

VIP QUALITY

TASK MANAGEMENT GUIDE

2008



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Setting Tasks

How to set tasks with clear requirements and goals to achieve the results you want

Define what you need to achieve your goal

Set the goals and the means for their achievement

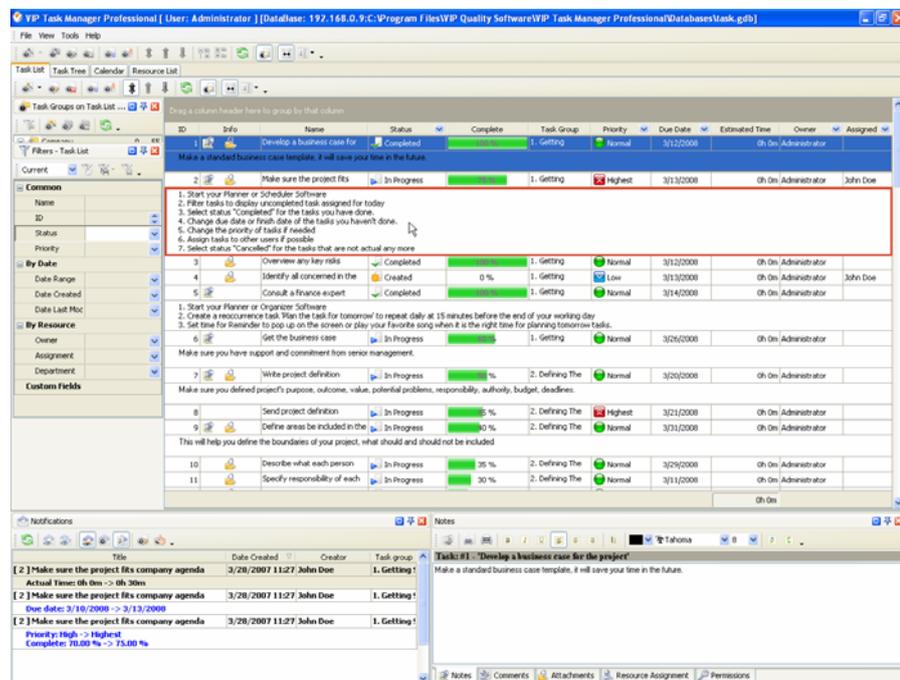
When you set your goals, you should define what means you need to achieve them. It can be money, time or some additional skills and knowledge, etc. Determine which of these resources you already have and which should be found or reached. If you realize what you are lacking to achieve the goal you set, it will be easier to eliminate the difficulties towards your aim and approach your life dream faster.

“Means of goal achievement” To Do List

- While setting the goals, define what means you need to achieve them
- Define whether you have these means or need some actions to possess them
- Take the first step towards your goal by obtaining the means you lack of
- Use software to enter a list of means you need to achieve the goal you set

Action plan

1. Start your [task management software](#)
2. Create a new task, for example “Apply a new product line”
3. Find out what you need to achieve this goal and enter it into task notes section
4. Start achieving the goal



Save your employees' time

Respect other people's time

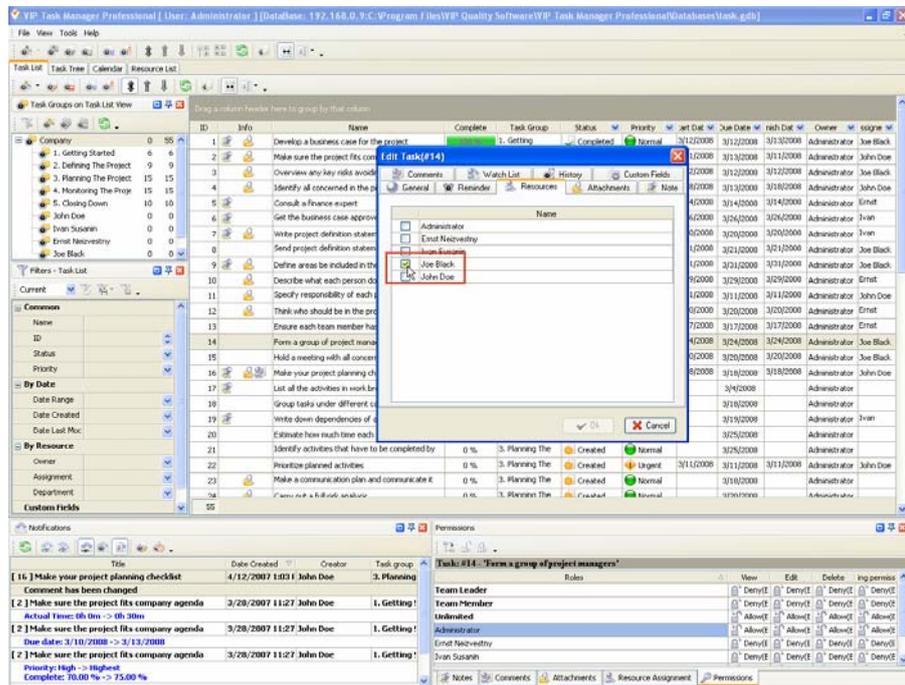
When you plan the meeting, don't try to involve all your staff in it. Some of your team members are not connected with the subject of future discussion. They won't be of use and won't get anything important for themselves, but only postpone with their own tasks. You should respect your employees' time and avoid disturbing them in vain. First of all think who really should attend the meeting. Instead of wasting time on the meeting, other team members will be able to concentrate their attention on their tasks, avoid procrastinations and use their time more effectively.

“Meeting participants” To Do List

- When you plan the meeting, exactly determine its subject
- In accordance with meeting subject, select team members who are related to it and may be of use during the discussion
- Inform only required employees about the meeting
- Use software to create the task “Meeting”, assign required employees to it and inform them

Action plan

1. Start your [task management software](#)
2. Create a new task, e.g. “Discuss marketing plan”
3. Open tab “Resources” and assign the task to required employees
4. Click “Ok”



Estimate the time that the task may take to properly plan your schedule

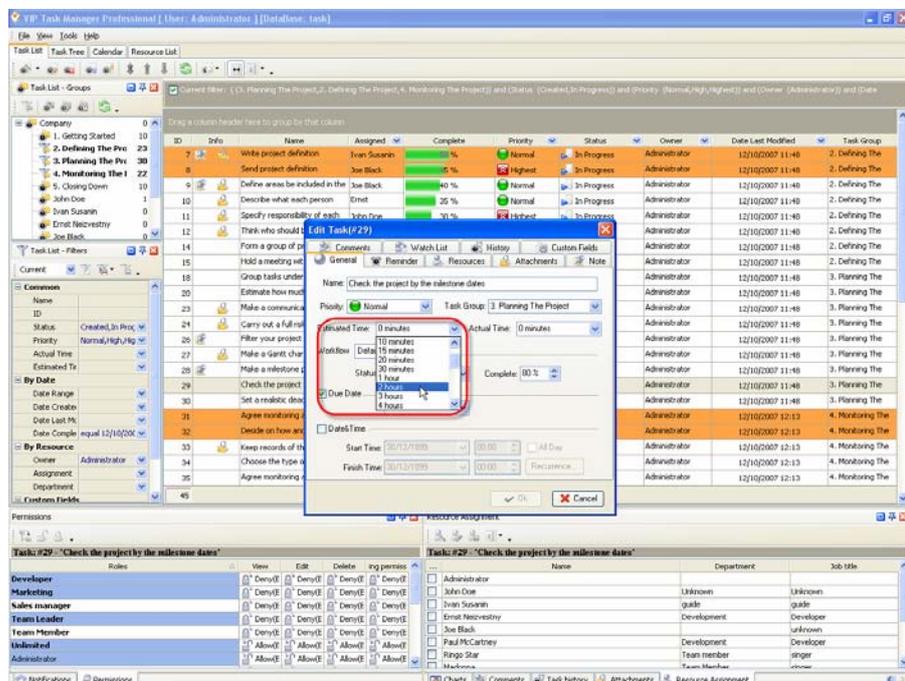
Set the task and estimate the time for it

For proper planning of your working day you should know how much time each task may take, at least approximately. If you try to estimate this time while setting the tasks, then it will be much easier for you to make your daily and weekly plans. When you think over the steps that you need to take to accomplish the task, you are concentrated on it and can more exactly estimate required time for each step separately and the whole task in general. Later you will need only to track estimated time for each task and schedule them to your time table in accordance with their priorities and importance.

“Task estimated time” To Do List

- When you think over the task that you need to do, estimate the time that it may take
- Just as you record the steps and subtasks of this task, note down their estimated time
- Use software to enter task estimated time

Action plan



1. Start your [task management software](#)
2. Create a new task
3. Enter task estimated time
4. Click "Ok"

Take more additional information when you are going to the appointment

Any additional information may be of use

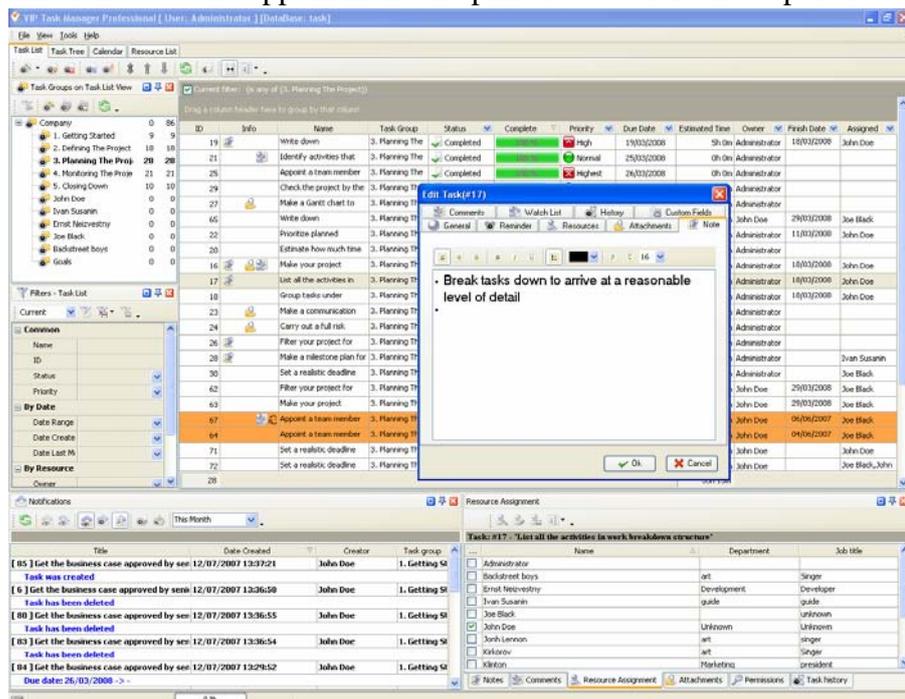
While you plan some appointment, it's very important to have as much information about its place and participants as possible. Something may go wrong on your way to the appointed place and additional information may be very useful. Let's imagine that you go to some unknown region and must be met by the driver in the office car. What should you do if he/she doesn't come? In such situations any additional phone number or address may help you to contact with the people that will tell you what to do.

"Additional information" To Do List

- When you plan the appointment, find out all phone numbers, addresses, cell phones and any place-names if you are going to unknown area
- Record this information and keep it somewhere where you can reach it before the departure
- Don't forget to take the information when you go to the appointment
- Use software to enter all additional information about the appointment and print it out before the departure

Action plan

1. Start your [task management software](#)
2. Create a new task, for example "Business trip"
3. Enter all additional information into the task notes section
4. Print out the task with the notes and take it with yourself in the trip



How to accomplish more tasks and spend less time

Don't lose the opportunity to accomplish one more task

Among the tasks that are scheduled to exact time there are many tasks which accomplishment depends on some obstacles and can't be planned beforehand. For example, if you need to drive to the service station on your way to the bank, you don't know exact time when it happens. You can solve this problem by creating the group of tasks

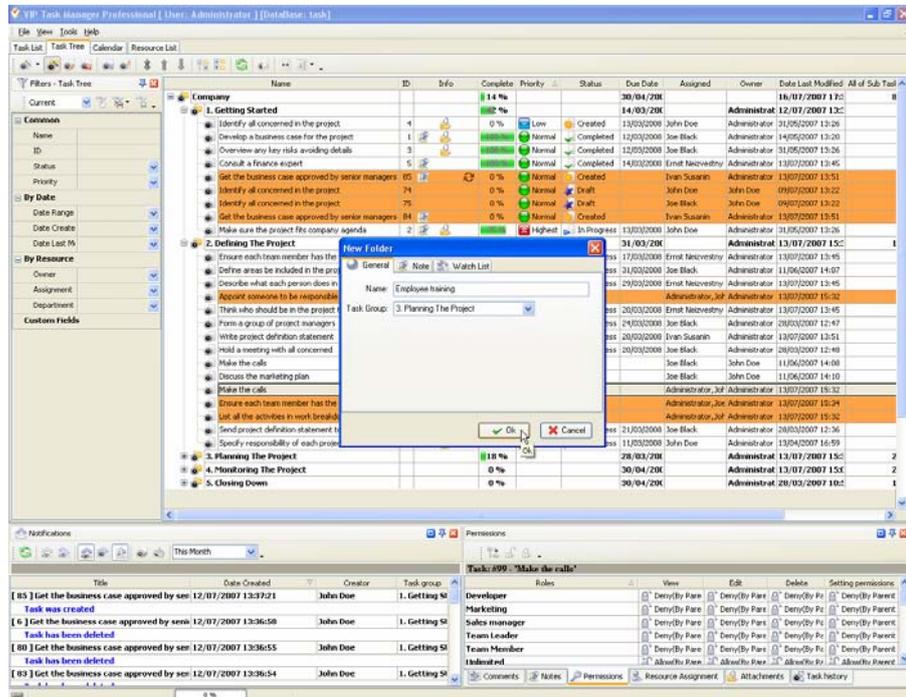
“Places” and assigning to it all the tasks that are connected with these places. So, when you are going to the bank, look into task group “Places” and recall the tasks that you can do on your way to it.

“Context-dependent tasks” To Do List

- Determine the events that are mostly peculiar to you or your company
- Create the group of tasks for each of the event
- Place the tasks into corresponding groups
- When one of these events approaches, look into corresponding task group and recall the tasks that should be done
- Use software to create the groups of the tasks and track them when it’s necessary

Action plan

1. Start your [task management software](#)
2. Create a new task group, for example “Places”
3. Assign the tasks connected with the trip to definite place to these task group
4. Track the tasks of 'Places' task group when you are going somewhere



Set realistic and time-bound goals to achieve them faster

Goal must be time-bound

Each goal that you really want to achieve should be time-bound. It is not enough to say that you want to earn 200 thousand dollars a year; you must set the time by which you will try to achieve it. When the goal is clearly connected with the time, it becomes more material and serves you a light-flash to move forward it and achieve it by appointed due date in contrast to vague goals that you hope to reach "one day".

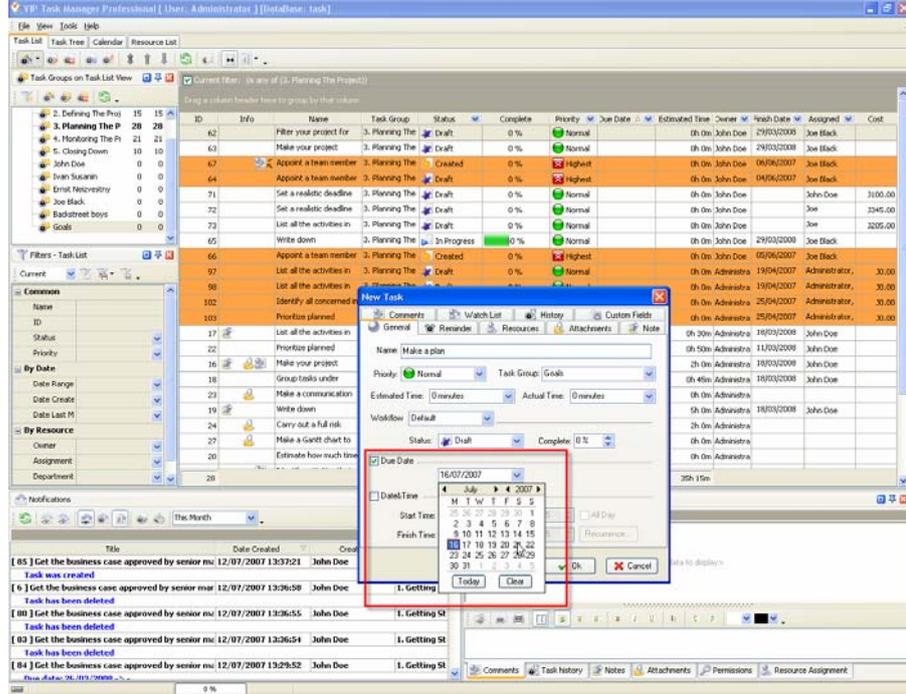
“Time-bound goals setting” To Do List

- When you set the goal that you want to reach, try to estimate the time that it may take
- Even if it may take too much time, don't confuse to write it down near your goal
- Even through you won't achieve the goal by assigned time, you will feel that the goal is realizable and not fantastic
- Use software to set approximate due date while setting the goal

Action plan

1. Start your [task management software](#)
2. Create a task group "Goals"

3. Create a new task with your goal
4. Set approximate due date for this goal



Visualize the achievement of your goals while setting the tasks

Visualizing the goal will help to achieve it

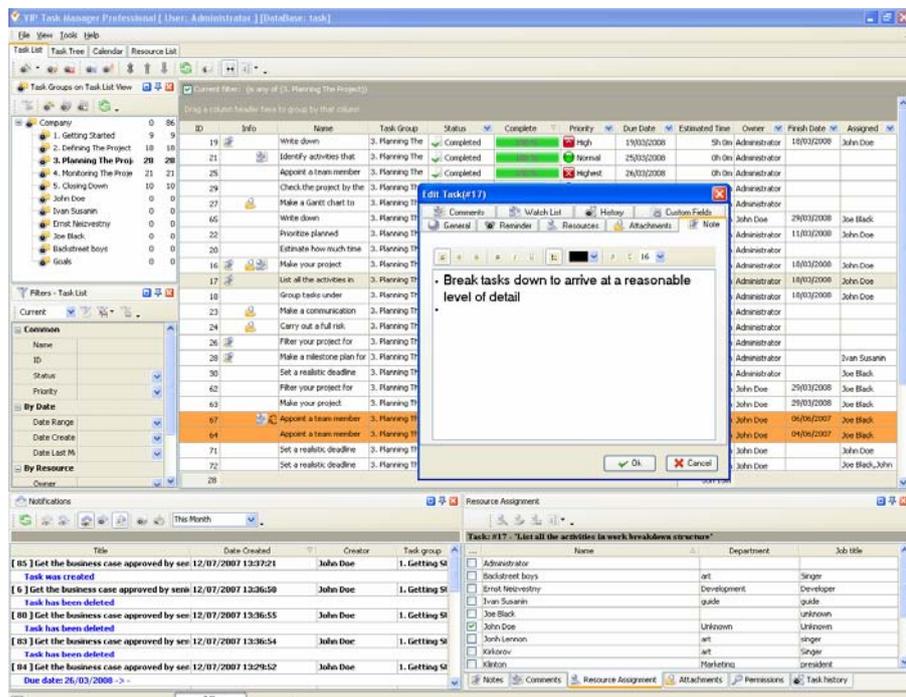
While setting your tasks it is very useful first to imagine how you achieve your goals within your inner eyes. You just need to make yourself comfortable, close eyes and visualize the process of approaching to your purpose. You will be able to see the circumstances and problems that may appear while achieving the goal and find out what should be done to overcome them. Now, when you observe the whole picture, you can start setting the tasks that you need to accomplish in order to quickly and successfully approach to your goal.

"Visualize your goals" To Do List

- While setting the tasks, visualize how you achieve your goals
- Set the tasks that will help to overcome the obstacles and to achieve your goal
- Use software to set the tasks

Action plan

1. Start your [task management software](#)
2. Create the task whose accomplishment will help you to achieve your goal
3. Enter required details into task notes section
4. Start achieving your goals



Attach additional documents directly to the task

The task and its documents should be kept in one place

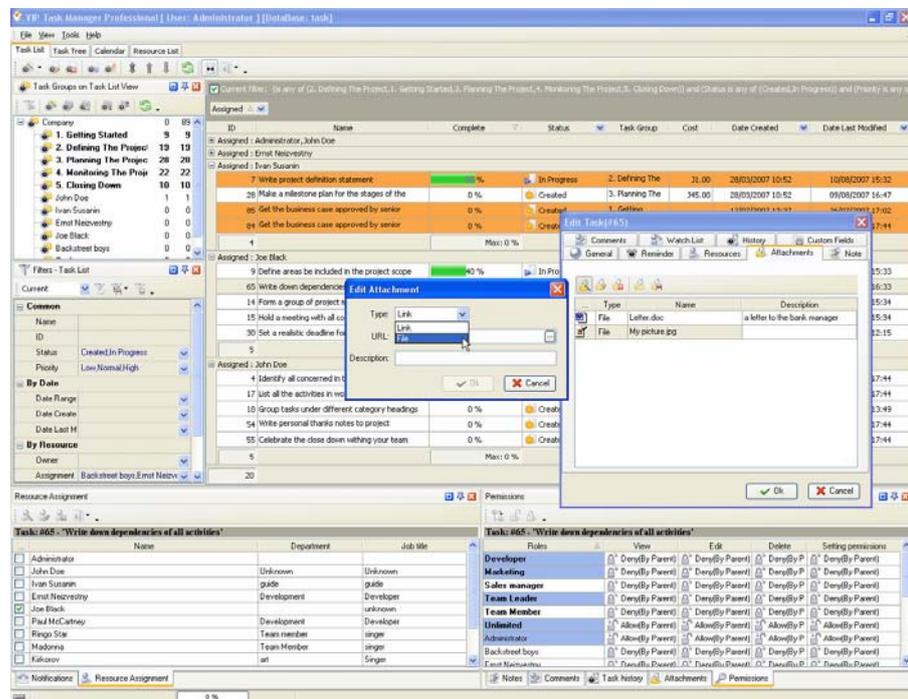
It is a usual situation when there is a need to add some documents or any other information that is required for successful task accomplishment. If you print out and store the papers related to each task on your desk, you will soon face a pile of papers on your workplace. Keeping these documents as electronic files in your PC will require extra time to find them when accomplishing the task. The best way out of such situations is to keep the documents related to each particular task somewhere near this task. In such case you will save your time while implementing the task.

