

# Plexus™ - Executive Overview

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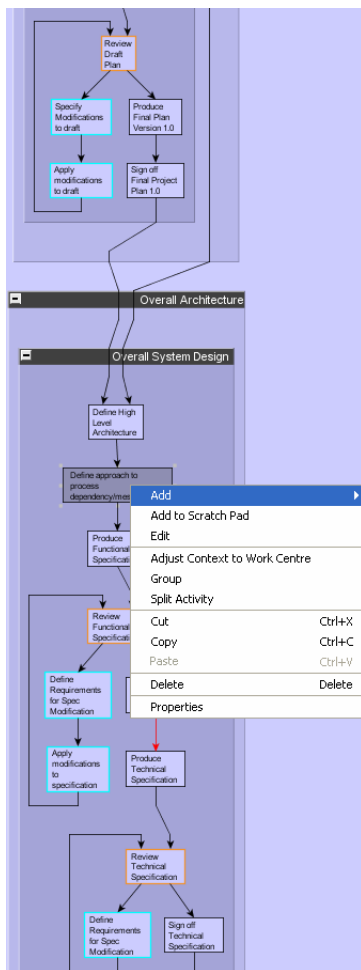


Figure 1: The network view of activities grouped in a work breakdown structure (one of an arbitrary number of hierarchies that can be defined in Plexus). Colour codes show some important activity classifications. Plexus provides constant feedback and guidance to the user and performs real-time model health checks.

Other Plexus views of the same data include the Dependency (or Design) Structure Matrix (DSM) and Gantt Views. These can all be sliced, diced and filtered using a common interface and transitioned between seamlessly

## Summary

Acsian has developed a unique, groundbreaking enterprise solution that:

- Makes complex programme planning and management easier and more effective
- Opens business operations to greater understanding, analysis and improvement
- Engages non-planners in the planning process and motivates them to succeed
- Unlocks unused knowledge and expertise
- Reveals hidden dependencies and interactions and transforms them into better delivery solutions
- Lowers risk and increases prospects of success
- Generates enormous savings on large programmes
- Delivers major operational transformation

This is achieved by Plexus - a sophisticated system that overcomes the massive complexity of programme planning and management.

In Plexus, an accurate project model, built in an easy-to-use environment, can be continuously accessed and developed by planners and non-planners alike, across a network.

Plexus encourages its users to refine the information (or dependency) structure of their projects. Plexus then identifies ideal sequences and schedules from millions of alternatives. These optimised plans offer ideal blends of cost, time and refinement risk. Complex, iterative refinement cycles are sequenced to achieve the best possible results.

Plexus maximises participant productivity and enables effective delivery. It engages, it connects, it motivates. It maximises profit from existing resources.

## Introduction

Plexus is a breakthrough solution for tackling the challenges of complex programmes. It addresses the common causes of programme failure:

- Poor risk analysis
- Poor change management
- Lack of buy-in from participants
- Poor understanding of priorities
- Poor initial planning
- Lack of clear objectives and deliverables.
- Lack of understanding of dependencies
- Inadequate resource allocation

Conventional planning approaches and systems are inadequate in isolation. Plexus takes a novel, intelligent approach to planning, to complement (and possibly replace) conventional systems.



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## Plexus™

Plexus is an information-driven planning approach that focuses participants – including non-planners – on outcomes. It consists of the modelling environment and the schedule optimisation and analysis tool.

### The Modelling Environment

A Plexus model (see Figure 1) accurately represents *what* has to be done, by *whom*, *how*, and by *when*. Plexus provides a simple, powerful, graphical tool for creating such models. Its networked system lets any number of staff – engineers, designers, etc. – make contributions. This spreads the planning workload, and enriches planning with previously unknown expertise.

Plexus shows how activities link together across operational boundaries. It captures natural dependencies and relationships between activities, without the limitations of traditional planning tools. It models iterative refinement cycles that reduce risk. Engineers and designers at all levels can therefore show the way they really work.

Activities planned in Plexus are annotated with standard activity durations (optionally as three-point estimates to analyse random variations and schedule robustness) and resource properties. Other properties such as the relative importance of activity dependencies are also captured. Plexus allows the precise benefits of on-time delivery, and the costs of being late to be specified.

Plexus lets you create unlimited numbers of operational hierarchies in any model. The complex matrix relationships and interactions of a business are revealed and modelled. With sophisticated filtering, searching, reporting and visualisation techniques, you can examine the smallest

elements of a project and discover subtle dependencies between activities and teams.

Plexus model logic is reusable. It is stored in familiar folder trees. You can cut and paste all or part of one model into another. You can create company-wide standard models to be used over and over again. Technical know-how can be shared throughout the business. Governance frameworks can be dropped into any project model to ensure genuine compliance.

