Reviewing a Project Plan

Now that you have created a project plan, the next step is to look for information that may be missing, unnecessary or inaccurate. In most cases, you will want to analyze and adjust the project's schedule. For example, you may discover a *resource overallocation*—a day when a resource has been assigned ten hours of work instead of the usual eight hours. On the other hand, you may discover a resource underallocation—a day when a resource has been assigned only four hours of work instead of the usual eight hours.

In addition, you may want to identify the project's *critical tasks* or adjust the *critical path*. Critical tasks are tasks that can delay the project if they are not completed on time. Typically, the critical path is the longest sequence of linked tasks in a project.

Analyzing the Project Schedule

Prior to adjusting a project's schedule, you need to consider the factors that affect how Microsoft Project calculates task start and finish dates, the length of the project, and the addition of resources to a task. For example, when you assign a resource to a task, Microsoft Project calculates the amount of work required to complete the task. If you specify a duration of three days, Microsoft Project calculates twenty-four hours of work. If you assign a second resource to the task, Microsoft Project calculates a new duration of one and a half days, but the number of hours of work remain the same. This calculation method is referred to as *effort-driven scheduling*. **Table 4-2** describes additional factors and the effects on a project schedule.