"Attach files to the task" To Do List

- While setting the task, think about the additional documents that may be required during task accomplishment
- Avoid printing out the documents and keeping them on your desk
- Use software to create a task and attach required files to it

Action plan

1. Start your [task management software](#)
2. Create a new task
3. Select "Attachments" tab
4. Attach required files to this task
5. Click "Ok"



Set the list of responsibilities for each position of your staff

Describe the position

In the team work it is quite possible that some employee falls sick or is just absent and somebody must implement his or her tasks. These tasks should be clearly described to the person who will do them. In order to avoid doing it each time when particular employee's tasks are re-delegated, make a description for each employee position, just something like position manual. Having a list of tasks that each post is responsible for, you will save your time and help your staff to easily shift between different duties.

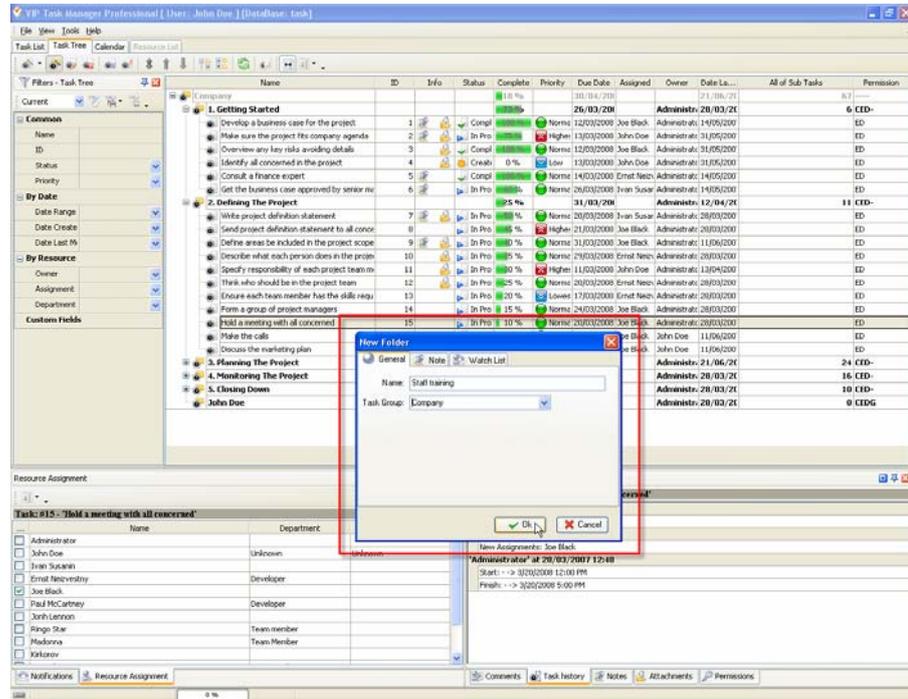
"Make task list for each position" To Do List

- Describe the responsibilities for each position of your team

- Make this list of tasks available for each employee concerned to it at the moment
- Use software to set a list of responsibilities for each position

Action plan

1. Start your [team management software](#)
2. Create a new task group, e.g. "Sales person position"
3. Create new tasks, that describe salesmen's responsibilities
4. Assign them to each employee concerned to this post



Make your goals clear and achievable

Use clear map to get to your dream

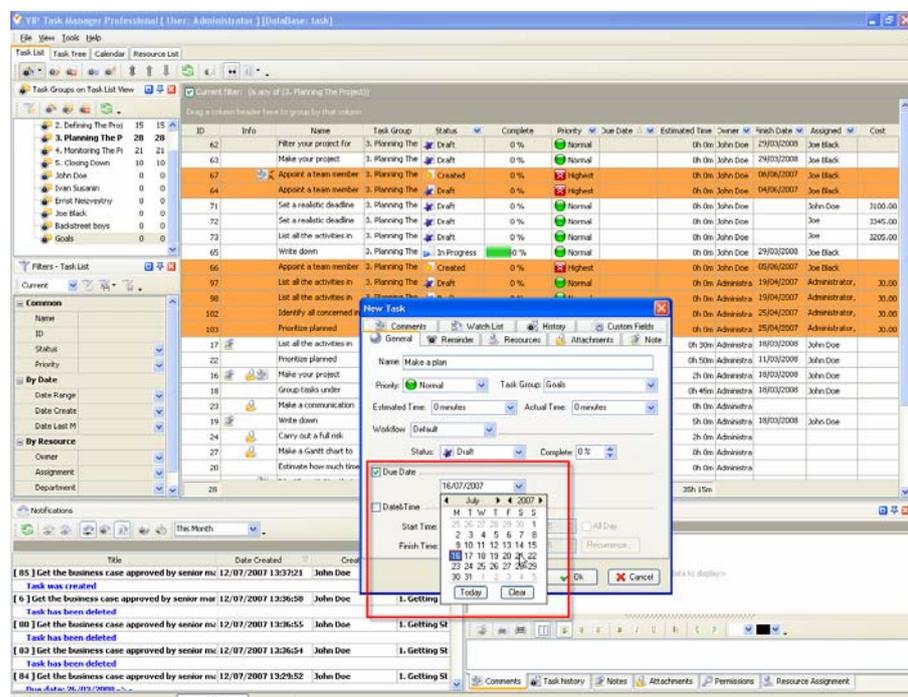
Goals are your road map on the way to successful career and as any map it should be clear and smart. When setting your goals make sure that they are achievable. If the goals take long time to be accomplished or they are hardly to come true, you will lose confidence in yourself and your self-appraisal will decline. Each goal that you set should be completed within a certain amount of time. If the goal is clear and specific it can help you focus your attention and efforts on its achievement and avoid feeling of frustration.

"Set achievable goals" To Do List

- Think about the goals that you want to achieve in your career
- Make your goals realistic and achievable, for example if you want to become a rich man think about the steps that can help you realize it
- Set deadlines for your goals to feel that they are achievable and not too long
- Use software to list your goals, set their deadlines and if required to enter their details

Action plan

1. Start your [task management software](#)
2. Create a new task group "Goals"
3. Create new tasks describing your goals and assign them to this task group
4. Set tasks due dates and enter more details about them into task notes section
5. Start doing the tasks



Don't try to achieve your life-time goal at once

Little steps towards the aim

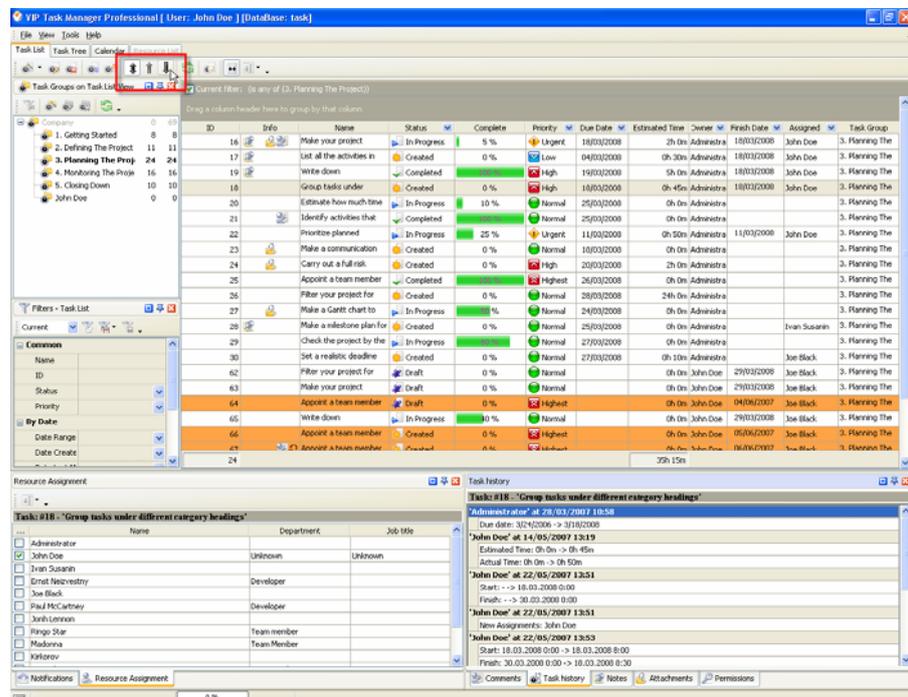
When setting your goals don't try to achieve your long-life dream at once. It is like a muscle that may be strained or torn if you try to bench press too much weight at once. Goal setting is the same. It's difficult to attain to significant results in a moment. Start from small goals and gradually build them up. If you limit yourself to one small goal that can be pursued from the beginning to the end in a matter of a few weeks or months then after completing it you will be able to increase the resistance by pursuing larger goals.

"Set your goals step by step" To Do List

- Think about your main goal and about the steps you need to do to achieve it
- Break down these steps into smaller and easier ones
- Set the order in which you would like to achieve your goals
- Start achieving easier goals and gradually go on to more difficult ones
- Use software to list your goals beginning from easier to more difficult ones

Action plan

1. Start your [task management software](#)
2. Create a new task group "Goals"
3. Create new tasks describing your goals and assign them to this task group
4. Set tasks order beginning from easier to more difficult goals
5. Start achieving your goals gradually



Modify your goals if the situation has changed

No plan survives first contact with the battlefield

When you set your goals it doesn't mean that they are already final. While achieving them, goals may give you valuable feedback and tell you whether you are making progress or not. In order to successfully advance in your business and career you shouldn't ignore reviewing goals you've already set and results you've already got. Learn your mistakes, obstacles that you face and overcome and make adjustments to your goals in accordance with your conclusions. Goals that you set are not written in stone and can evolve to become more and more fruitful. Changing or adapting your strategy under your current situation and circumstances may take your time but it will be of benefit in future.

"Change your goals" To Do List

- Analyze your current situation and circumstances and compare your needs at that moment with the goals you've set earlier
- If something goes not in the way you were expected change your goals under current conditions
- Use software to make changes in your goals

Action plan

1. Start your [task management software](#)
2. Open already existing task or create a new one
3. Revise your Task Group 'Goals' and make corresponding changes
4. Alternatively, change the goals of the task or enter new ones in the task notes section
5. Save changes of the task

The screenshot shows the VFP Task Manager Professional interface. The main window displays a task list with columns for ID, Name, Complete, Task Group, Status, Priority, Due Date, and Owner. A note is visible at the bottom right: "Goal: Focus on 20% of tasks which will give 80% of results!". The task list includes various tasks such as "Prioritize planned activities", "Make your project planning checklist", "Make sure the project fits company agenda", and "Specify responsibility of each project team".

Subtasks should be prioritized too

Some subtasks are less important than others

Complex tasks usually have a number of subtasks, which are defined while task setting. Some of these subtasks are more important and others are less significant for the result of this task. The successful and timely accomplishment depends on the prioritizing the subtasks by their importance. If you spend the whole time assigned to a task doing its less important points you risk to waste the time and not to get a required result. For example, if you spend more time playing with the design of marketing report than actually working on its content you will probably get well-designed report with lack of marketing in it. To avoid such situations you should have clear priorities and resist the temptation to accomplish less important but more pleasant points of the task.

"Prioritize the subtasks" To Do List

- When you have the task to do, think about the steps you should do to fulfil it
- Define which of these steps are more important to get required result and set lower priority to those that don't influence the task result
- Set the order in which subtasks should be done
- Use software to list the task and enter its subtasks in a proper order

Action plan

1. Start your [task management software](#)

The screenshot shows the VFP Task Manager Professional interface. The main window displays a task list with columns for ID, Name, Complete, Task Group, Status, Priority, Due Date, and Owner. A note is visible at the bottom right: "Task: #1 - Develop a business case for the project". The task list includes various subtasks such as "Develop a business case for...", "Make a standard business case template...", "Make sure the project fits...", "Start your Planner or Scheduler Software", "Filter tasks to display uncompleted task assigned for today", "Identify all concerned in the...", "Consult a finance expert", "Set the business case", "Write project definition", "Send project definition", "Define areas to be included in the...", "Describe what each person", and "Specify responsibility of each".

2. Create a new task
3. Enter tasks points in a proper order into task notes section
4. Start doing the task and follow the steps describing in task notes

Don't keep the details of tasks in your mind

Has your memory never let you down?

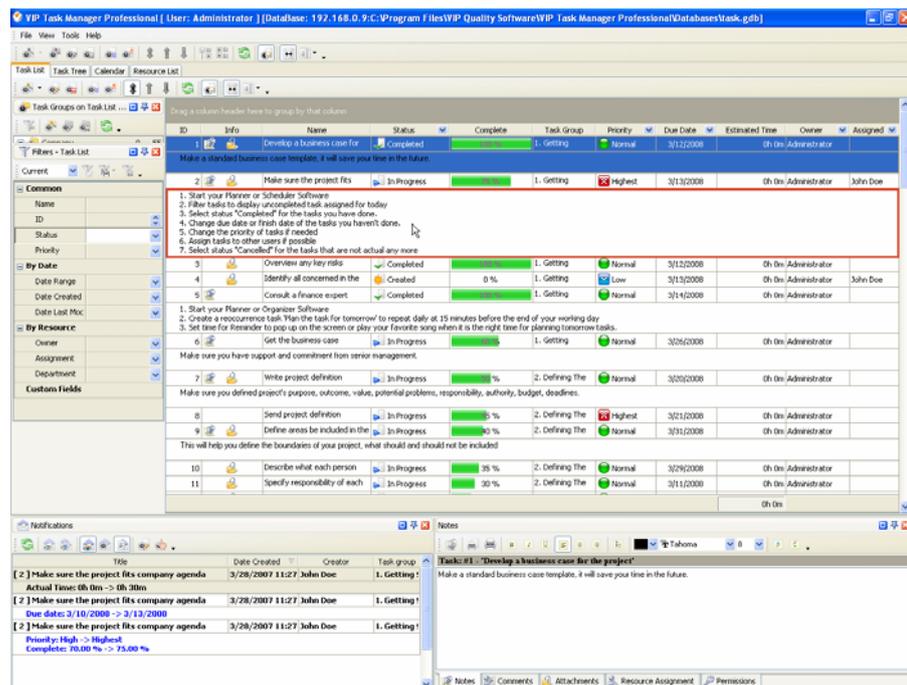
Almost all tasks may contain some additional information which is usually stored in mind. Let's say you have a task to write an advertising article in two weeks. There are lots of details you should remember in order to write it right – its subject, some thoughts or ideas you need to reveal, approximate plan, etc. When you rely on your memory to “remind” you of all details, you put a tremendous strain on it. The more things you need to remember, the more likely you will forget something important. If you write down what you keep in your head it will be easier for you to avoid distractions and concentrate your efforts on your current work. For this purpose you can use task management software.

Use software to free your memory

Making notes of everything that you keep in mind can relieve the pressure that you feel. Enter details related to your projects, tasks or meetings into task management software. For example, you can create a task “Write an advertising article” and briefly specify in task notes section all the phrases, benefits, figures or other information that you shouldn't forget about while writing the article. Now you can forget about the details of this task and remember them only when you actually need them.

Action plan

1. Start your [task management software](#)
2. Create a task, enter its title
3. Select Notes tab and enter the details of this task
4. Look through the task details to refresh them in your mind before you start doing it



Start setting a task from goal setting

Motivation matters

Goal setting will give you the motivation you need to get the results you want. With every goal you achieve your confidence and self-esteem grows and helps you in every next project you undertake, because if you don't achieve the goal you become frustrated or side-tracked along the way.

What's the goal?

Do you always know the goal of the task when you set it? Not an obscure feeling of why you want this task to be done, but rather a clear target that could be expressed in one sentence and successfully reached if this task is completed. The clearer you set the goal the more chances you get to set the task right and accomplish it in a timely and organized manner. If the task is standalone you can specify its goal as a Note to this task, or if the task belongs to a project it is better to set goals for the whole project.

Action plan

1. Start your [task management software](#)
2. Select a task on the list
3. In Notes panel enter the goal of the task
4. Click 'Apply' button or CTRL+S

The screenshot shows the YIP Task Manager Professional interface. The main window displays a task list with columns for ID, Info, Name, Complete, Task Group, Status, Priority, Start Date, Due Date, and Assignee. A task titled 'Prioritize planned activities' is selected. The 'Notes' panel on the right contains the text: 'Goal: Focus on 20% of tasks which will give 80% of results!'. The 'Apply' button is highlighted in the Notes panel.

Break the tasks down until it is possible

Setting end tasks

If the task you set is too big you or the person you delegate this task to can start procrastinating. No wonder. When the task is too general you can neither understand clearly what you should do exactly, nor estimate reasonable time for doing it. To escape procrastination you should break the task down to as many small tasks as you can.

Benefits

This is extremely important when you delegate the task. Your employee may not know some aspects of task or the preferred workflow for this task, while you know what should be done and in which order. It helps to avoid some unexpected results and save the time we usually spend on thinking what to do next at each stage of the task.

Action plan

1. Start your [task collaboration software](#)
2. Create a task
3. Go to 'Notes' tab

The screenshot shows the YIP Task Manager Professional interface. The main window displays a task list with columns for ID, Info, Name, Status, Complete, Task Group, Priority, Due Date, Estimated Time, Owner, and Assigned to. A task titled 'Develop a business case for...' is selected. The 'Notes' panel on the right contains the text: 'Task: R1 - Develop a business case for the project'. The 'Apply' button is highlighted in the Notes panel.

4. Enter all the steps for this task
5. Click OK.



Planning Tasks

How to plan tasks to do the right tasks in the right order and priority

How to manage your long and short term tasks

Planning should be flexible

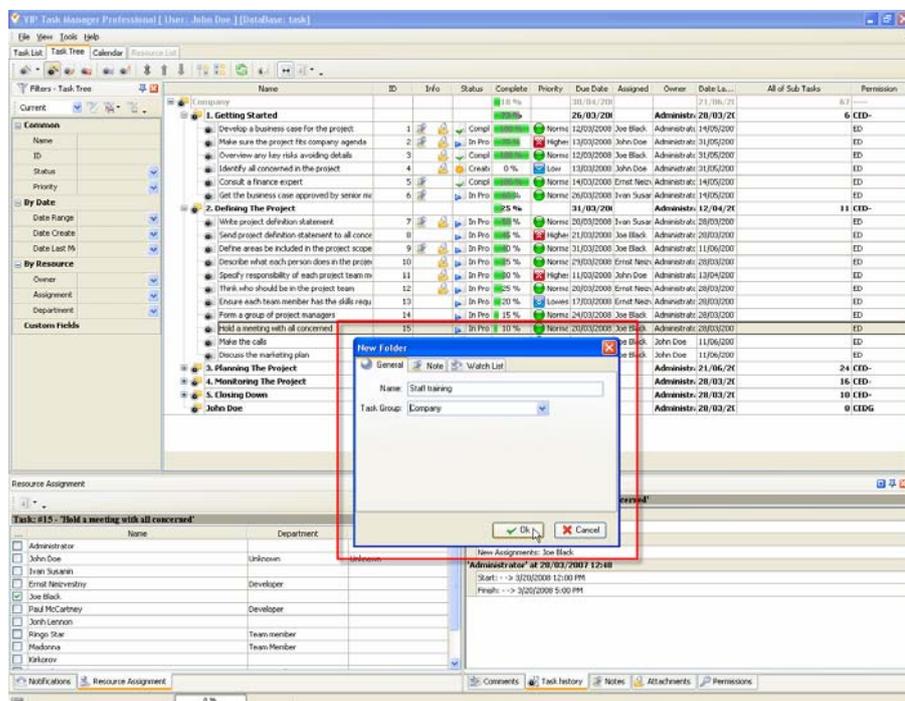
While planning your work you should find the golden mean: don't try to schedule the future too minutely when you create your weekly or monthly plans and at the same time don't let your plans run themselves. You should develop flexible system of moving the tasks from long-term schedule to a short-term one. For example, all long-term tasks may be assigned to task group "Year", short-term tasks may be kept in "Week" task group. By regular tracking of both task groups you will be able to transfer the tasks from one category to other in time.

"Flexible planning" To Do List

- Place all your long-term tasks into one task group "Year", short-term tasks assign to "Week" task group.
- When you create your daily plan, e.g. in the evening of the previous day, track "Week" task group and transfer the most actual tasks to your daily schedule.
- Once a week track "Year" task group and move the most significant tasks to "Week" category
- Use software to keep your tasks in the different categories and track these categories

Action plan

1. Start your [team management software](#)
2. Create two task groups "Week" and "Year" and assign your tasks to appropriate category
3. Sort the tasks of "Week" task group every day and select the most important or urgent of them to accomplish this or next day
4. Once a week sort the tasks of "Year" task group and select the tasks that should be accomplished in the nearest future



Make your daily plan in the morning after the tasks are completely defined

The advantages of morning planning

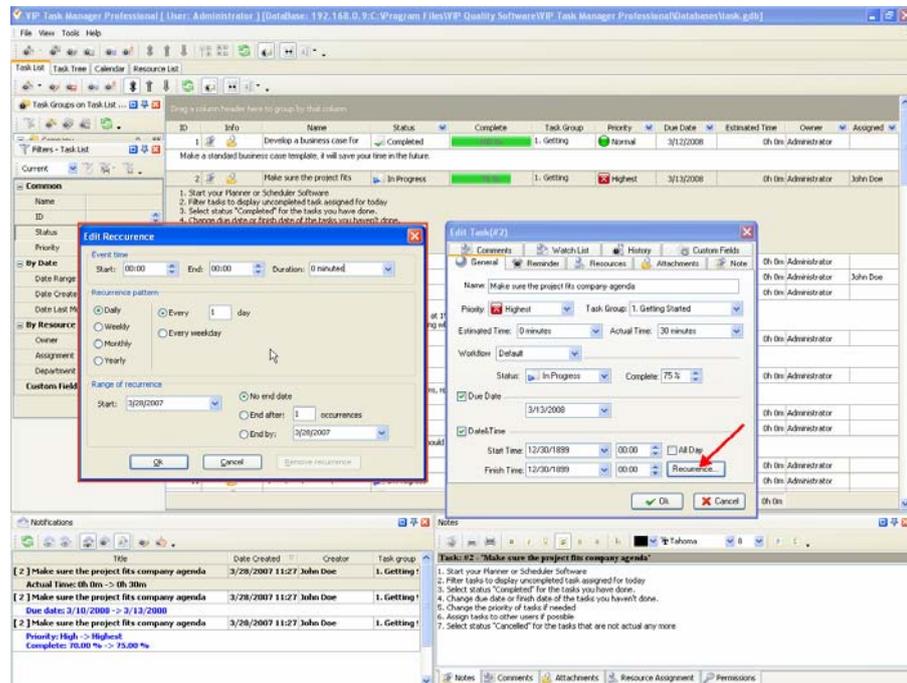
There are companies that have stable and predictable activity, but there are also such businesses where events must be coordinated and confirmed before making final plan. For the first type of the companies it's very convenient to plan the tasks in the evening of the previous day. But if you work in a company that is not so stable, we recommend you to plan the tasks in the morning before you start working on them. You may need to determine some additional details or make some confirmatory calls in the morning and as a result of them you have to change definite points of your plan. That's why it's more reasonable to save your time by planning once – in the morning.

