television transmission, has to start at the beginning of the project. By the completion stage of the project, one should only be dealing with the mechanics of the distribution process. For those not dealing with the distribution of physical objects such as film or videotape, the Internet has had a profound effect upon the possible models of distribution. There is no longer a requirement for every finished product to be produced from one factory in one country when this can be replicated across the world by either remaining in electronic format or by being processed more locally at the point of final delivery. There is a certain irony in the fact that a CD-ROM with a face value of £0.30 (the pressing fee and packaging costs), although it embodies material of anything up to half a million pounds in production costs, will cost £5 or £10 to ship to its final destination across the world. We still wait for the paperless office and paperless communication.

14.7.3 Wrap (review and communicate)

At the end of the project, after sufficient time for team members to reflect on its successes and failures, a review should take place – ideally before the team move onto another production. It has been a common oversight in the audiovisual industry not to spend some time looking at the success and failure of a programme project from the perspective of the production processes involved. The prime and sometimes only criteria for measurement are whether the programme is a critical success, either because the customer enjoys it or because it's well received by audiences or reviewers, and whether it makes money.

The difficulty for the audiovisual industry is to establish what can be learned by the experiences of the production team. How can this learning be shared with others in the industry? When you are in an industry in which the saying 'You're only as good as your last job' is paramount, you have to maybe spend some time reflecting on what exactly was your last good job. However you view it, there is a lot to be gained by having a review and communicating it to all interested parties.

The review process should start by asking all of those involved in the project to think about and write down those things that they thought obviously

went well and those things that they thought obviously went badly. They should then reflect on why these elements or processes went well or badly. More formally, you can begin to ask them to look at the production project cycle and go through each stage, identifying those elements that went well or did not go well.

Each person should therefore end up with a list as shown in the PPC review template (Table 14.4).

If this grid is handed out to everybody involved with the project, they can identify certain areas that concerned them and comment about them accordingly.

Table 14.4 PPC review template

Project element	What went well/ improved the project	What went wrong/ delayed or hindered the project
Initiation • assessment • evaluation		
Group production • definition • planning		
Production • media production • post-production		
Completion • delivery • wrap		
Staffing		
Methods		
Planning		
Monitoring		
Meeting objectives		
Unexpected results		
Stakeholder response (client, audience etc)		
Project communication and feedback		

Many believe that just completing the production project is success and a good enough measure. However, there is value in making a clear assessment regarding:

- whether it fulfilled the project requirements
- the cost in terms of the true budget as opposed to the funded budget
- the time in terms of delays and areas of over-run
- the cost to individuals within the project team in coping with the stresses and strains put upon them because of either poor management or poor project planning.

The so-called 'softer' issues of team membership and team relationships are vital in understanding how a project can be successfully managed. A complex production project deserves, and possibly demands, at least a day set aside to evaluate the successes and failures of the project.

The outcome should be a report that:

- suggests new approaches and standards for future projects
- looks at ways of improving the current procedures
- considers buyer/supplier relationships in terms of core team partnerships, as well as subcontractors or freelance staff recruited by any of the key players in the production
- ideally, considers the training and courses that team members might need to go on in the future
- identifies any gaps in their knowledge for all or any of the team members.

In addition to the grid in the review template (Table 14.4), a project audit checklist that identifies all the questions in each area of the project will provide a useful tick list against which the discussion can take place.

A project review meeting could take the following form:

1 General introductions and scene setting
2 A quick summary of impressions and feelings from all of those present who represent the team production membership
3 A more formal approach of going through the stages of the project and examining people's comments on those stages as they are reached
4 Examining in some detail one or two elements that were particularly troublesome
5 Summarising in the meeting the general impressions of what has taken place over the project, and what has been achieved
6 Agreeing as to who will write up the notes and share them within the team before they are passed to other interested parties.

These meetings can be difficult, especially if there were aspects of the project in which individuals or teams of individuals came head to head and clashed over production or creative issues. If the project has ended in some disarray, then it may be useful to bring in an independent facilitator or some sort of skilled negotiator to manage the meeting. If the project has been tolerably successful but there have been some differences (hardly surprising in a creative industry), then these need to be explored. This has to be handled with a fair degree of sensitivity by either the project manager or someone deputed to take on the management of the review. In many cases, projects are made up of a supplier plus client or a production company and series producer. Whatever the case, there are usually two or three key parties involved. The final communication should be a document to which all feel they have made a contribution. In this manner a wealth of shared knowledge becomes available to colleagues, suppliers and new entrants to the industry.

14.8 References

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14.9 Further reading

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Millerson, G. (1992). *The Technique of Television Production*. Focal Press.

Croton, G. (1991). *Television Training: Approaches to Production and Direction*. BBC Books.

Watts, H. (1992). *On Camera*. BBC Books.