Defining a Project Plan

The heart of every project is the project plan. A project plan describes all the project tasks, who's going to do each task, the task sequence, the estimated duration of each task, the estimated cost of each task, and the length of the overall project. A project plan makes everyone aware of deadlines and by comparing the project's progress to your original schedule, it lets you see deviations, anticipate problems and correct any delays before they become unmanageable.

You create a project plan in Microsoft Project by:

- creating a project file

- setting the project date

- listing the tasks that must be completed to reach the project goals

- determining the best sequence for your tasks

- estimating each task's length

- creating a list of resources

- determining the project's working times

- assigning resources to tasks

- assigning costs to resources or fixed costs to a task