"Morning planning" To Do List

- Each morning when you arrive to the office don't forget that you need a plan
- Make required meeting confirmations or obtain all additional information that you need to make your final daily plan
- After that start planning your day
- Use software to set recurrence task to make daily plan in the mornings

Action plan

1. Start your [task management software](#)
2. Create a recurrence task "Plan the tasks for today"
3. Assign it to repeat daily at 10 minutes after your working day starts
4. Set reminder to pop-up at the screen to notify you about this task



Regularly re-evaluate your company organization system

Any system may need changes

From time to time each company organization system should be re-evaluated. It's possible that the organization system that was relevant sometime ago, needs to be updated and modified now. In order to timely catch the moment when your company organization should be changed because of new events, regulations or information, revise your system on a regular basis. In that case you will be able to develop new approach for your company work or modify existing one in time.

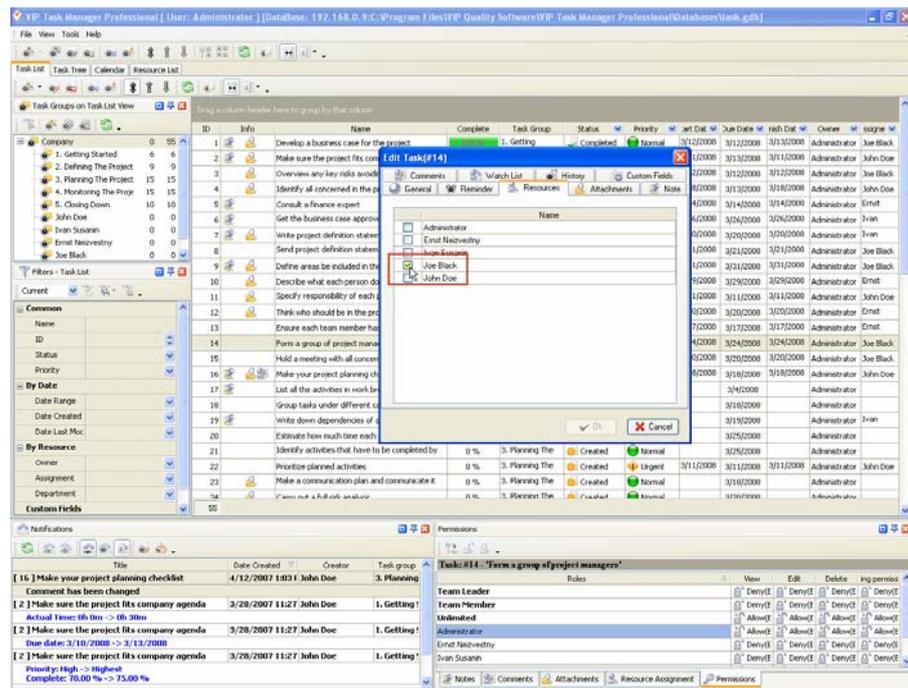
"Re-evaluate your company system" To Do List

- Decide how often you need to revise the effectiveness of your current organization system

- While re-evaluating your working approaches consider all important factors and develop the system that will be advantageous for company future success
- Use software to plan regular meetings devoted to system consideration and keep your colleagues aware of them

Action plan

1. Start your [team management software](#)
2. Create a new task "System re-evaluation"
3. Assign your colleagues to this task
4. Enter any required information into task notes section



How to determine the task that has higher priority

Learn to prioritize

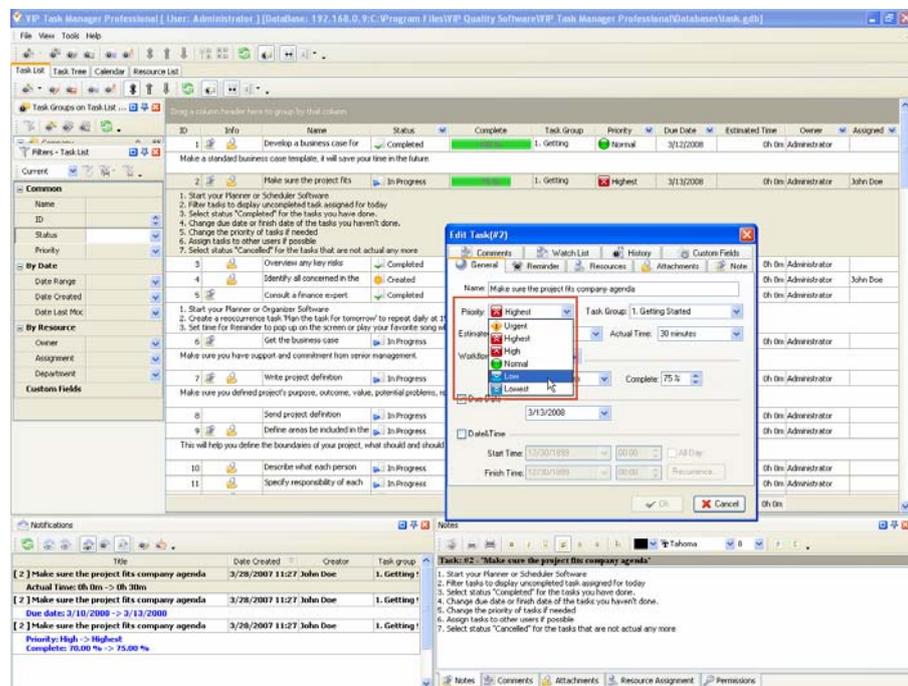
It's extremely important to prioritize the tasks in your To Do List before start doing them. But it is not always easy to recognize the most important tasks and determine what priority should be assigned to each of them. If you often have troubles in setting priority to the task, make it a rule to ask yourself "Which of two tasks should I choose, if I can accomplish only one of them?" Your choice will determine the importance and priority of the task. After you consider the whole to do list, you can proceed to make your daily, weekly and other schedules.

"Set priority to each task" To Do List

- Before you start making your schedule and accomplishing tasks, you should set priority to each task
- Track your To Do List and compare all tasks by their importance
- To those of them, that can't be missed and should be done first of all, set higher priority
- Use software to set priority to each task in your To Do List

Action plan

1. Start your [task management software](#)
2. Track your task list and determine the value of each task in comparison with others



3. In accordance with your conclusions, set priority to each task
4. Before further work with your task list sort the tasks by priority

Develop an agenda of the meeting and keep the participants aware of its plan

Disorganized meeting can be a time waster

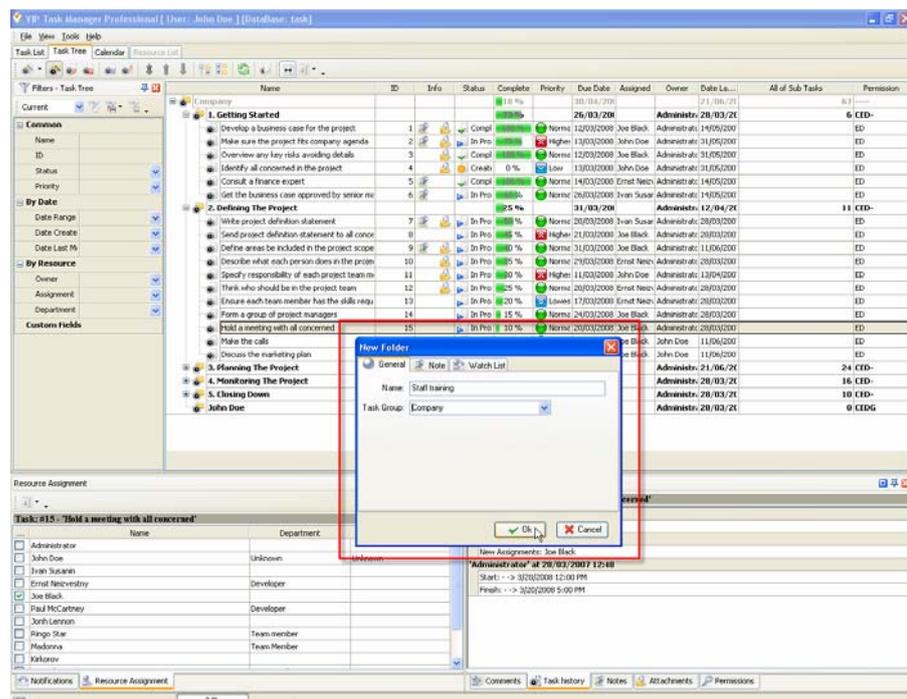
To prevent the meetings from becoming a time wasters, they should be properly organized. There must be a clear meeting agenda, which items should be prioritized and have definite time limits. All participants of the future meeting must be informed about the aims, main points and the time that is allotted to them in advance. Otherwise, the meeting can turn into an utter chaos, nothing will be solved and presentations of the participants may drag on and overstep the limits of meeting agenda. All of these can be avoided by making a clear plan of the meeting with exact deadlines for each speech and discussion and by sticking to this plan during the meeting.

"Plan the meeting" To Do List

- Develop the plan of the future meeting beforehand, set its destination and goals
- Prioritize the points of the meeting and set exact time limits for each of them
- Prepare the presentation and speech for the meeting
- Inform the participants of the meeting about its date and content
- Use software to make an agenda of the meeting, prioritize its steps, set their deadlines, keep the staff aware of the meeting and attach any required files

Action plan

1. Start your or [Team Management software](#)
2. Create a new task group "Meeting plan"
3. Create new tasks that describe the steps of the meeting or the speeches of each participant
4. Assign these tasks to task group "Meeting plan" and set priority and time limit to each task
5. Assign the tasks to particular employees to inform them about their role in the meeting
6. Attach any required additional file, such as your speech or presentation, to the tasks



Feel difference between urgent and important tasks

"Tyranny of the urgent"

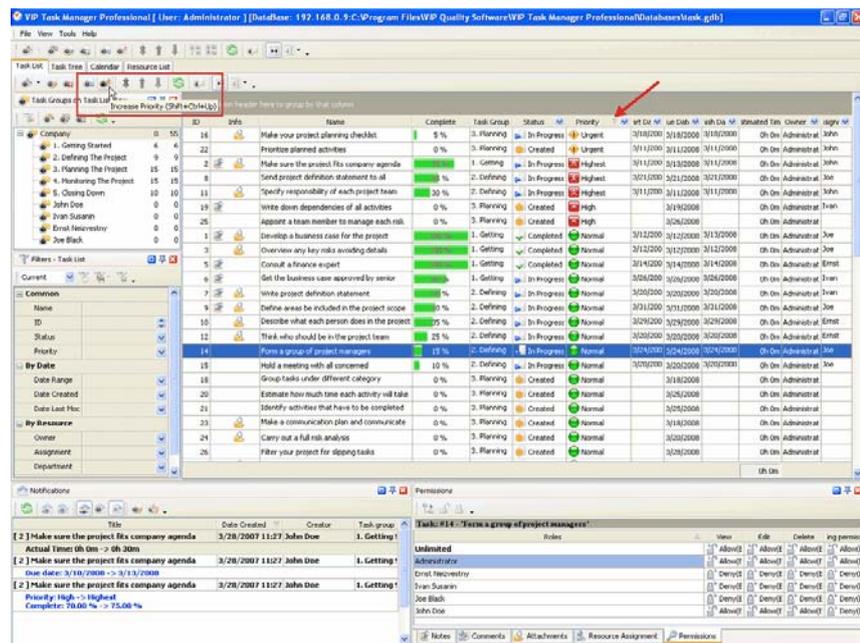
It is very important to realize the difference between tasks and projects importance and urgency. Urgent task doesn't mean that it is important, it may be urgent at this particular moment but later it won't have any value. Having too many urgent tasks in our to-do list, we become too busy with them and sacrifice important projects that have long-term goals and advantages. As a result we feel ourselves stressed and have poor quality of work. In order to avoid such situations, you should assign more time for the tasks that are important but not as urgent. Control the time that you spend on urgent tasks and try to devote more time to important and long-term projects.

"Urgent and important" To Do List

- Track your uncompleted tasks from time to time
- In addition to the tasks that are urgent, pay attention to those that are very important even if not urgent
- Plan your time in such way that you accomplish also some important tasks, not only urgent
- Use software to track the tasks, sort them by priority and change the priority if required

Action plan

1. Start your [task management software](#)
2. Sort your task list by priority
3. If it is possible, put off some urgent task and pay attention to the most important ones
4. Change their priority and start doing them



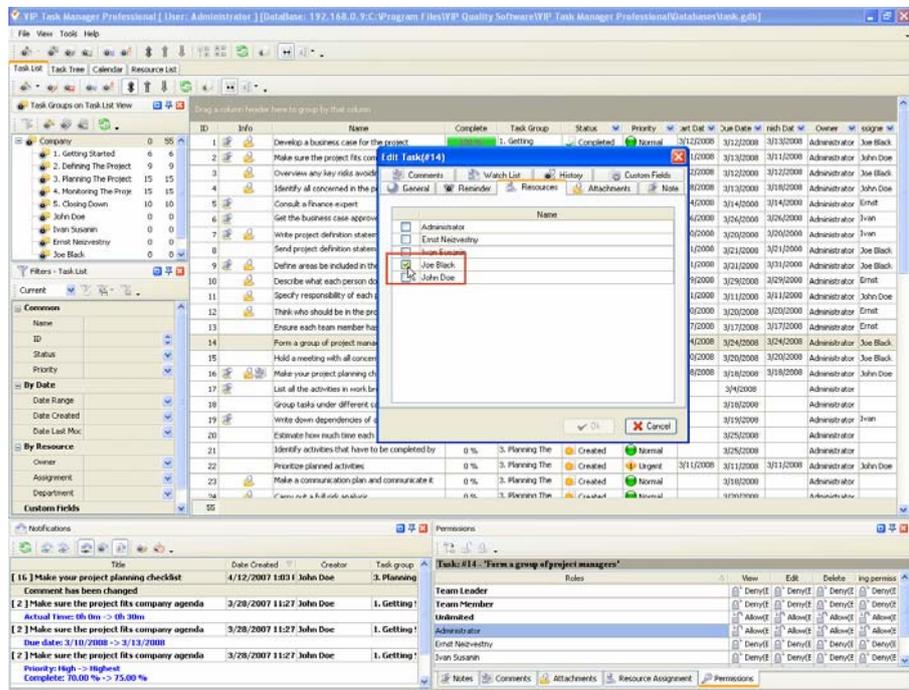
Plan the time to learn innovations in team work before using them

Spend some time for learning

Any innovations in your team work, such as new technologies, new approaches, new information and so on, require time to learn and get used to them. If employee doesn't have enough time to adjust to new work conditions, he/she feels stress and disappointment. All people need some time to adapt to any changes. If your team member realizes that there is enough time at his/her disposal to have familiarized with new items of the work, he/she will avoid stress and anxiety and be able to perfectly cope with new work requirements.

"Learning new work requirements" To Do List

- When you have some changes in the work of your team, don't require your staff to be quick to grasp everything
- Plan some extra time for your employees to learn changes before they start using them
- Use software to plan extra time for your employees to learn new requirements



Action plan

1. Start your [team management software](#)
2. Create a new task "Learn new changes"
3. Assign this task to employees who are connected with these changes
4. Enter required instructions into task notes section

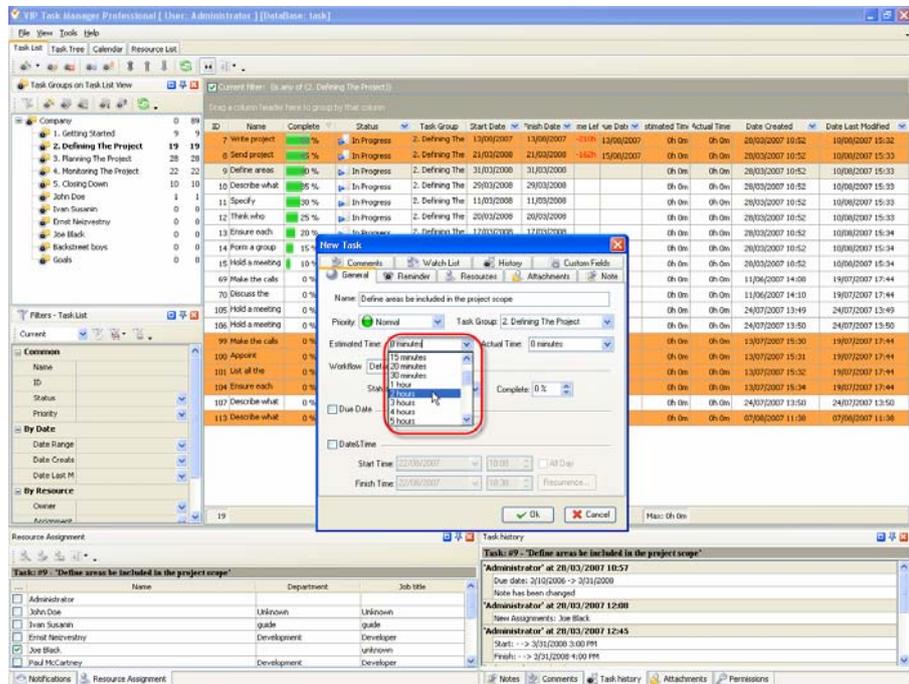
Plan the project together with the employees who will be accomplishing it

First discuss and then plan

When you have an idea of new project and a group of employees who will accomplish it, it makes sense to discuss project's details with them before planning its stages and tasks. These people better know what and how should be done, how much time it will take, because they have already faced with similar tasks and problems that may arise during their accomplishment. And if you plan this project by yourself, you may miss or not take into account some important details. So, don't rely only on yourself and the result will be more productive and successful.

"Plan together with employees" To Do List

- When a new project appears, think about the employees who will be able to accomplish it
- Hold a meeting where the tasks and subtasks of this project, their possible problems and terms of accomplishment will be discussed
- With the help of your staff plan the tasks and their details
- Use software to create a task list, enter tasks' details and estimated time



Action plan

1. Start your [team management software](#)
2. Discuss the project with your staff and then create the tasks that the project consists of

3. Enter all required details into task notes section
4. Set tasks' estimated time

Plan corporative parties to keep your employees motivated and productive

Parties can be useful

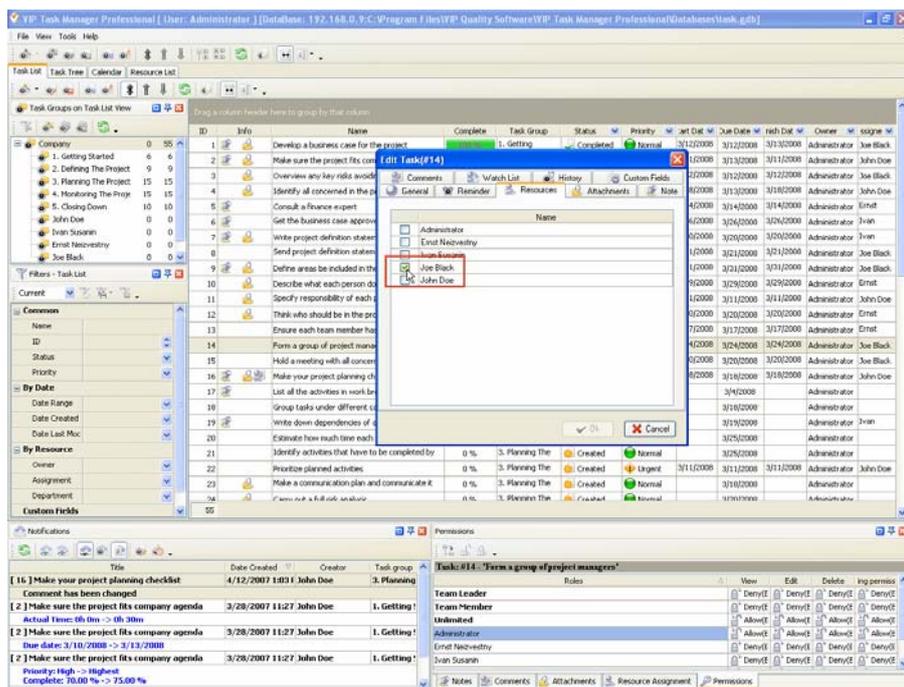
One of the ways to keep your staff motivated and increase their productivity is to arrange corporative parties. It is not only a possibility for everyone to relax and get rid of stress and overwhelming, but a chance to share others people' experience and develop new ideas and solutions. In a free and easy atmosphere sudden great ideas of solving some problems or maybe further work approach may take into somebody's head. Corporative events can give an opportunity for everyone to tell the stories of their personal success, discuss their common success, feel themselves as an integral part of the company and thus become more productive and motivated.

"Corporative events" To Do List

- From time to time plan corporative parties or other corporative events for your staff
- Date these parties for some nearest holidays or company events
- In accordance with the ground of the party, think over its style and content
- Use software to plan corporative party for your staff and keep them aware of it and its subject

Action plan

1. Start your [team management software](#)
2. Plan your staff party and think about its subject
3. Create a new task "Corporative party" and assign it to employees who will take part in this party
4. Enter party subject and content into task notes section



Employee is not a chair which is easy to replace

See the employee for what he can become, not what they are now

One of the widespread problems any company faces sooner or later is lack of people that are capable to replace talented employees. It's easy to replace a chair or a computer but it's often too hard to replace a qualified team member. And the problem is not in employees. It is a manager who should estimate his staff's virtues and do everything possible to help them develop their talents. What you need is a plan of your staff training. This plan might include different actions varying from delegating special tasks to attending thematic seminars and so on. It

takes time but the result is worthy of it. If you pave the way you will be able to replace the skilled employee by worthy man when the time comes.

"Plan the staff training" To Do List

- Assess the strengths and weaknesses of your employees
- Develop different training approaches to help them improve their capabilities, encourage them to become more competent
- Plan your company's training activities in order for everybody to be well informed about future events
- Use software to share the training plans with your team

The screenshot shows the Microsoft Project interface. The main window displays a Gantt chart and a task list. The task list includes tasks such as '1. Getting Started', '2. Defining The Project', '3. Planning The Project', and '4. Monitoring The Project'. A 'New Task' dialog box is open, showing the 'Name' field set to 'Staff training' and the 'Task Group' set to 'Company'. The dialog box also has fields for 'General', 'Note', and 'Watch List'.

Action plan

1. Start your [team management software](#)
2. Create new task group "Staff Training"
3. Create a new task, e.g. "Attend the seminar" or "Discuss the right and wrong points of work accomplishment", etc, and assign it to employee
4. Enter all required details into task notes section



Over plan your working day

Tasks tend to take the time allocated for them

The fewer things we need to do the more time we spend on them. We tend to procrastinate before start doing the task, because we realize that have plenty of time to accomplish it. Multiplying all similar situations you will discover that lots of useful time is lost forever. The decision of this problem is in assigning more tasks to each day. Having a lot to do creates a healthy sense of pressure on us. If you give yourself one thing to do during the day, it will likely take all day to complete it, if you have two things to do you will likely accomplish both and if you give yourself twelve things to do during the day, you may not get all twelve done but may complete seven or eight of them and have less interruptions during their accomplishment.