Plans from other systems (e.g., Microsoft® Project) can be imported into the far richer Plexus modelling environment.

**Plexus™ is powerful and easy to use. It creates more authentic operational models, and clarifies your business operations. Project planning information is shared, understood and improved. Knowledge capital is unlocked to create more efficient operations. With better, faster planning, product development times are cut, more projects can be managed, and more profitable work gets to market earlier.**

Plexus is an easily deployed client-server system. It is platform independent, and can work off any major relational database system. Security ensures variable levels of accessibility.

### Schedule Optimisation and Analysis

The ideal plan achieves the best possible outcome for the lowest cost and shortest time. In a plan with several thousand activities, dependencies, cycles and priorities, subtle changes in activity sequencing can massively impact cost, time and refinement risk. The permutations are almost endless, and impossible to evaluate and compare thoroughly using current systems.

In just minutes, Plexus's schedule optimisation tool searches through the permutations to find the ideal project schedule, given the definition of the project captured collaboratively in the Plexus modelling environment. Taking account of resource constraints, dependencies, priorities, costs and rewards, it generates multiple, alternative project plans (see Figure 2) with ideal blends of cost, time and refinement risk. From these optimal plans, you can easily select the right balance for your project.

Plexus weighs up all the priorities and dependencies. It determines which refinement cycles run, when and how many times, to optimally reduce refinement risk.

Plexus's schedule optimisation tool:

- Automates plan creation and

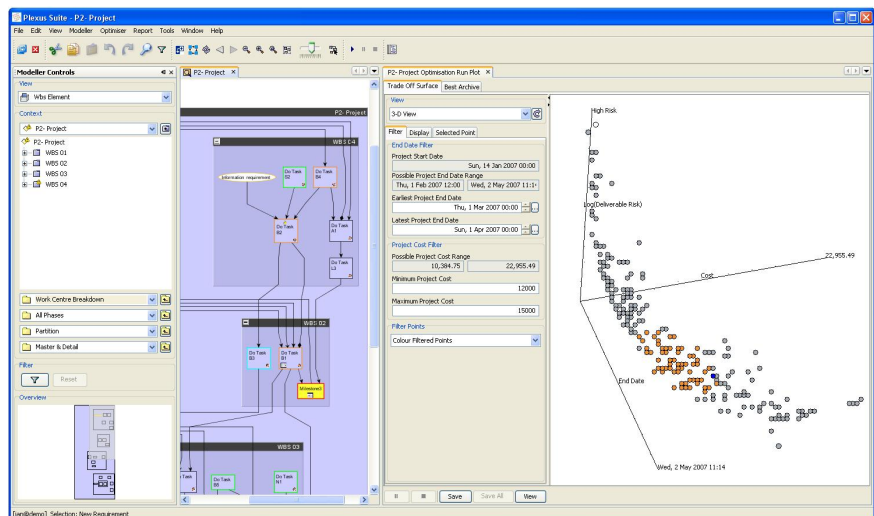


Figure 2: Project plans are shown as points in a 3D trade-off map of cost, lead time and refinement risk. Each point on this map is an optimal project plan that can be; simulated, analysed, evaluated, and turned into a Gantt chart.

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- evaluates all possible options
- Transforms complex relationships into meaningful sequences of activities
- Shows the impact of divergence from plan, and provides options to effectively address delays
- Identifies plans that reduce cost, time and risk

Once derived by Plexus, selected schedules can be visualised in the same modelling environment that the project logic was authored in, to give new insight.

Planners can simulate project execution, visualise Gantt charts and analyse:

- Project subsets (for instance, activities on the critical path for a specific milestone)
- Confidence intervals for planned delivery dates (using Monte-Carlo analysis using three-point duration and work estimates)
- Variances between plans (for example, a contractual baseline versus the latest estimate)

- Impacts of late delivery (for example, how delaying specific milestones effects the rest of the plan)

Project plans can be exported to all conventional project management systems for progress monitoring.

If plans fall behind during execution, Plexus can re-optimize uncompleted activities to provide the ideal route forward. It can easily model revision if your project changes.

## Conclusion

- Plexus transforms your business operations, delivering real improvement
- Plexus enhances planning with expertise from the whole business
- Plexus optimises the use of resources
- Plexus improves participation, efficiency and motivation
- Plexus reduces risk, lead time and cost of product development
- Plexus enables better decision-making to enhance delivery success
- Plexus increases profit and reputation

Studies tell us that 84% of all projects fail in some way, often spectacularly. Plexus changes all that.

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