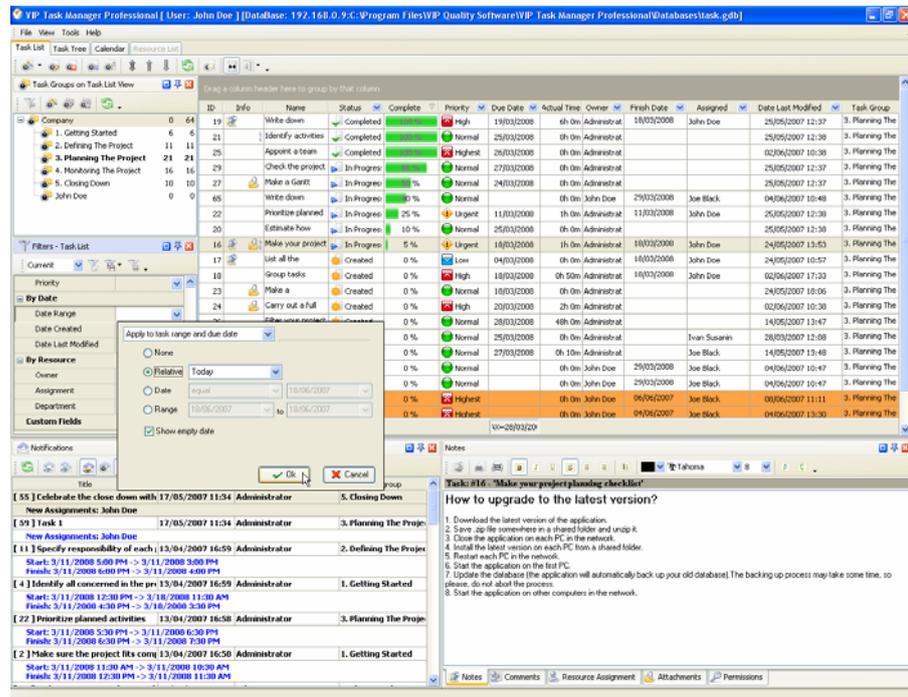
"Over plan your day" To Do List

- Impartially estimate the time you need for the tasks that were assigned on 'today' without procrastinations during their accomplishment
- Estimate the time you will have after assigned tasks are completed
- Assign some more tasks on this day to have the feeling of active working flow

- Use software to track the tasks assigned on today and to assign new tasks

Action plan

1. Start your [Task Management](#) or [Organizer software](#)
2. Apply filter to display the tasks assigned on 'today'
3. Estimate the time you need to accomplish them
4. Assign some more tasks on this day and start doing the tasks



Plan your tasks even if it is obvious for you how to get it done

Lack of planning results in long procrastinations while doing the task

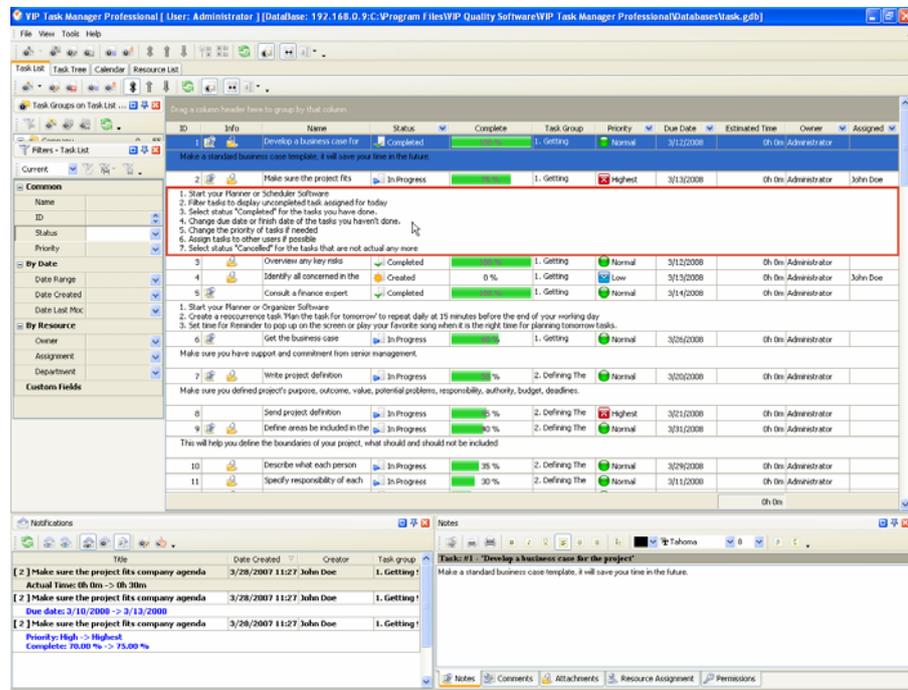
There is nothing as sensible as a plan before you are going to do something. It's a common truth but how often we forget about it. The result is that very often we don't know where and what to start from. We meet unexpected and unplanned problems that we are not ready to solve in order to go ahead to our goal and that may result in long procrastinations. So, isn't it better to spend some time before you start doing something and thereby save the time and energy in future?! As while making a plan you bring the order in your thoughts and future actions, work over the solutions of possible problems and find the ways to accomplish your task perfectly.

"Planning Tasks" to do list

- Analyze the task you have to do
- Think of possible troubles or obstacles you may face while doing the task
- Work out clear steps you should follow to have the task done
- Specify these steps in the order they should be done and estimate the time you need for each
- Use organizer or task management software to plan your tasks

Action plan

1. Start your [Organizer](#) or [Team Management software](#)
2. Create the tasks, give them the names of your plan's points
3. Set start and finish date of each task



4. Add required notes to each task in order to describe everything you need in details
5. Start doing the task

Plan your phone calls to avoid wasting much time

Two-edged sword

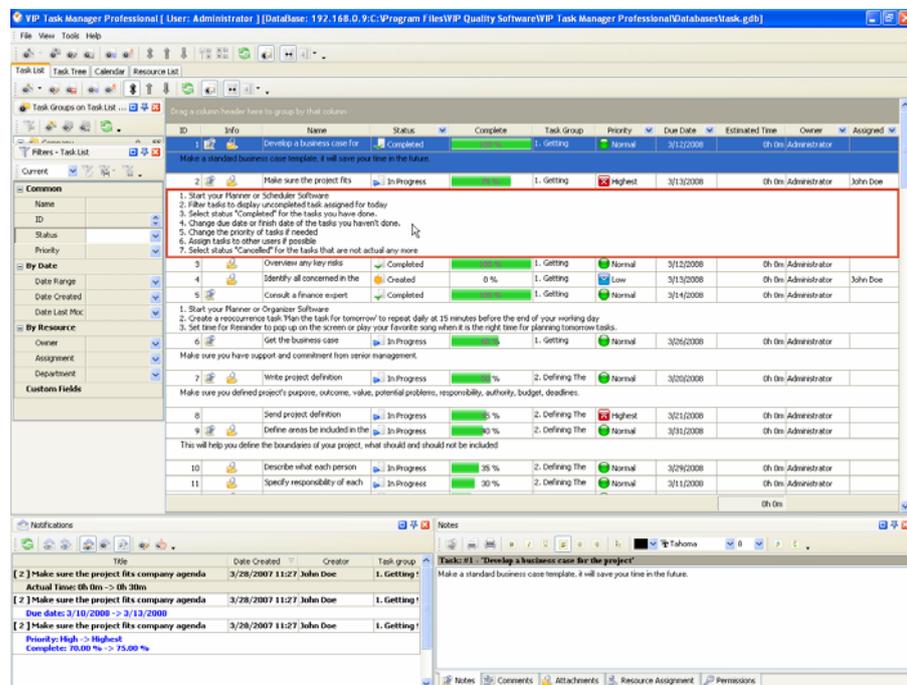
Telephone is one of the greatest inventions but it is a two-edged sword. When used correctly, it can be a great time saver, but very often it becomes a time killer. Phone calls may lead to procrastination in many ways. When you are interrupted by a phone call it is difficult to concentrate on what you were doing before it. Phone call may force you do another task forgetting the one you did before. Also phone calls may take some time if you don't plan it and this is the case where software can help.

Plan your phone calls to avoid wasting much time

First of all think of the goal you want to achieve by the phone call to that person. What is the estimated result of the phone call? Meeting. Purchase. Agreement. State it clear. Are there any details you should mention during the call? What are the most important questions you should ask and get answers? All these details can support the main task to call a person, save your time and achieve better results.

Action plan

1. Start your [Organizer software](#)
2. Create task with the name of person you have to call to, assign it to "Calls" category
3. Put down the goal and detail of your conversation into Note section
4. Set reminder for indicated time for both tasks



The screenshot shows the VP Task Manager Professional software interface. The main window displays a task list with columns for ID, Name, Status, Complete, Task Group, Priority, Due Date, Estimated Time, Owner, and Assigned. A task titled "Make a standardized business case template, it will save you time in the future" is highlighted in red. Below the task list, there is a "Notes" section for the selected task, containing a list of steps: 1. Start your Planner or Scheduler Software, 2. Filter tasks to display uncompleted task assigned for today, 3. Select status "Completed" for the tasks you have done, 4. Change due date or finish date of the tasks you haven't done, 5. Change the priority of tasks if needed, 6. Assign tasks to other users if possible, 7. Select status "Cancelled" for the tasks that are not actual any more.

Prioritizing is the key to getting things done

No priorities, no effectiveness

One of my friends is constantly telling me that she has no time, she doesn't manage to do all the things she has planned and as a result she almost always stays at work late after the working day is over. I guessed that the problem was in disorganization, however, I understood the exact reason when I arrived at her country house earlier than it was appointed. We were going to celebrate her birthday so she was cleaning the house. She had only one hour before the guests arrival, and guess where she started to tidy up first – in the drawing room, where guests will spend the evening? No. In the room the guests will never see!

Prioritize, or lose time

Prioritizing, as any other task management tool, is well-known but rare-used. There is often a temptation to do the tasks we want or like to do, yet we should do the important or urgent tasks first. You can set priorities in the evening when you plan things to do for tomorrow or in the morning when you look at your task list and choose the tasks for the start. Otherwise, you will never achieve your goal: you will keep on doing trifles never getting the result.

Action plan

1. Start your [Task Management](#) or [Organizer software](#)
2. Filter tasks to display uncompleted task assigned for today
3. Select a task and click on 'Increase Priority' or 'Decrease Priority' button
4. Click on 'Priority' column to sort tasks by priority

At the end of the day plan tasks for tomorrow

What should you do today?

If you come to work in the morning and think "what should I do today?", this tip is exactly for you. It may take you up to 30 minutes to figure out what you need to do first of all and plan tasks for the whole day. Also, some people may feel kind of anxious when they go to work without any idea of what they can expect from this day.

Save at least 15 minutes a day

You can save at least 15 minutes if you don't put it off till tomorrow. In the evening when your focus is still on the job, it may take 10 - 15 minutes to organize your work for the next day. You remember what tasks are not completed today and what priority they should be given for tomorrow. You will be amazed at how much more effective you can be by using this simple tip.

Action plan

1. Start your [Planner](#) or [Organizer software](#)
2. Create a recurrence task 'Plan the task for tomorrow' to repeat daily at 15 minutes before the end of your working day
3. Set time for Reminder to pop up on the screen or play your favorite song when it is the right time for planning tomorrow tasks.



Sort tasks before planning tasks for tomorrow

Don't check off completed tasks at once

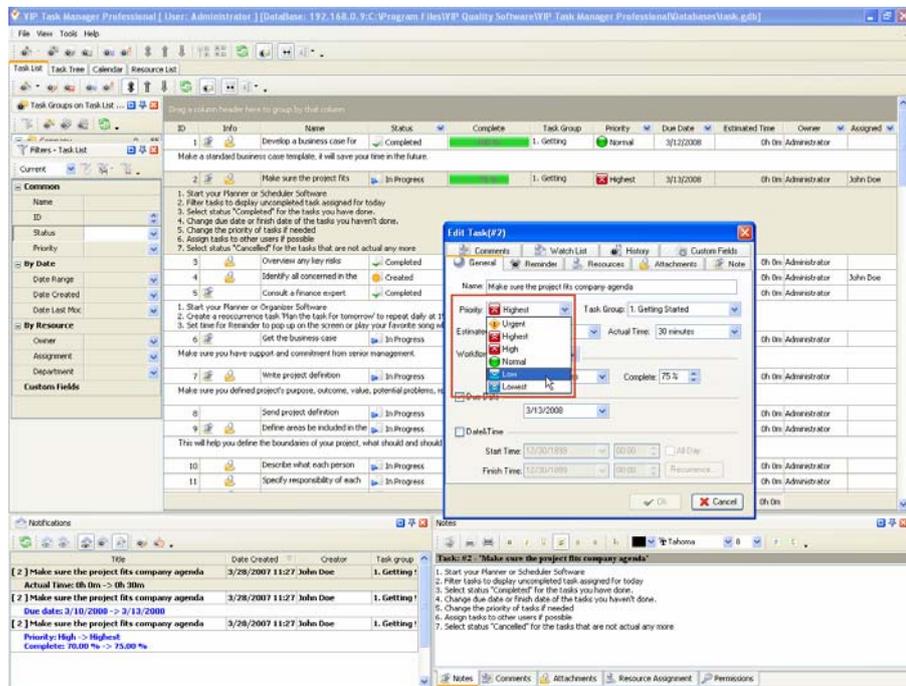
Before planning tasks for tomorrow take a look at all the tasks assigned for today. For this reason, it is better not to check the tasks immediately after you completed them. If you delay this procedure till the evening, you will finish your work for today in a very good mood as it feels so good when you check off completed tasks.

Sort the uncompleted tasks

Besides checking off completed tasks, sort the tasks you didn't manage to complete. Some of them should be rescheduled for tomorrow with a higher priority. Some of them can be delegated to your department staff. Some of them may be cancelled because they might be no need to do them any more.

Action plan

1. Start your [Planner or Scheduler Software](#)
2. Filter tasks to display uncompleted task assigned for today
3. Select status "Completed" for the tasks you have done.
4. Change due date or finish date of the tasks you haven't done.
5. Change the priority of tasks if needed
6. Assign tasks to other users if possible
7. Select status "Cancelled" for the tasks that are not actual any more.



Scheduling Tasks

How to schedule tasks to allocate time effectively and always meet the deadlines



Schedule a meeting with a task to yourself and you won't miss it

A task is like a meeting

Imagine that you can't start working on some high-priority task because there is always something that hampers you. Let us suggest a simple but useful tip to you. When you need to meet with a certain person, you will certainly be able to protect this time from other tasks. So, try to schedule the meeting with yourself and treat to the time of this meeting in the same way as you appreciate other meetings – you can't put off or miss it. Now you can be assure that the task will be started exactly in time.

"Meeting with a task" To Do List

- If you have a task that must be necessary done but you put it off for a long time, change your approach to it
- Imagine that you are assigned to attend the meeting and you can't miss it or be late
- Use software to schedule the task

Action plan

1. Start your [organizer software](#)
2. Create a new task
3. Assign it to the most appropriate time
4. Start doing the task

The screenshot shows the Microsoft Project software interface. The main window displays a Gantt chart with a task named "Set a realistic deadline for the project" scheduled for June 10, 2007. The task is assigned to "John Doe" and "Joe Black". The interface includes a calendar, task list, and resource assignment table.

| Name | Department | Job Title |
|----------------|-------------|-------------|
| John Doe | Unknown | Unknown |
| Small Mcweeney | Developer | Developer |
| Joe Black | Developer | Developer |
| Paul McCartney | Developer | Developer |
| Jonh Lennon | Team member | Team member |
| Ringo Star | Team member | Team member |

How to involve into the project rationally

Two birds with one stone

When we start a big project, we need some time to draw into it. To relief this process and to use this time rationally, it's recommended to accomplish some small tasks that are related to the project in one way or another. While working on the task that is similar to the future project, you make up your mind to the right direction and unconsciously prepare yourself to proceed to the project. So, you kill two birds with one stone – accomplish one more task and get ready to start a serious work.

"Proceeding to a big project" To Do List

- Before you start a big and serious project, think what tasks you should accomplish to get everything ready for this important work
- Accomplish these tasks before you proceed to the project and it will be easier for you to redirect your attention to its accomplishment
- Use software to schedule appropriate tasks to the proper time before starting a new project

The screenshot shows the Microsoft Project software interface. The main window displays a Gantt chart with a task named "Set a realistic deadline for the project" scheduled for June 10, 2007. The task is assigned to "John Doe" and "Joe Black". The interface includes a calendar, task list, and resource assignment table.

| Name | Department | Job Title |
|----------------|-------------|-------------|
| John Doe | Unknown | Unknown |
| Small Mcweeney | Developer | Developer |
| Joe Black | Developer | Developer |
| Paul McCartney | Developer | Developer |
| Jonh Lennon | Team member | Team member |
| Ringo Star | Team member | Team member |

Action plan

1. Start your [task management software](#)
2. Create a new task
3. Schedule this task to the time before you plan to proceed to a new project
4. Start doing the task and then switch your attention to the project

Schedule special time for documentation process

Don't let the paper pile grow

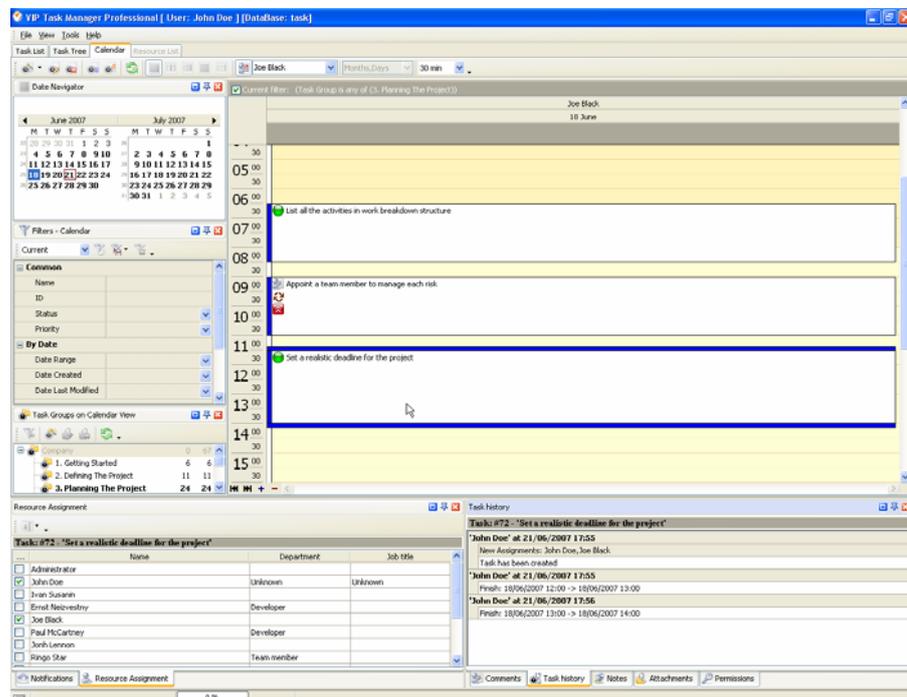
You frequently find out that your desk is covered with the piles of papers. You can take each of them into your hands several times during the day, but the paper still stays at its previous place. What are the reasons of your disorder? They may be various, such as lack of scheduled time for documentation process or just lack of organization. In both cases the best decision of your problem is to schedule exact hours in your timetable for paper handling. So, you will get rid of endless paper piles on your desk and accustom yourself to be disciplined and productive.

"Paper handling" To Do List

- If you are tired of endless paper queues on your desk, think when it is the best time in your schedule that you can devote to sorting the documentation
- Schedule paper handling to this time and keep to your plan
- Use software to schedule the time for work with the papers

Action plan

1. Start your [organizer software](#)
2. Create a new task 'Paper handling'
3. Schedule this task to the most appropriate time
4. Keep to your schedule



The screenshot displays the Microsoft Project interface. The main window shows a Gantt chart for a task named 'Set a realistic deadline for the project' (Task ID: #72). The task is scheduled from 10:00 AM to 11:00 AM on June 18, 2007. The task list on the right shows the task details, including the resource assignment to 'John Doe' and 'Joe Black'. The resource assignment table at the bottom shows the following data:

| Resource | Name | Department | Job title |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------|-------------|-----------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Administrator | | |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | John Doe | Unknown | Unknown |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Ivan Susanin | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Ernst Reizendry | Developer | |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Joe Black | Developer | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Josh Lennon | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Ringo Star | Team member | |

What can be done to make up employees' mind to the work

How to proceed to work faster

Many people need some time to make up their mind to start working day. It's normally until it doesn't take too much time. If your employees spend the whole morning discussing their previous day, checking e-mails or something else, you should try to eliminate such procrastinations. For example, make it a rule to hold the meetings each morning and discuss what was done, what should be done, what problems were faced, etc. In such a case, the employee has to remember the previous working day and think over the tasks that should be done this day, so, he or she automatically draws into the work.

"Morning meeting" To Do List

- Assign short meeting to the morning of each day
- Define the questions that should be discussed during these meetings, for example, what tasks were done during the previous day and what problems each employee had during their accomplishment, what he or she is going to do this day, etc
- Inform your team members about the meetings and their subjects
- Use software to create a task 'Meeting', assign it to required employees and inform them about its subject

Action plan

1. Start your [team management software](#)
2. Create a new task 'Morning meeting'
3. Schedule it to appropriate time in the morning
4. Assign required employees to attend the meeting
5. Enter meeting subject into task notes section

The screenshot displays the VIP Task Manager Professional interface. The main window shows a calendar view for June and July 2007. A task titled 'Set a realistic deadline for the project' is highlighted in blue on the calendar. The task details pane on the right shows the task name, start date (21/06/2007 12:55), and notes. The resource assignment table at the bottom lists team members and their roles.

| Task: #72 - "Set a realistic deadline for the project" | Name | Department | Job title |
|--|-----------------|-------------|-----------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Administrator | | |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | John Doe | Unknown | Unknown |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Ivan Susann | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Ernst Nezevstry | Developer | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Paul McCartney | Developer | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Jonh Lennon | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Ringo Star | Team member | |

Control accomplished tasks in advance before their due date

You should have enough time for task control

If you are going to control the task that you delegate to the employee, do it beforehand and not at the last moment. First of all it's useful because you will stimulate the team member to accomplish the task before its due date, and secondly you will have enough time to check the task carefully and return it back if there are some mistakes or imperfections. So, by planning task control some time before its due date, you will help you and your team member to accomplish it successfully and in time.

"Timely task control" To Do List

- While delegating a task to your employee, try to plan the time when you can control it

- Reserve enough time before task due date to carefully control the task and correct the mistakes if it's necessary
- Use software to plan the time for task control

Action plan

1. Start your [organizer software](#)
2. Create a new task, e.g. "Control Joe's task"
3. Schedule this task to a proper time before its due date
4. Continue doing your tasks

The screenshot shows the Microsoft Project interface. The main window displays a Gantt chart for a project. A task named "Set a realistic deadline for the project" is highlighted in blue, indicating it is selected. This task is scheduled for June 10, 2007, from 06:00 to 11:00. Below the Gantt chart, the "Task List" pane shows the task details, including its name, ID, status, and priority. The "Resource Assignment" pane at the bottom shows that the task is assigned to John Doe, with a 9% resource usage.

Plan your working day to achieve success in career

How to plan your day properly

When you plan your working day you should divide your tasks into three groups: the tasks connected with the exact time, the tasks without concrete moment of the time when they should be accomplished and the tasks that don't have exact time to be done but require much time to be completed. As the tasks of the first type have exact time and can't be accomplished next day or in two hours, first of all you should put them into your schedule. Then estimate the time that is required for each task of the third group and find these intervals in your timetable. The time between already assigned tasks can be filled by the tasks of the second type according to their priority.

"Planning of the day" To Do List

- Pick out the tasks that have exact time when they must be accomplished, for example "Attend the presentation"
- Schedule your time-consuming tasks to appropriate time in your agenda
- Allocate the rest of the time between other tasks in accordance with their importance
- Use software to create the tasks and assign them to the appropriate time

Action plan

1. Start your [organizer software](#)

This screenshot is identical to the one above, showing the Microsoft Project interface with the Gantt chart and task list. The task "Set a realistic deadline for the project" is highlighted in blue, and the resource assignment pane shows it is assigned to John Doe.

2. Create the tasks with the exact time for accomplishment and assign them to this time
3. Create your time-consuming tasks and assign them to the appropriate time
4. Create the rest of the tasks and schedule them to free time
5. Start doing the tasks

Don't make the client wait for the meeting

It's so easy to dissatisfy the client

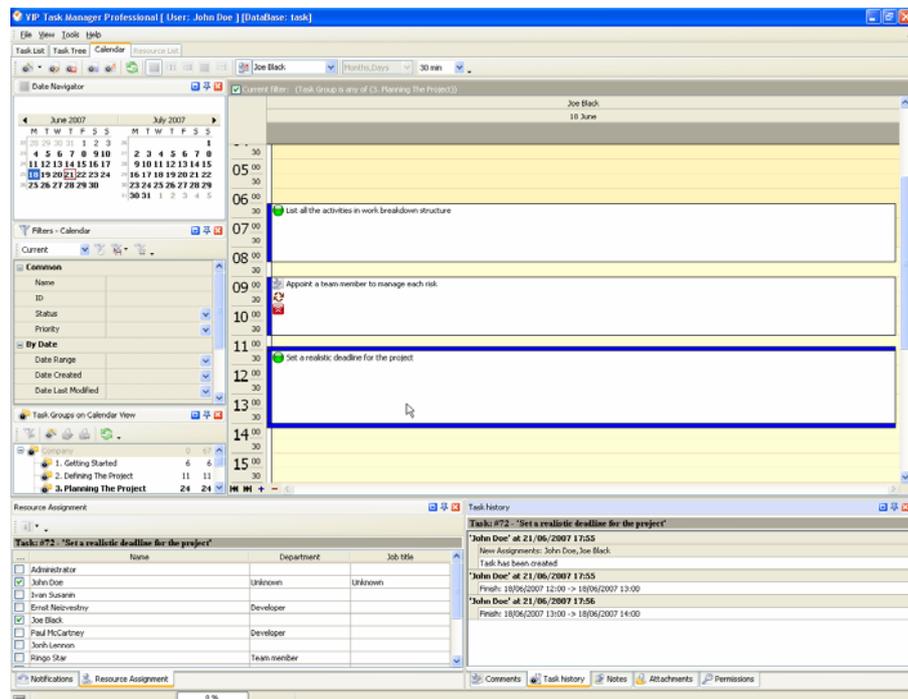
If your company's activity depends on the meetings with the clients, you should properly plan the time for meetings, as the punctuality makes good impression on your clients and partners. If you schedule one meeting directly after another, one delay will cause the procrastination with all following appointments and all clients will need to wait. There is a simple solution of this problem – leave some time breaks after every two meetings. So only following meeting will start later, others will start in time after a break.

"Scheduling breaks between meetings" To Do List

- When you plan your meeting agenda, assign time interval after each two or three meetings
- Don't plan anything on these time breaks, because you may require them to eliminate the delay before following meeting starts
- Use software to schedule meetings and time intervals between them

Action plan

1. Start your [organizer software](#)
2. Create a new task, for example "Meet the prospect"
3. Schedule this task in some interval after previous meeting



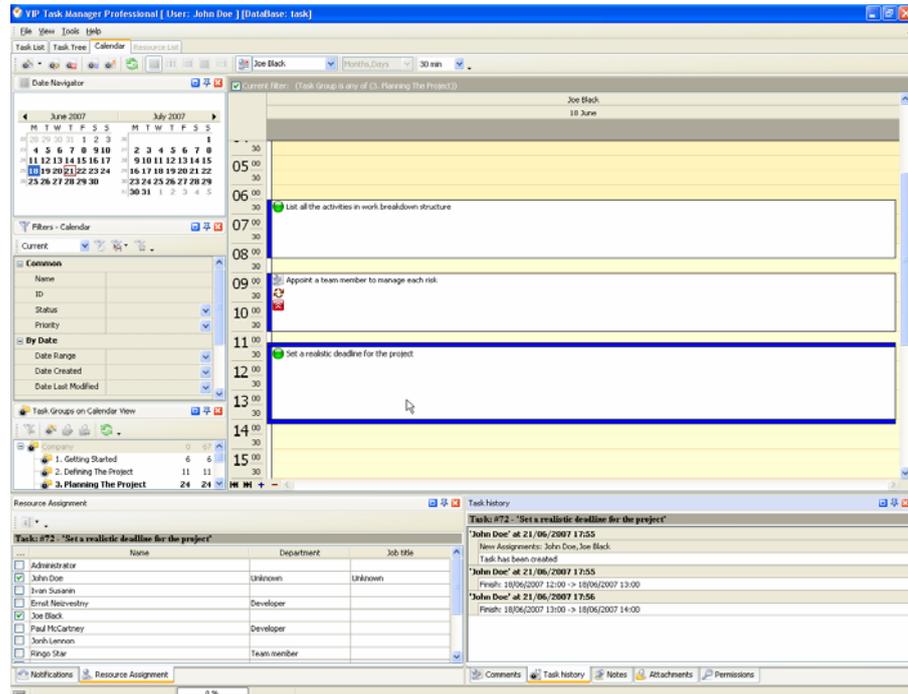
Simple tip how to arrive to the meetings in time

It's better to come earlier than later

People judge the good performance of your business responsibilities by your punctuality. That's why it's extremely important to avoid coming late to the meetings. Estimate the time reserve for the way to the meeting, embarrassment with the address or some additional preparations, such as gathering required documents, packing the notebook, putting your clothes on, etc. So, plan the time to do these activities in advance to come to the meeting in time.

"Reserve the time" To Do List

- When you plan the meeting, take into account all factors and problems that you may face on the way to it
- Estimate the time that you will need to get to the meeting
- Estimate how much time you will need to make all required preparations before the meeting
- Use software to schedule the time for meeting and assign the time reserve before it



Action plan

- Start your [organizer software](#)
- Create a new task, for example "Meet the prospect"
- Schedule the task to required time
- Set reminder to pop-up on the screen at required time before meeting begins

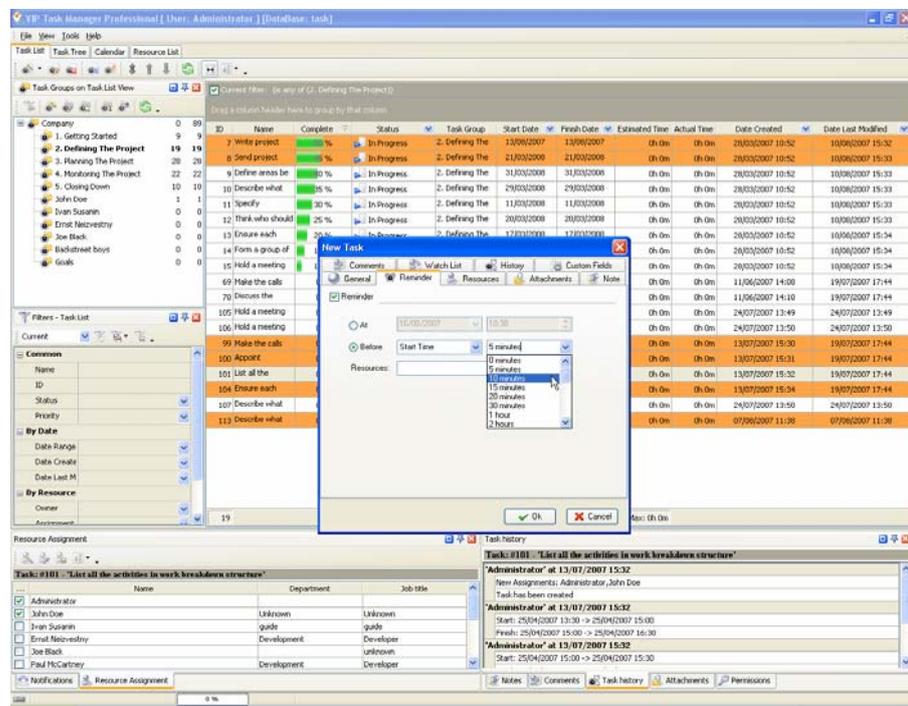
Make it a rule to accomplish one unpleasant task each day

Accomplish unpleasant tasks step by step

Each employee has some short but unpleasant tasks that he/she doesn't want to accomplish. It's obviously very difficult to make yourself start doing the work that is boring and not interesting especially if you realize that it isn't urgent. How to accustom yourself to fulfil unpleasant tasks? Get into a habit to find fifteen minutes each morning to implement one unpleasant task. So little by little you will accomplish all small unwilling tasks and avoid growing them into the big and troublesome problems.

"15 minutes for unpleasant task" To Do List

- Consider all small and unpleasant tasks that you can't make yourself accomplish for a long time
- Prioritize these tasks by their importance
- Schedule fifteen minutes in your daily timetable for each of your unpleasant tasks
- Use software to assign one unpleasant task to each day



Action plan

1. Start your [organizer software](#)
2. Create a list of your unpleasant tasks
3. Assign these tasks to each day, for example to the morning
4. Start doing the tasks

Set two deadlines and try to accomplish the task by the first one

Lack of time can be an engine of productivity

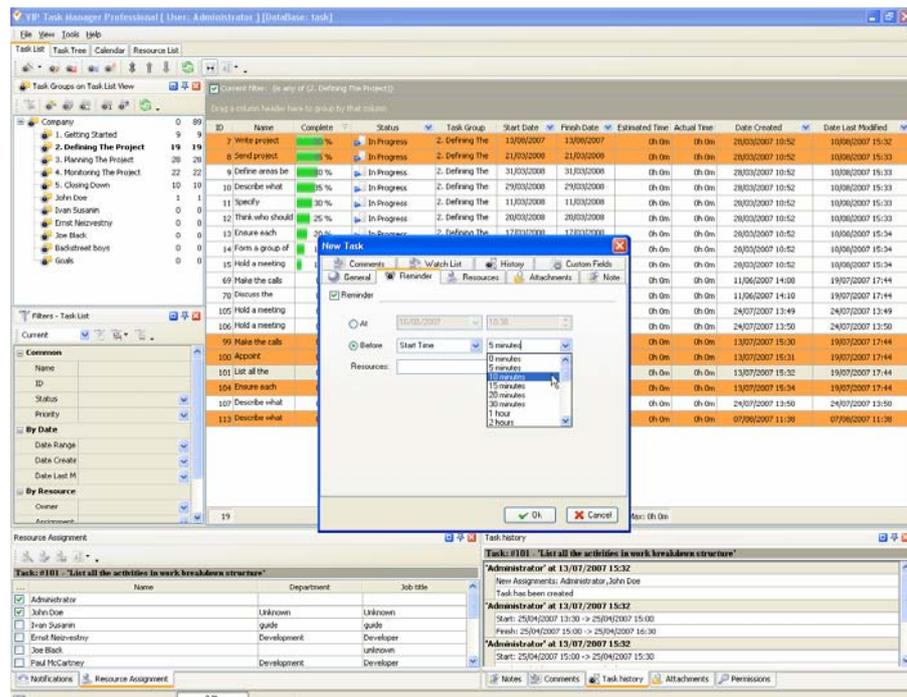
We often tend to procrastinate with some of our tasks, especially if they are boring and not interesting. And only when we realize that the task due date expires, we start working more effectively. If it's exactly about you, the best solution for you is to create artificial lack of time. Set two deadlines for each of your unpleasant tasks: fake deadline for you to motivate yourself to complete the task faster and real task due date. Keep the ample time reserve between these deadlines. In that way you will motivate yourself to work productively and won't hazard timely task accomplishment.

"Two deadlines setting" To Do List

- Before you start doing the task, define its due date
- Estimate what time interval you should keep before final due date just in case and set first deadline
- Start doing the task so as you have to complete it by first deadline
- Use software to set two deadlines for the task

Action plan

1. Start your [task management software](#)
2. Create a new task
3. Enter its final due date
4. Open tab Reminder, activate Reminder option
5. Select required time interval to be reminded before due date



Give yourself a little rest during the day

Our mind needs some rest to gain strength

When you create your daily schedule, don't forget that your body needs some rest during the day. It's obviously that working without interruptions you will do more tasks, but your mind requires periodical "recharge" and you have to think about your health. Otherwise later you may find yourself losing the energy. When you take a short

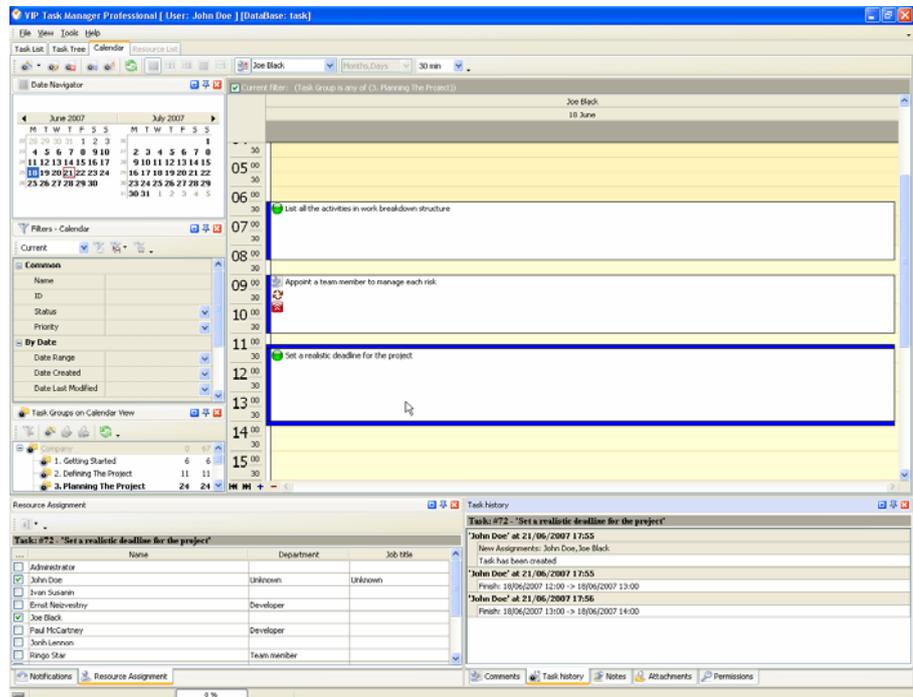
walk or just take a short break without calls, e-mails and other tasks, you will revive your mind and feel yourself fresh and vigorous.

"Recharge your mind" To Do List

- Don't try to work without the rest, it may adversely affect your health in the future
- Schedule short break in the middle of your day to let your mind have some rest
- Use software to schedule breaks into your daily agenda

Action plan

1. Start your [organizer software](#)
2. Create a new task "Take a break"
3. Assign this task to the most appropriate time for you
4. Start doing your tasks



Define the hours that you will regularly devote to the important tasks

There must be exact hours for important tasks

When you do something that is extremely important to you or for your business, you need to concentrate all your attention on this work. You have to be intent and careful in order to avoid mistakes and fulfill the tasks properly. You will be more effective if you define the hours for important tasks and clearly separate them from any interruptions and other less important tasks. In such case you will exactly realize that these hours are extremely important for your career, collect all your efforts and will be absorbed in your tasks.

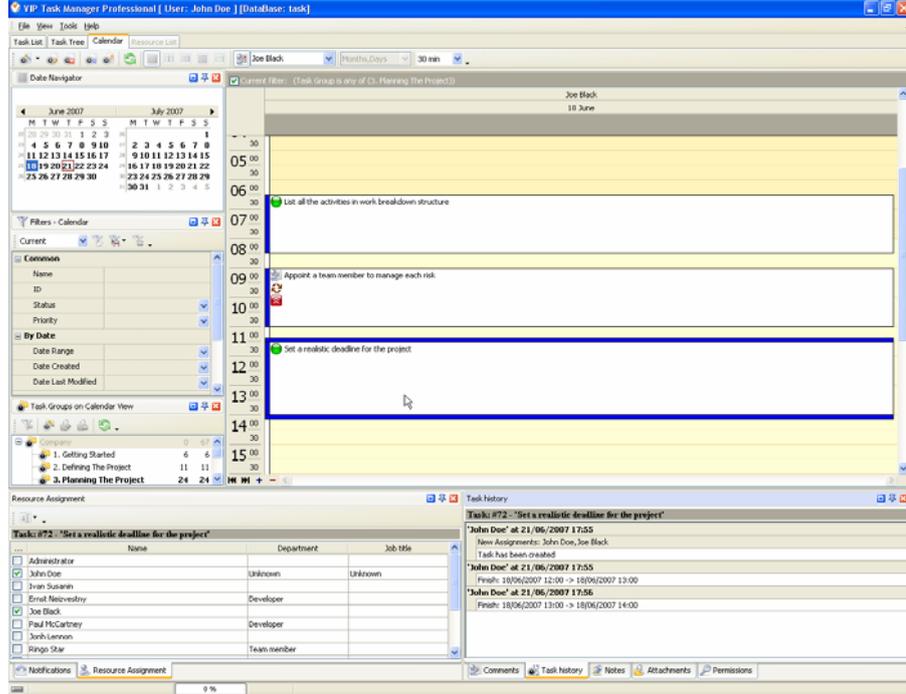
"Define important hours" To Do List

- Consider what hours will be more productive for your important tasks
- Block these hours in your schedule
- Use software to assign important tasks to your "important hours"

Action plan

1. Start your [organizer software](#)
2. Create a new task, that is extremely important for your work

3. Assign this task to the time that you devote to important tasks
4. Start doing the tasks



Limit the tasks that may waste much of your time

Get rid of time stealers

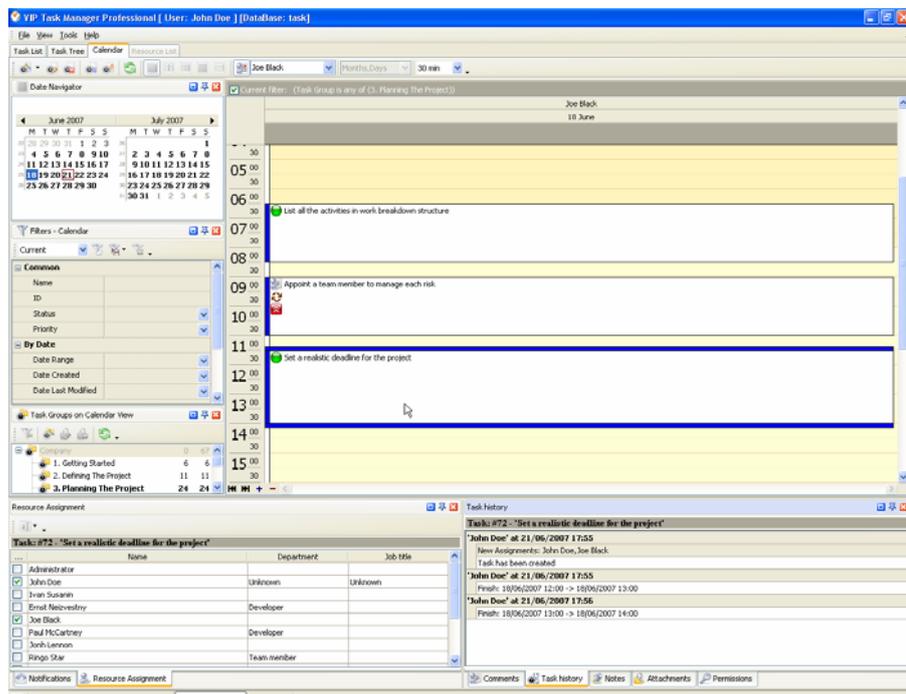
During our working day we have lots of things and habits that waste our time and productivity. As these habits may cost our success and career, we need to recognize and control them. This means that we have to limit the time that we spend on mindless and useless tasks and devote it more important and effective tasks. You can do it, if you schedule definite time blocks for the tasks that waste a great part of your time and avoid the temptation to be engaged in them out of these blocks. It will help you to turn your time and energy to achieving your goals and success.

"Limit time wasters" To Do List

- If you still have time waster tasks, start to overcome them
- Schedule definite time blocks for accomplishing these tasks
- Avoid returning to these tasks out of scheduled time blocks
- Use software to schedule the time for time stealers

Action plan

1. Start your [organizer software](#)
2. Create a new task, for example "Check e-mails"
3. Schedule it to definite time
4. Accomplish this task only at this time and don't return to it later on



Schedule the tasks in such a way that you can accomplish them at one sitting

Try to accomplish tasks at one sitting

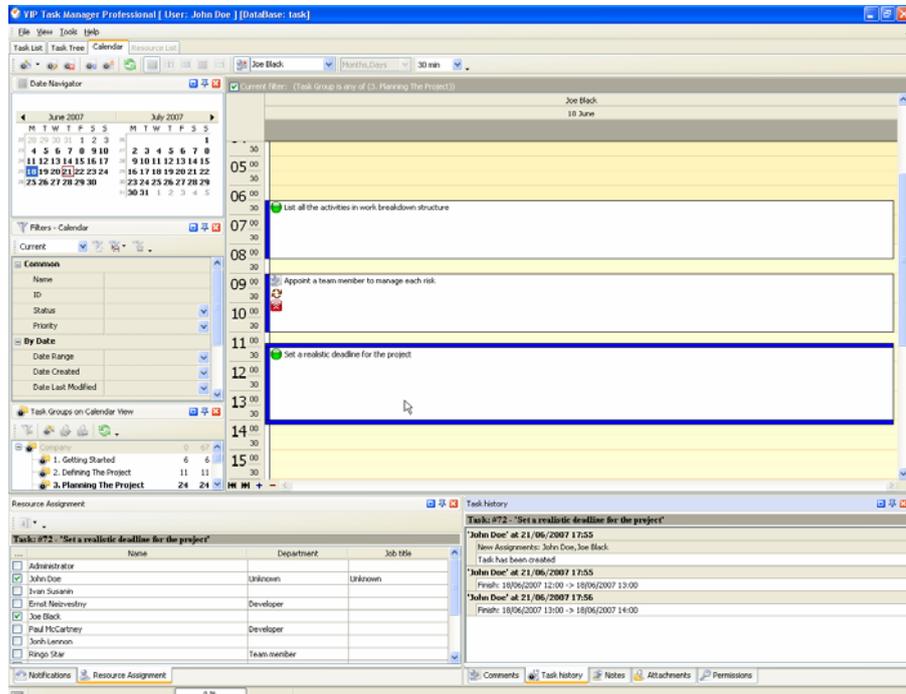
When you start doing particular task, you make up your mind to it, concentrate your attention and only then can accomplish it successfully. If you interrupt your work on this task, you will need extra time to concentrate your thoughts on it next time when you return to it. That's why it's better to estimate your time in such way that you won't need to interrupt the accomplishment of particular task. While making daily plan, try to schedule time-consuming tasks at the beginning of the day in order that you have enough time to accomplish it at one sitting, avoid doubling your actions and thus save your time and energy.

"Don't interrupt task accomplishment" To Do List

- Before you make your daily schedule, estimate the time that you will need for each task
- Try to schedule time-consuming tasks at the beginning of the day and shorter ones at the rest of time, but not to the prejudice of their priorities
- Use software to make your daily schedule

Action plan

1. Start your [scheduling software](#)
2. Schedule time-consuming tasks at such time that you won't need to interrupt them
3. Don't forget about task priorities
4. Start doing your tasks



From time to time motivate yourself with pleasant tasks

Reward yourself

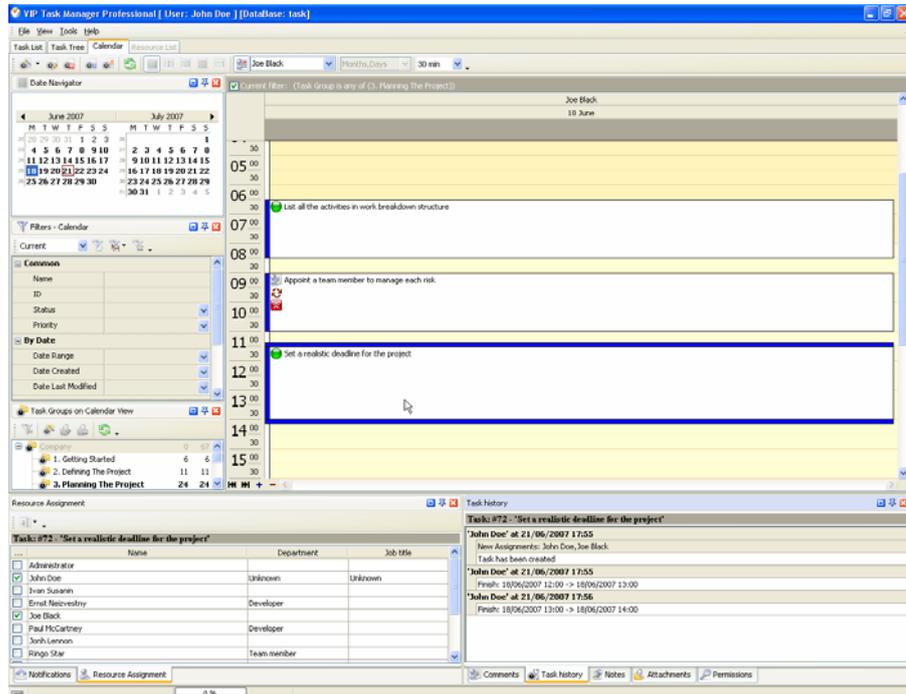
Each person needs to be motivated in his/her work. One of the ways of self-motivation is to reward yourself with short break or pleasant task. After accomplishing important and maybe not very interesting task you can give a treat to yourself and shift to some short pleasant work even if it is not so urgent. While working uninterruptedly on your important and urgent tasks, you may feel yourself overwhelmed and tired, what can lead to productivity slowdown and procrastination. Rewarding yourself with short but pleasant tasks will help to easily cope with "must-do" tasks and increase your productivity and effectiveness.

"Reward yourself" To Do List

- When you make your schedule, don't try to put all "must-do" tasks together
- After some important and complex tasks schedule one easy and small task, that will reward you for your work
- Use software to schedule some rewarding pleasant tasks into your Task list

Action plan

1. Start your [organizer software](#)
2. Create a new task, for example "Write e-mails to friends"
3. Assign it to the time after some important and complex task
4. Start doing tasks



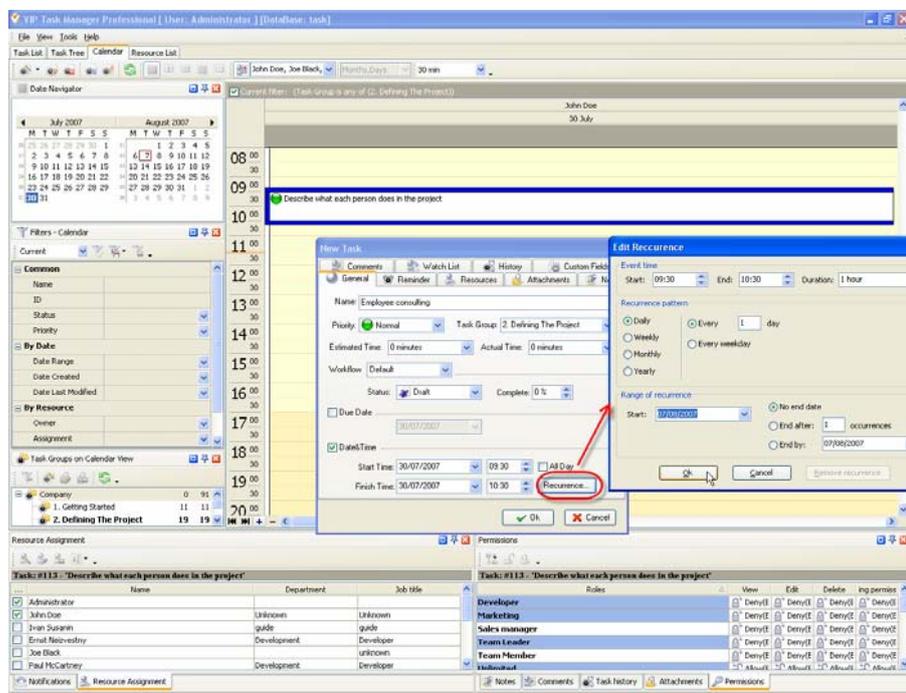
Schedule definite time for processing new information and don't interrupt your current work

Best decision for new information processing

Each day the managers receive new information, papers, e-mails, calls, etc. They need to process and include them into company workflow. As processing new inflow requires definite time, it may interrupt leader's current work and make him/her unfocused and disappointed. The best solution to stay fully focused on what needs to be done at that moment, is to not handle the information immediately and postpone processing non-emergency inputs till scheduled time. This will help the manager to stay organized, focused and successfully accomplish his/her current tasks.

'Process new input' To Do List

- When you get new information, e.g. calls, papers and so on, don't hurry up to handle it immediately if you are busy at that moment
- Choose the most suitable time for you to process new information
- Put the task 'Process new inputs' on your schedule and set it as 'Recurring'
- Use software to schedule the time for processing new information



Action plan

1. Start your [scheduler software](#)
2. Create a new task 'New information processing'
3. Choose the most suitable time for this task and assign it at this time
4. Decide how often you need to do it and make it recurrence
5. Continue doing your tasks

Schedule employee consulting hours proportionally during the working day

Three small 'visiting hours' blocks vs. one big block?

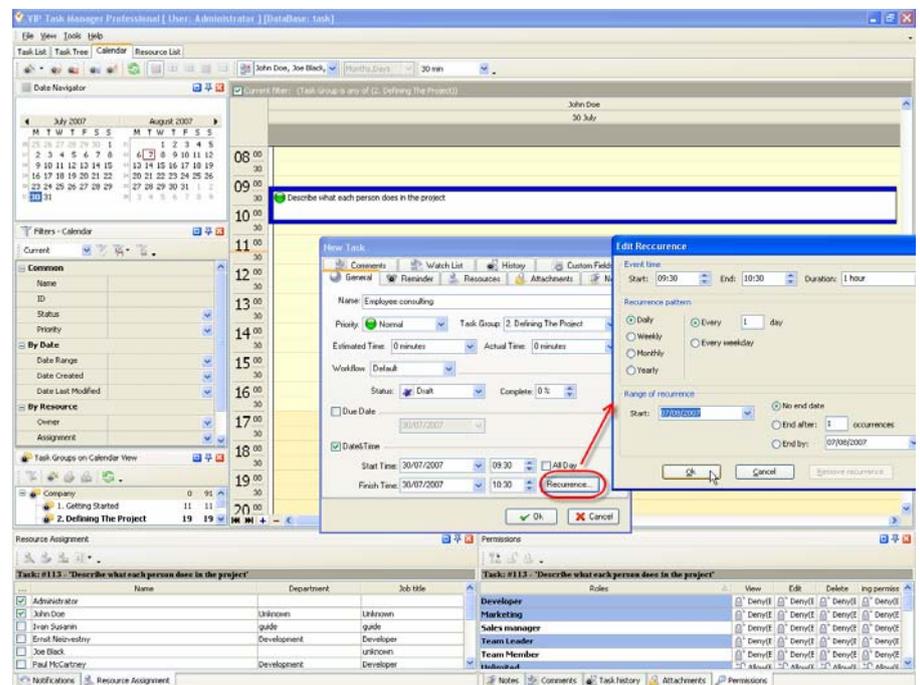
When you establish 'visiting hours' policy for your staff, first decide how often it will be more effective for your company to have these visiting hours and when it is the best time for them. For example, you schedule one big interruption block at the end of the day. In this case the employee, who needs your help to solve some problems, has to wait till evening and procrastinates with his/her further work. The same situation arises if your 'visiting hours' block is assigned to the morning. The best solution for effective company work and collaboration is to schedule small visiting hours blocks three times a day in an equal time intervals.

'Visiting hours blocks' To Do List

- Discuss with your staff the most suitable time for 'visiting hours'
- Try to proportionally distribute them to the whole day in order to provide your staff with your help during the day
- Schedule interruptions and let your team remember when they can approach you with non-emergency problems and questions
- Use software to schedule regular visiting hours and keep your staff aware of them

Action plan

1. Start your [scheduler software](#)
2. Create a new task 'Employee consulting'
3. Make it recurring three times a day, for example, at 11 a.m., 2 p.m. and 5 p.m.
4. Now your team members can check if you are available now or when you will be available, they need only to set filter and display your today schedule
5. Continue doing your own tasks



The screenshot shows the Microsoft Project software interface. A task named 'Employee consulting' is highlighted in the task list. The task is scheduled for 09:30 to 10:30 on 30/07/2007. The recurrence pattern is set to 'Every 1 day'. The range of recurrence is from 30/07/2007 to 09/08/2007. The task is assigned to the resource 'John Doe'. The interface includes a calendar, task list, and resource assignment table.

| Task ID | Name | Department | Job title |
|---------|----------------|-------------|-----------|
| 1 | Administrator | | |
| 2 | John Doe | Unknown | Unknown |
| 3 | Iran Sistani | guide | guide |
| 4 | Emel Nezevsky | Development | Developer |
| 5 | Joe Black | Unknown | Unknown |
| 6 | Paul McCartney | Development | Developer |

| Task ID | Name | Roles |
|---------|---------------|-------|
| 1 | Developer | |
| 2 | Marketing | |
| 3 | Sales manager | |
| 4 | Team leader | |
| 5 | Team Member | |
| 6 | Individual | |

Work out coordinated schedules for all team members

One undisciplined person can delay the work of the whole team

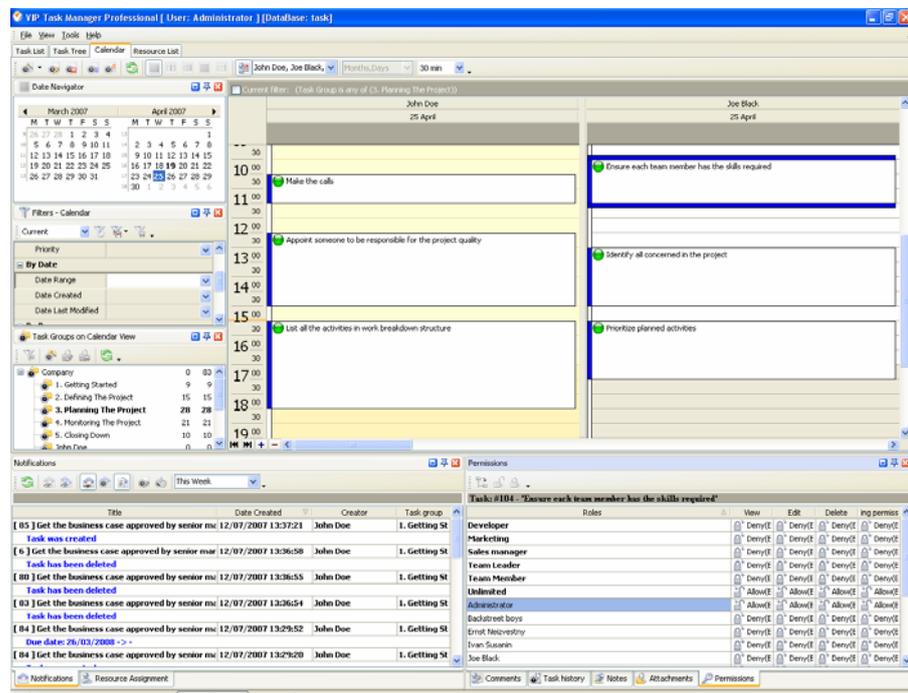
Someone's lack of planning can destroy your company plans. The work of the whole team is often interrelated and each team member's workflow may influence others. If your colleagues don't have clear schedule or ignore following it, their actions may delay your working process or interrupt you when you are busy. In order to avoid the situation when an employee can not start doing his task because the task of another employee is not completed, find some time to make coordinated schedules for all your team members as well as your own and acquaint your staff with each schedule beforehand. In this case everyone will be aware of the time when his or her colleague is not overloaded with the work and won't be interrupted.

"Make team members' schedules" To Do List

- In your mind sort your staff in accordance with their common functions
- Work out the schedules for all your employees, taking into account whether their actions cross or not
- Discuss the timetables with your team to acquaint them with their colleagues' and own schedules and take into account their own requests
- Use software to make team members' schedules and keep everyone aware of them

Action plan

1. Start your [Team Management software](#)
2. Monitor what each employee does and when
3. Schedule their tasks so that the schedule will not lead to delays
4. Start doing your tasks



The screenshot displays the VP! Task Manager Professional interface. At the top, there's a menu bar with 'File', 'View', 'Tools', and 'Help'. Below it, a toolbar contains icons for 'Task List', 'Task Tree', 'Calendar', and 'Resource List'. The main window is divided into several sections: a 'Date Navigator' showing a calendar for March and April 2007; a 'Filters - Calendar' section with options for 'Current', 'Priority', 'By Date', 'Date Range', 'Date Created', and 'Date Last Modified'; a 'Task Groups on Calendar View' section showing a hierarchical tree of tasks; a 'Notifications' section; and a 'Permissions' section. The central part of the interface shows a task list for 'John Doe' and 'Joe Black' on '25 April'. The tasks listed include: 'Make the calls', 'Appoint someone to be responsible for the project quality', 'List all the activities in work breakdown structure', 'Ensure each team member has the skills required', 'Identify all concerned in the project', and 'Prioritize planned activities'. At the bottom, there's a table with columns for 'Title', 'Date Created', 'Creator', and 'Task group'. The table contains several entries, some with status indicators like 'Task was created', 'Task has been deleted', and 'Task has been approved by senior manager'. The bottom right corner shows a 'Permissions' table with columns for 'Roles' and 'View', 'Edit', 'Delete', and 'No permit'.

Give yourself a little more time than you expect the task will take

It's better to err on the side of too much time than too little

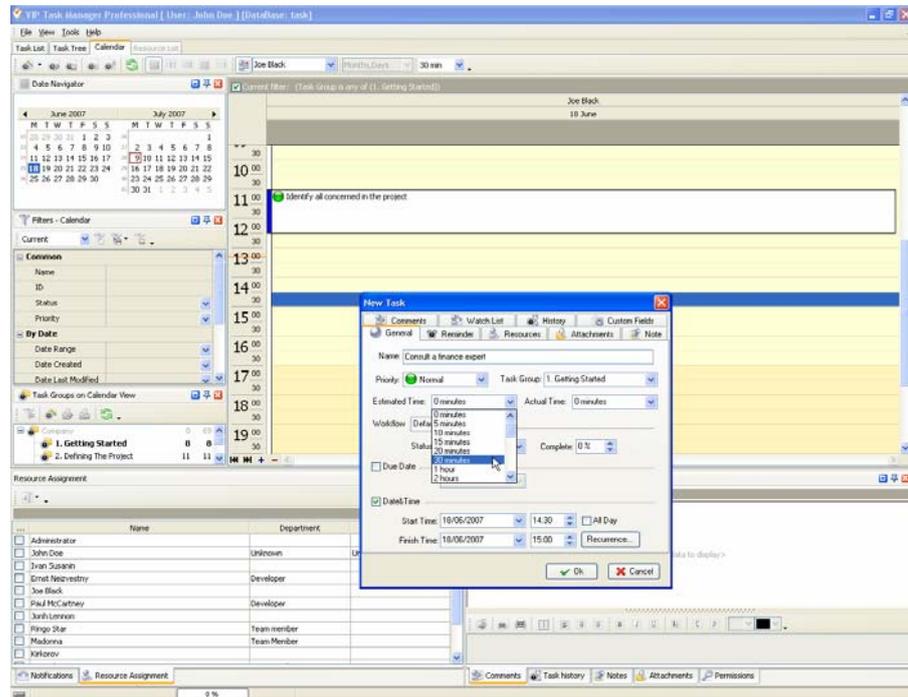
All of us faced the situation when the due date of the task expires and we are still far from completing it. Time is up and you realize that the task won't be finished on time, you start worrying and become disappointed and unfocused. One of the reasons for not meeting the deadline is that you planned not enough time to this task. Sometimes it is difficult to estimate the time that particular task will take beforehand because during its accomplishment you can meet unexpected obstacles that may cause procrastination. In this case the only advice is to plan some extra time for your tasks. It will be better if you err on the side of too much time rather than too little. You'll have the possibility to finish the task in time or even earlier and feel yourself in a good spirit.

"A little more time" To Do List

- Try to estimate the time you need to accomplish particular task
- Think about the possible complications that might happen during the task accomplishment
- Take into account your conclusions and add some extra time for this task
- Use software to set task start and finish date

Action plan

1. Start your [scheduling software](#)
2. Double click on a task
3. Enter time period into "Estimated Time" field
4. Start doing the task



Change your habit of leaving things unfinished to getting things done

Unfinished task has no value

Leaving things unfinished is a habit that many people suffer from. It's your enemy on the way to success. An unfinished project is of no value. Its accomplishment might have great influence on subsequent projects and the result of procrastination at this particular task is postponement of the whole work. The evident solving of this problem is in changing pernicious habit of giving up the started work. Teach yourself to finish everything you start. Don't let yourself go ahead while you have unaccomplished task. Estimate the time that this task might really occupy and in accordance with it set the finish time when you ought to fulfill it. Gradually you'll find out that your bad habit is in the past and your productivity has increased.

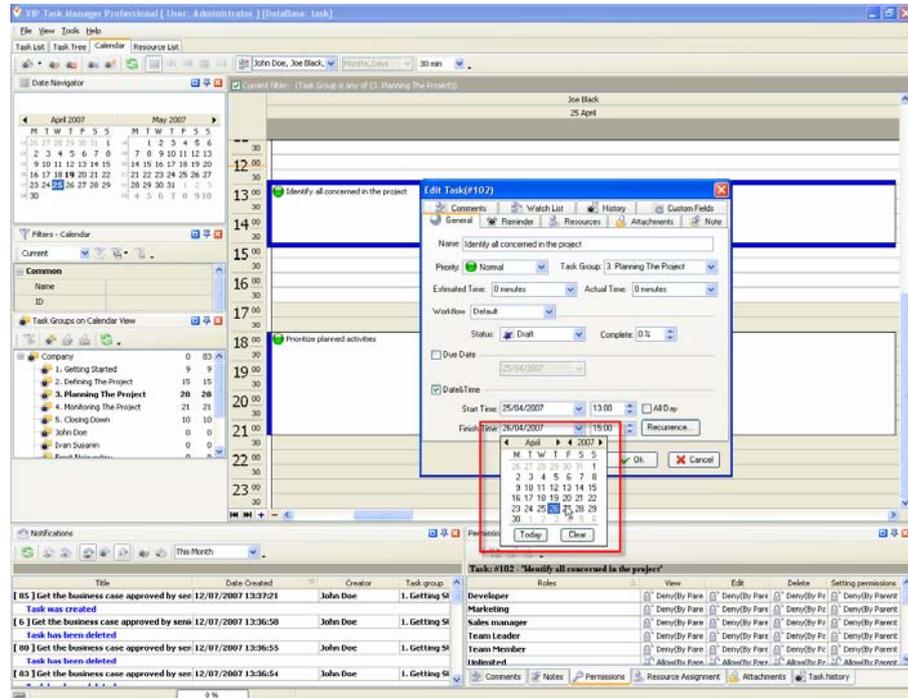
"Finish started task" To Do List

- Study the task you have to do and in accordance with its complexity think how long it will take you to accomplish this task
- Set yourself the exact term when you ought to finish this task
- Start doing the task and don't leave it off till its accomplishment. Even if you don't have time to finish the task by the date fixed you'll at least have it accomplished

- Use software to create a new task and set its finish time and due date

Action plan

1. Start your [scheduling software](#)
2. Create a new task
3. Set task finish time and due date
4. Start doing the task



Take breaks while accomplishing the time-consuming task

Your work is not a monotonous and endless process

One of the reasons of procrastination is time-consuming task. Some of the tasks may seem so big that you even don't know if you'll ever be able to finish it. The picture of endless and boring working day devoting to this particular task appears in your mind. How to make yourself start the task after that? Remember that you don't have to work all day on this particular task. Give yourself permission to take a break. If you schedule breaks or other kinds of activity while accomplishing this task it will help you see that your work is not a monotonous and endless process. And it will help you overcome the procrastination before starting the work.

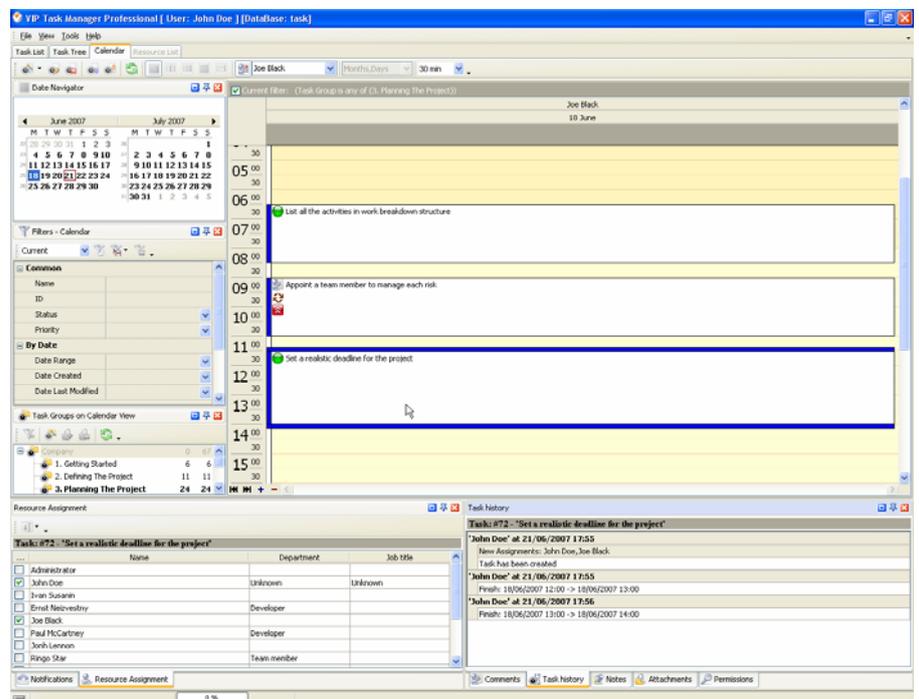
"Schedule breaks" To Do List

- First of all define how long can you concentrate on a certain task
- View the task in a sober light and divide it into several approaches in accordance with your attention span
- Commit to work for definite time interval and then have a break or change your activity when your attention span is exhausted
- Use software to include the breaks into your schedule during the accomplishment of the long task

Action plan

1. Start you [scheduling software](#)
2. Track the tasks assigned on 'today'
3. If there are any time consuming tasks among them divide them into several time periods
4. Schedule breaks or other activities at the time between these periods

5. Start doing the tasks



Assign similar tasks to the same time

Spreading similar tasks across the whole day is the way to waste time

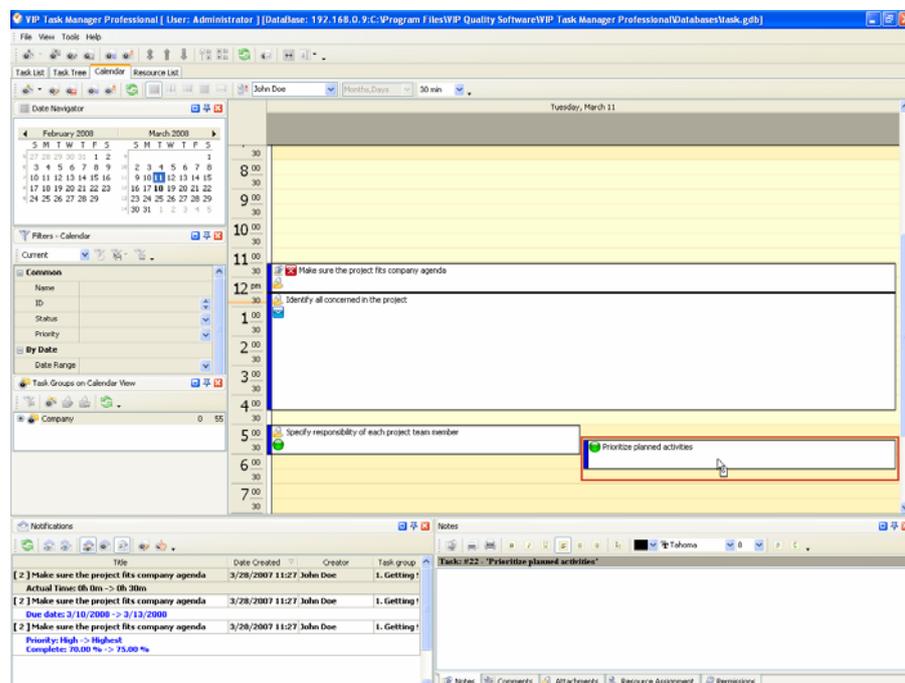
During the day business people may have endless list of tasks and there may be many similar ones among them. When doing them separately, it may take twice more time. It will be more effective if you group the tasks of the same type and assign them to the same time. For example, phone calls or meetings. If you group questions you need to solve and discuss it at one meeting rather than holding 3 different ones. If you know that you need to make 10 phone calls on a certain day, schedule them all at one time. This will save you a lot of time and make you more self-disciplined.

"Schedule similar tasks at the same time" To Do List

- Check your daily schedule and pick out the tasks that need similar methods to do them or require common skills from your side
- Put these tasks into the same task group and estimate the total time that they need to be done
- Define the most suitable time for performing each task group
- Use software to create tasks and schedule them on the same time

Action plan

1. Start your [scheduling software](#)
2. Choose Day view
3. Drag and Drop similar tasks so that they were assigned to one time period or followed each other





Schedule your interruptions

Interruptions are a normal part of work life

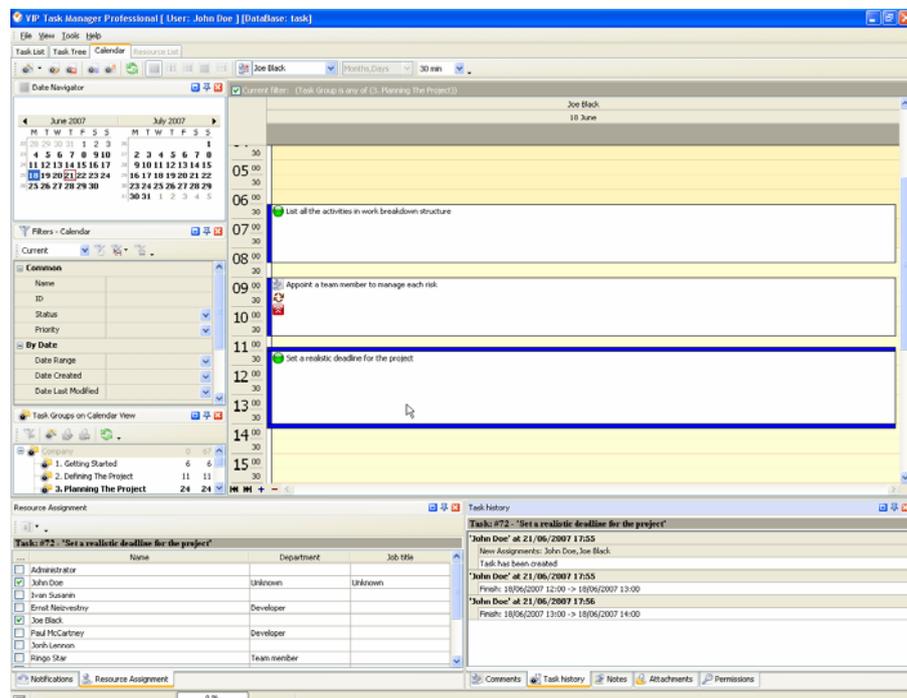
It's obvious that when you work without interruptions you would increase your own personal productivity, but it would be a short-term victory. If you spend a few minutes and help your colleague somehow, it will allow him or her to continue working productively rather than staying stuck on a problem, so the return on your small time investment becomes substantial. Whether you answer difficult questions, provide guidance, or point people in the right direction, your help can be a valuable service to your team and your company. That's why the best way is to balance your "time for your own tasks" and "time for consulting" devoted to your team member's questions.

Establish regular interruptions hours

If you suffer from unlimited and uncontrolled interruptions, the best solution is to organize them. When your team knows the exact hours they can talk to you, it will discipline your colleagues and will not undermine your productivity. Your employees will think twice before interrupting you and at least they will have time to prepare the right questions or describe the problem more precisely. Time limits will make the discussion more effective and purposeful.

Action plan

1. Start your [scheduling software](#)
2. Create a reoccurrence task "Employee Consulting" (ex.: it should repeat once in 2 or 3 hours and last for 30 minutes)
3. Now, if an employee wants to interrupt you, he can check if you are available now – set filter to see your tasks on today schedule.
4. If you are not available, the employee will see when he can interrupt you



Save time on scheduling tasks you receive by emails

Turn emails into tasks

Very often email letters we receive turn into tasks we need to do. The question is what to do with these emails as some of them require urgent actions while others can be put on hold or scheduled to a certain time. Imagine the situation when the mail comes, you pick it up and quickly look through to see if there is anything important. You see that this letter doesn't require immediate reply. You make a mental note that you have to react upon it later on, create a task on the basis of this letter and move on to the next letter. You have devoted time to this task and put

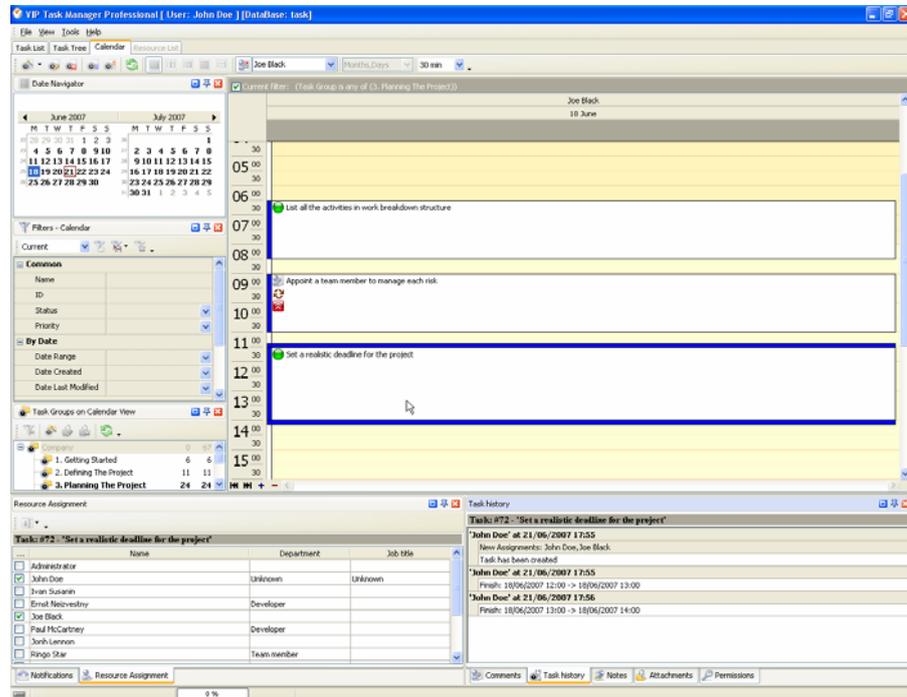
off acting on it. If you didn't schedule the task when you face it on the list you will have to find the email again and re-read it to remember its content.

Free up your time

As you see above you can double the amount of time spent on this activity. Seems like only a small amount of time, but multiply that by the dozens or hundreds of activities you address each day and you can begin to understand why you do not have enough time in the day to complete all your tasks. So there is a basic rule which if implemented will free up more time than you will realize. Schedule the task when you create it and add details from the email at once.

Action plan

1. Start your [scheduling software](#)
2. Create a task fro information you received by email
3. Assign the task to a certain time
4. Copy the email body or extracts from the email to Notes
5. Set Reminder to know to be notified at the right time



Scheduling the right tasks at the right time

Different tasks require different state of mind

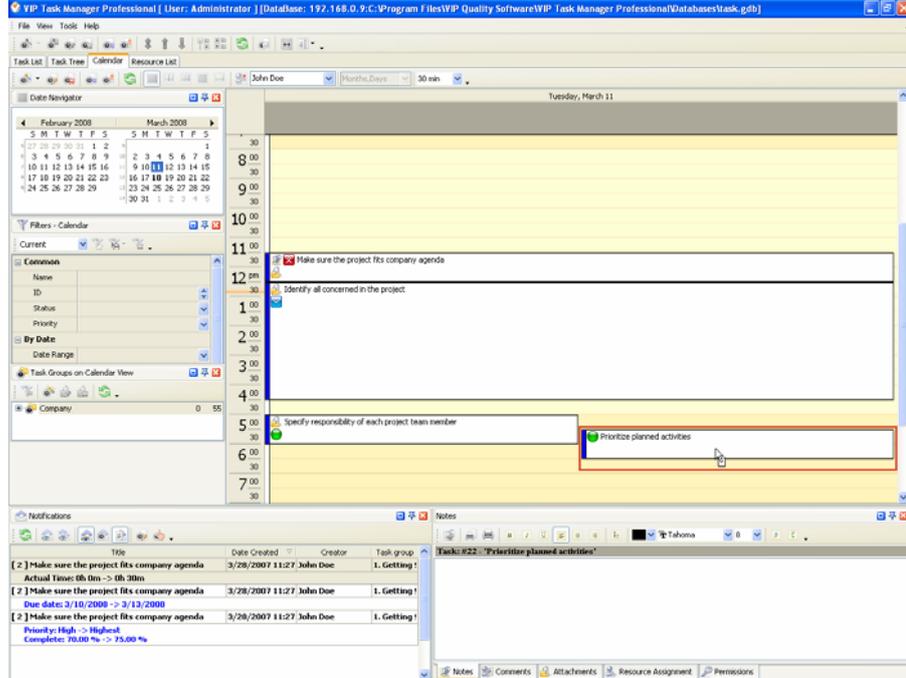
Besides the recommendation to do the most challenging tasks at our peak energy time, we would recommend to schedule different types of tasks at a specific time of the day. The fact is that different realistic types of tasks require different state of mind. For example, even if your peak energy time is morning, but your task is writing an article it is better to do it not right from the start of the day when you need time to concentrate and not at the end of the day when it is very hard to concentrate.

Life is life

Sometimes we intuitively plan certain tasks for certain hours, because we believe our productivity for these particular tasks is the highest at that time. Still, very often life brings changes to our plans and to our state of mind. What we need is a tool to quickly re-schedule our tasks. Calendar software is much more powerful in that case than paper organizers. If you feel you like doing a particular task you can easily re-schedule it by changing places with other tasks or assigning other tasks to other date.

Action plan

1. Start you [scheduling software](#)
2. Select time period for display (you can select the interval from 5 to 60 minutes)
3. Drag and drop the tasks across the schedule until you allocate tasks the best way



If you don't have 'sense of time' you should better use Calendar (instead of To Do List)

Do you manage your time?

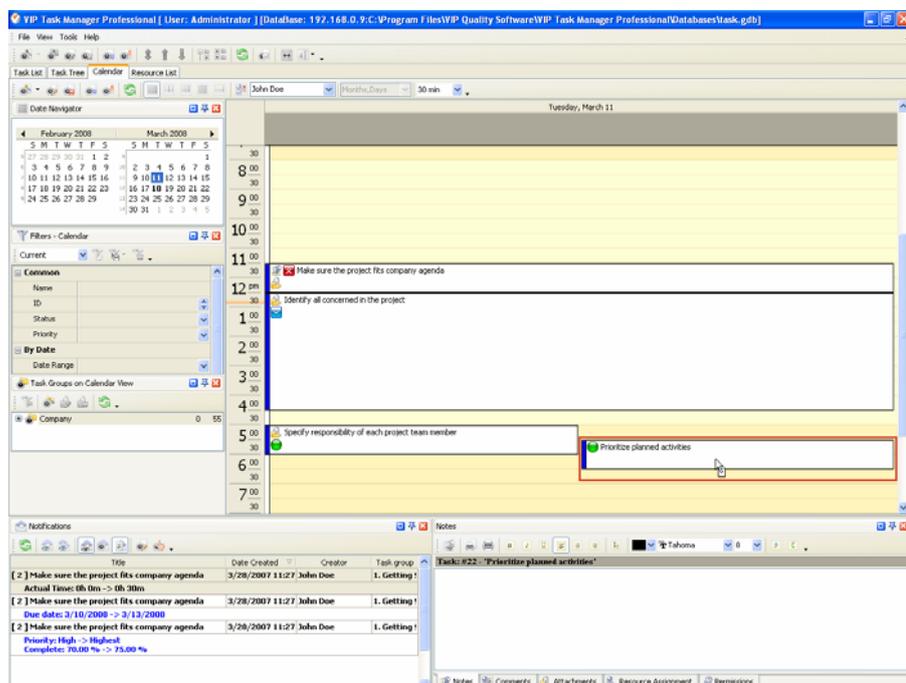
If you are constantly rushing, always being late for appointments and very often missing deadlines, you just don't manage your time or you manage it the wrong way. We all have the same 24 hours a day, however, some of us manage to do everything they planned while others handle a few tasks no matter how active they are. The difference between these two groups is in 'sense of time'. Some people just can not measure the time and think that they have plenty of it for all the tasks they have.

Use calendar

The solution for this kind of people is calendar. If they can estimate the right time for each task it is much easier to schedule them on calendar. Calendar grid in comparison with To Do List shows you that time is not unlimited. You can not fill in '30 minutes' cell with a task that takes 1 hour to complete. Finally you will have a time grid with less tasks, but these tasks will be more essential. As you will have to refuse from some tasks, you will need to set priorities. According to Pareto principle, focusing on important tasks will only help. :-)

Action plan

1. Start your [Calendar software](#)
2. Select Task List tab
3. Schedule Tasks for tomorrow
4. Select Calendar tab
5. Select tomorrow's date for display
6. Drag & Drop the Tasks across the Time Grid





Delegating Tasks

How to delegate tasks to your team or employees to be sure they will do the tasks well

Ask your manager to delegate the tasks that you are unable to accomplish to other employee

Avoid stress and overwhelming of your team

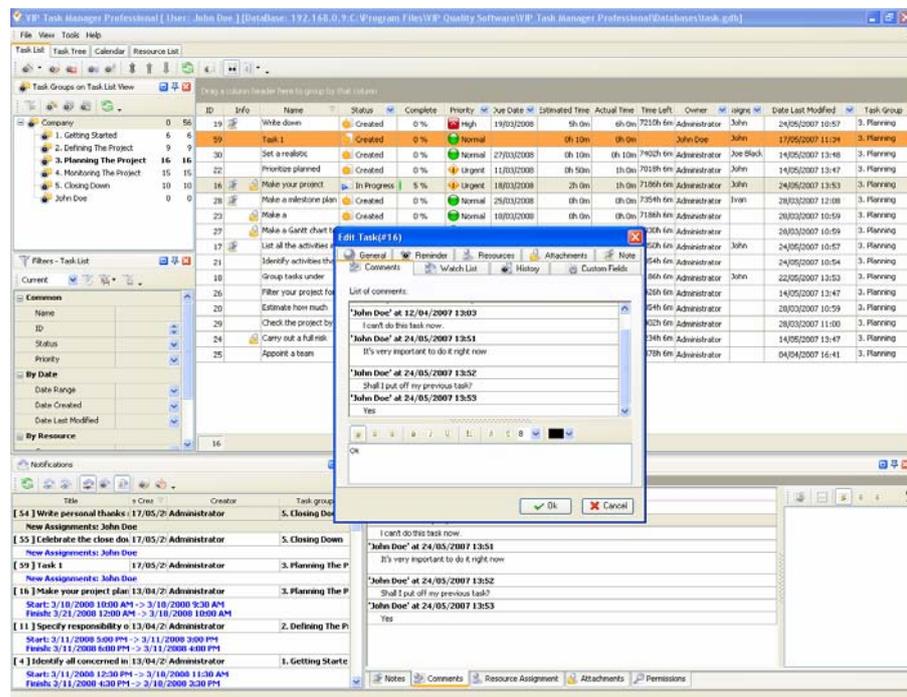
If you have a team of equally skilled specialists and a task that should be delegated to one of them, there is a question who it will be better to assign this task to. The answer is simple. By delegating additional task to that employee who is already overloaded with current work, you will make him feel stress and overwhelming and can decrease his productivity. So, select the employee who is less busy at the moment and has less urgent or important tasks in his/her To Do List and delegate a new task to him.

“Tracking employees’ load” To Do List

- Before delegating a new task, be careful and don't hurry up just to get rid of this task
- Track the number of tasks that each employee has and compare their importance and time that each one need to spend on them
- Delegate the task to the person who is less loaded at the moment and in the near future
- Use software to track employees' task lists and assign the task to less loaded team member

Action plan

1. Start your [team management software](#)
2. Set filter to display uncompleted tasks of required resources
3. Sort them by their priority
4. Select the employee who has less urgent tasks and assign a new task to him



Ask the employees to estimate the time they need for the tasks

Employees can define their task estimated time more exactly

When you delegate a task to your employee, first of all it will be better to describe its size and requirements to this team member and then ask him/her to estimate the time that this particular task may take. All people have

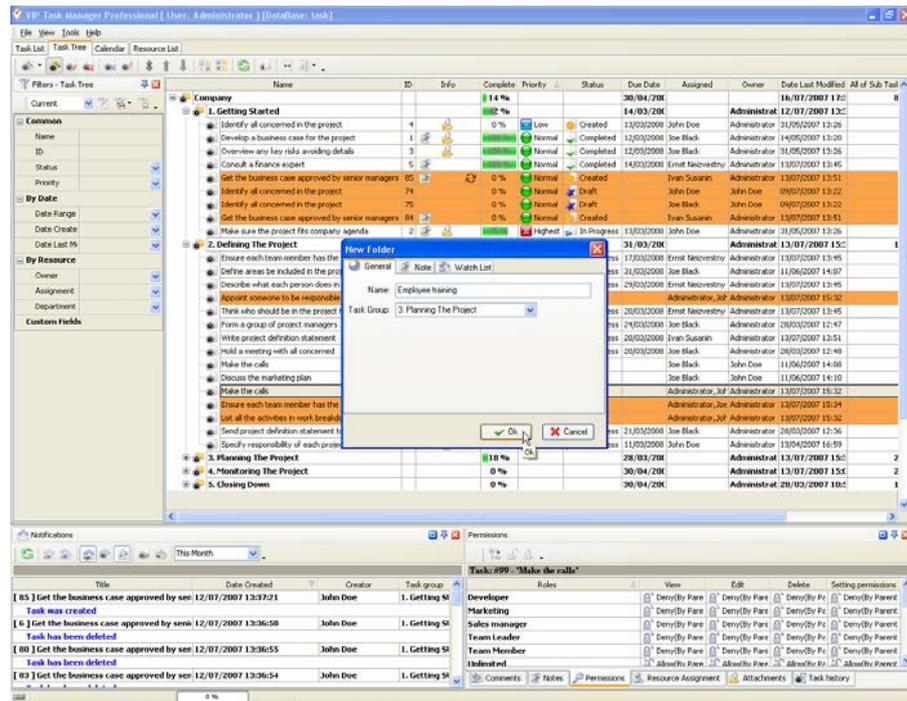
different skills and potential and it should be taken into account. So, a person who the task is delegated to, can more exactly estimate how much time he or she will need to accomplish the task successfully and avoid stress and overwhelming. Taking into account employee's opinion, you will be able to plan your and his working day more effectively.

“Employees’ estimation” To Do List

- When you delegate a task to your team member, first of all let him/her know the goals and requirements of the task
- If it's necessary, give him/her some time to consider this task and evaluate the time that he/she will need to accomplish it
- Take into account employee's estimation when you plan his/her and your working day
- Use software to create a task, assign it to the required resource and enter task estimated time

Action plan

1. Start [your scheduler software](#)
2. Create a new task
3. Assign it to required resource and enter its details into task notes section
4. Grant the employee permission to edit the task and enter its estimated time



Control the tasks that you delegate

Delegate the task, but not the reminder about it

There is an abundant situation that the task is delegated to the employee and is forgotten by the leader. But it isn't enough to assign the task to particular employee and explain the details and expected results of this task. A competent team leader should constantly control the accomplishment of the task that he/she delegated to, remind the employee about it and inquire about its state. In such a way the team members will remember about the task priority and importance and do their best to avoid procrastinations and finish the task in time.

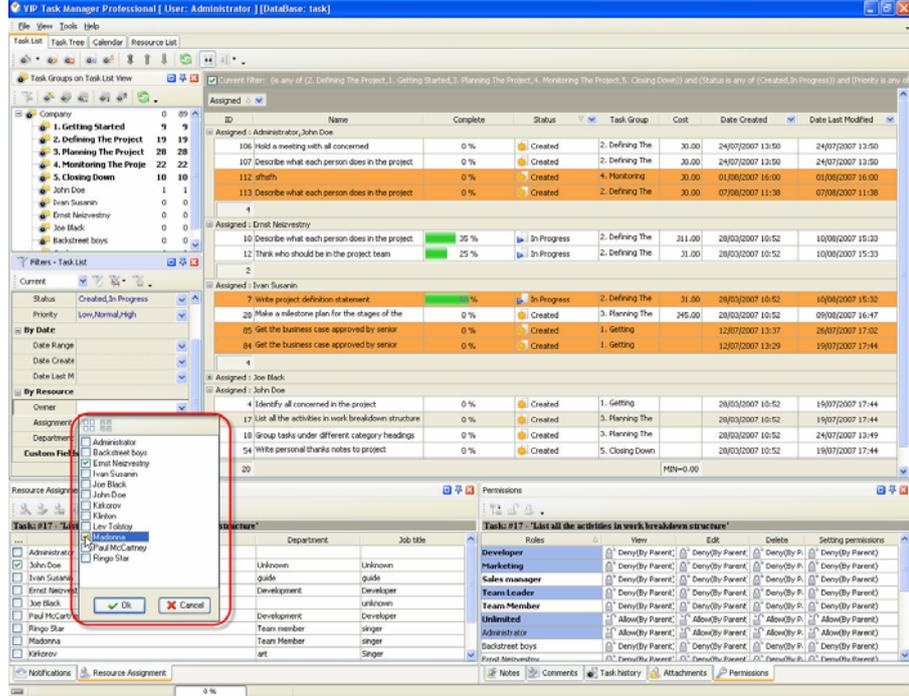
"Control delegated tasks" To Do List

- When you delegate the tasks, record them somewhere. Otherwise you can forget about some of them
- Regularly track these tasks, ask the people they are assigned to about their state and completion degree
- If it's required remind your employees about tasks' due date
- Use software to track delegated tasks and remind the employees about them

Action plan

1. Start [team management software](#)

2. Set filter to display the tasks that you created
3. Sort them by their status and completion
4. Add comments to some tasks to know task state



Delegation must be competent and profitable

Time is money

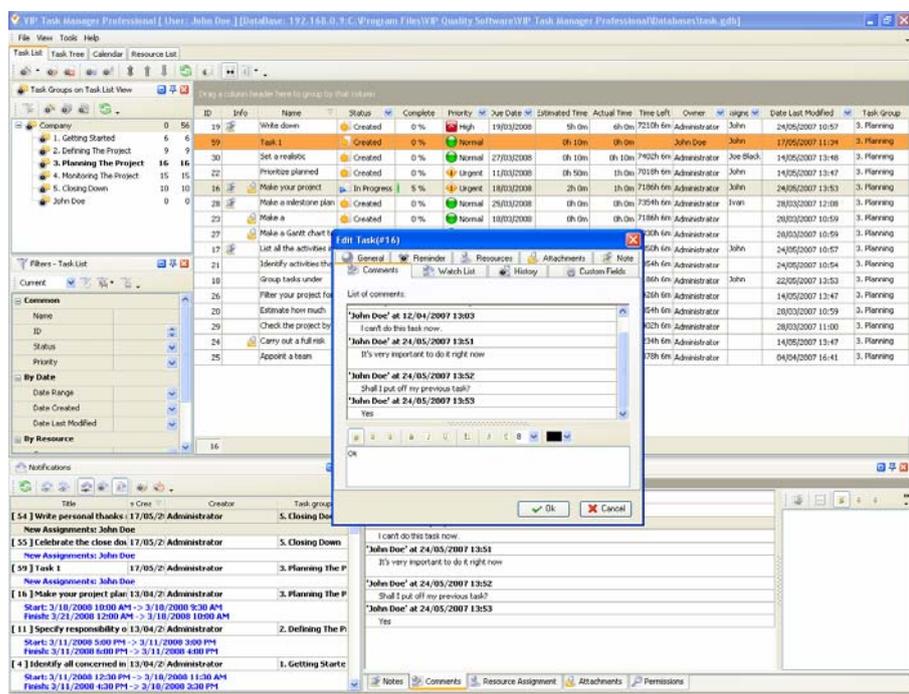
There are situations when the employee is delegated a task that is out of his/her competence and can be accomplished by other less qualified team member. It's necessary to say "No" for such requests, because employee will spend his/her precious time and lose the chance to accomplish more important and profitable work for the company. The employee should argue the reasons of rejection by demonstrating the leader how much the company will lose if he/she is occupied with other's duties. The company will get nothing because of that action but benefits.

"Say 'No'" To Do List

- When you are delegated a task that can be accomplished by less competent person, don't confuse to say "No"
- Describe the leader why you don't want to fulfill this task, for example you can do more useful and profitable work and delegated task can be accomplished by other person for less salary
- Use software to add comments to the task

Action plan

1. Start your [team management software](#)
2. Open the task you are delegated
3. Open task comments section and explain the manager why this task should be delegated to other person
4. Continue doing your tasks



Simplify the process of exchanging the comments about the task among the employees

Use software to exchange the information in your office

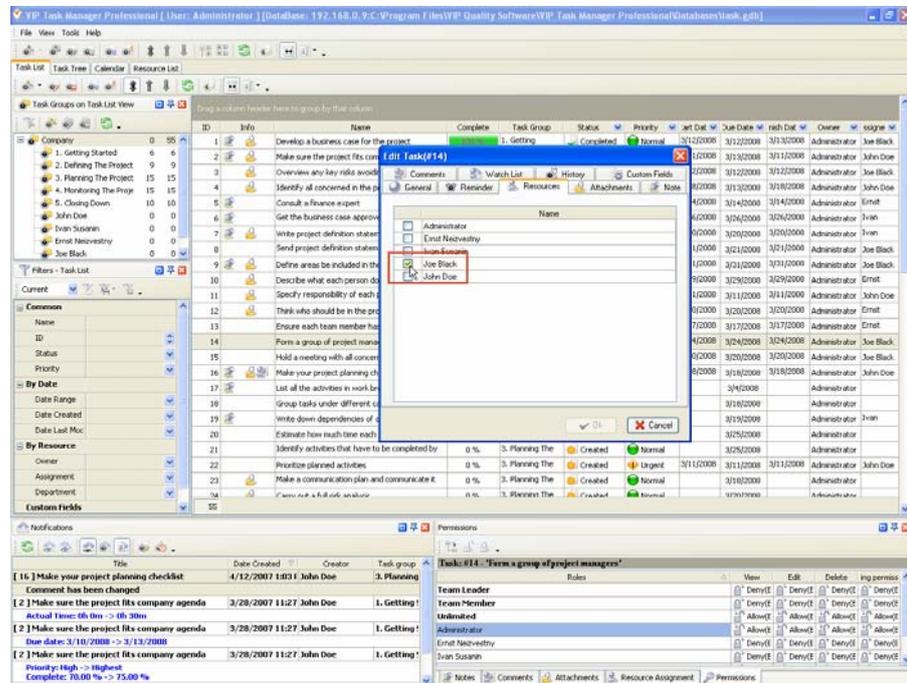
If the task is delegated to several employees simultaneously, as the rule each of them has separate role in its accomplishment. As the parts of this task depend on each other, team members need to be informed when their colleagues fulfill their part and maybe know some details. Running from one office to another to tell each other what is done, what should be done or what problems appeared, may lead to time waste and useless loss of energy. The process can be easily simplified by using specific software.

"Add comments to the task" To Do List

- When you are delegated the task that is also assigned on your colleagues, start doing your part of the task
- When it's completed, don't hurry up to run to other team members and tell them that you did it or any other details about the task
- Use software to exchange the comments about the task with your colleagues

Action plan

1. Start your [team management software](#)
2. When you accomplish your part of the task, change its completion, e.g. to "50%", and your colleague will receive notification about it
3. If you need to tell them some additional details, add them into task comments section
4. In this case they will also receive the notification



Ask your manager to delegate the tasks that you are unable to accomplish to other employee

Ask for the help when you can't do the task

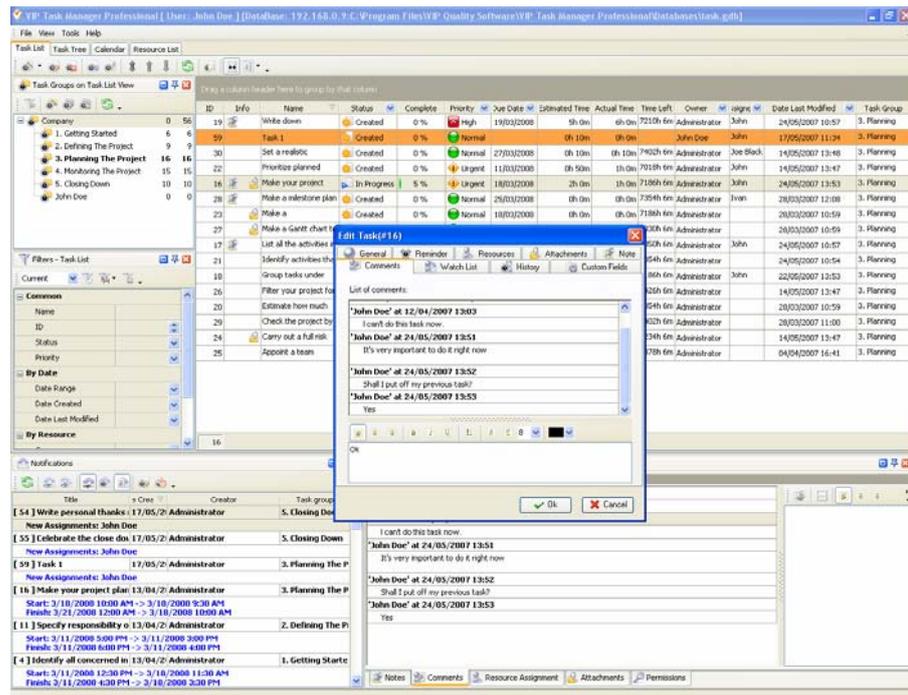
If you are delegated a task that you are unable to perform because of your lack of knowledge or time, don't hesitate to discuss it with your employer. If you attempt to accomplish this task, you'll have chances to procrastinate with it, feel stress during its implementation or don't finish it at all. It would be smarter to explain it to the manager and ask him/her to delegate this task to other employee who has capabilities to accomplish it properly. In such case you will have the possibility to focus on those tasks that you have skills to cope with.

"Ask for the help" To Do List

- If you are delegated a task that you are unable to perform, don't be shy to confess in it
- Explain your manager why you can't do it by yourself and ask him/her to delegate it to other team member
- Use software to add comments to the task

Action plan

1. Start your [team management software](#)
2. Open the task you are unable to perform
3. Explain this situation to the manager using task comments section
4. Continue doing the tasks you are skilled in



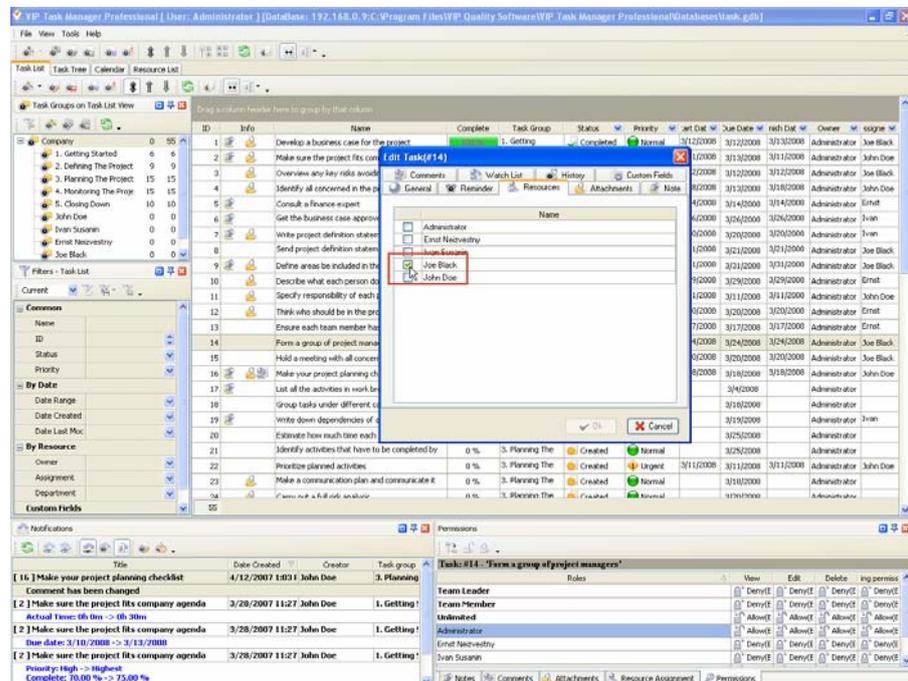
How to save your time by delegating the project to a group of employees

Delegating to the group of employees is more effective

If you need to delegate a project to a group of employees you should better do it simultaneously. When you assign the task to other person, you first explain him or her the whole picture of the project, its goals and other details regarding this work. If you go and approach each team member of the group separately it will probably take up a huge amount of time and you will need to repeat your description over again. It will be better if you gather everybody, who you are going to delegate to, and simultaneously discuss the project. This way you will save your time and energy and more closely approach all questions.

"Delegate to a group of employees" To Do List

- If you have a project to delegate it to a group of people, don't try to do it separately
- Set the time for discussion and let each participant of the meeting know about it
- Explain your team what you want to get at the end of project accomplishment and the ways to achieve it
- Use software to assign particular task to the group of employees, let



them know about it and enter task details to notes section

Action plan

1. Start your [team management software](#)
2. Create a new task
3. Select Resources tab and check the employees, who you are going to assign this task to
4. Select Notes tab and enter required task details into Notes section

Train your employees before delegating tasks

Does your employee have enough skills to do the task you delegate?

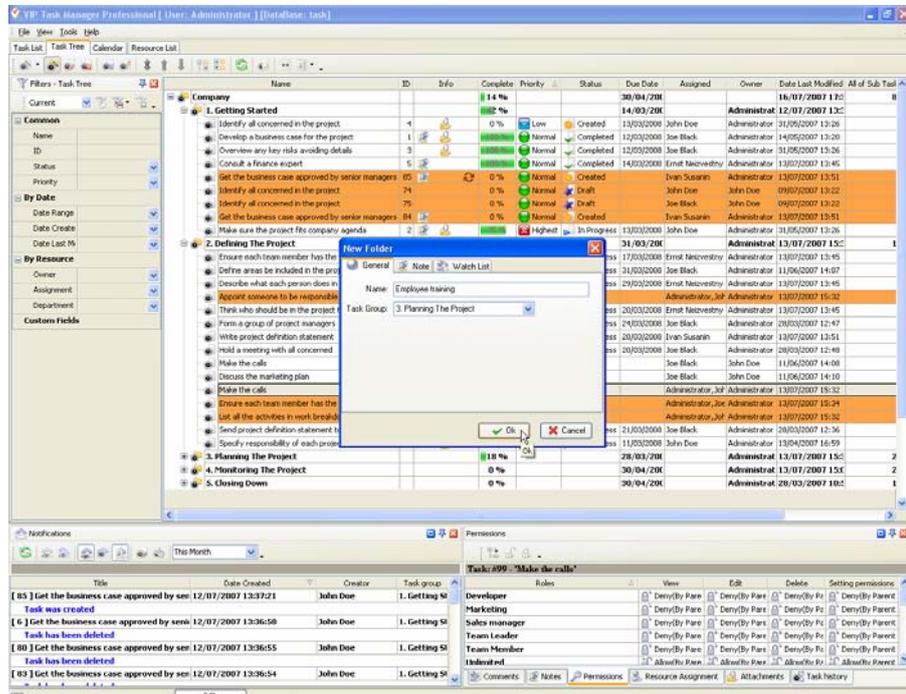
If you delegate tasks to your employees you should first train their skills for these specific tasks. The team member who you assign the task to may not have enough knowledge to accomplish the task or just doesn't know what you want to get at the end. It doesn't mean that he or she can't cope with your task. You just need to explain your employee what should be done and if it's required teach him or her how it should be done. It will help you to save your time when you check completed tasks. Next time when you delegate similar task to this team member, he or she will be ready to accomplish it.

"Train the staff before delegating" To Do List

- When you are going to delegate the task think about the person who has more chances to accomplish it
- Explain your employee what you want to get when the task is completed and only after that assign the task to this person
- Determine the skills your employee lacks to do the tasks
- Train employee's skills for accomplishing this kind of tasks
- Use software to schedule your staff training

Action plan

1. Start [your scheduler software](#)
2. Create a new task group "Employee Training"
3. Make a list of tasks that will train your employee to do the things you would like to delegate



Consider employee's choice with whom he or she would like to team up

Supporting employee's interests you can raise their productivity

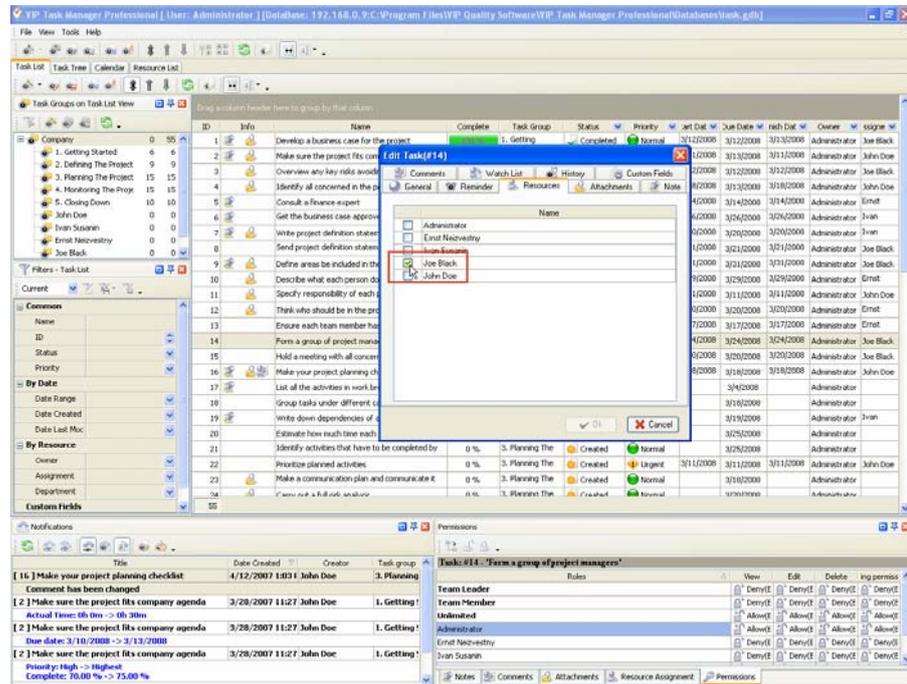
If you want your staff to work productively and successfully you have to provide them with favorable work conditions. One of these conditions is the ability of your employee to influence the choice about the person he or she has to work with. If your employee is teamed up on a task with a colleague whose work style may cause conflicts it will be unpleasant for both of them to work together on this task. The only thing to do is to discuss this question with your employee and to find the person who he or she would like to work with so the result of their team-work would be significant. Doing so you give them possibility to finish the assigned task effectively and benefit the company.

"Reassign the task" To Do list

- Listen to your employee reasons why he or she can't work with particular person he or she was teamed up with
- If these reasons are objective discuss another candidatures who also could do this task
- Cancel your first assignment and delegate this task to the person who suits everybody
- Use software to delegate the task from one employee to another

Action plan

1. Start your [team management software](#)
2. Think about the person who would be capable to accomplish the task and suits everybody
3. Open the task concerning your employee
4. Change the assignment of the task from one employee to another



Develop individual approach for each employee who you delegate to

Each employee has a different approach to tasks

Each person has his or her own skills and capabilities and this has material effect on their work and effectiveness. Some people could do the task standing on their head, others may need a bit of direction and coaching. The result of the task very largely depends on employee's approach to its accomplishment. Competent manager must take into account this factor. As he decide who should undertake the task he has to make an assessment of this particular employee's skills and potential and change the approach to the task accordingly. Only in such way the required result will be achieved.

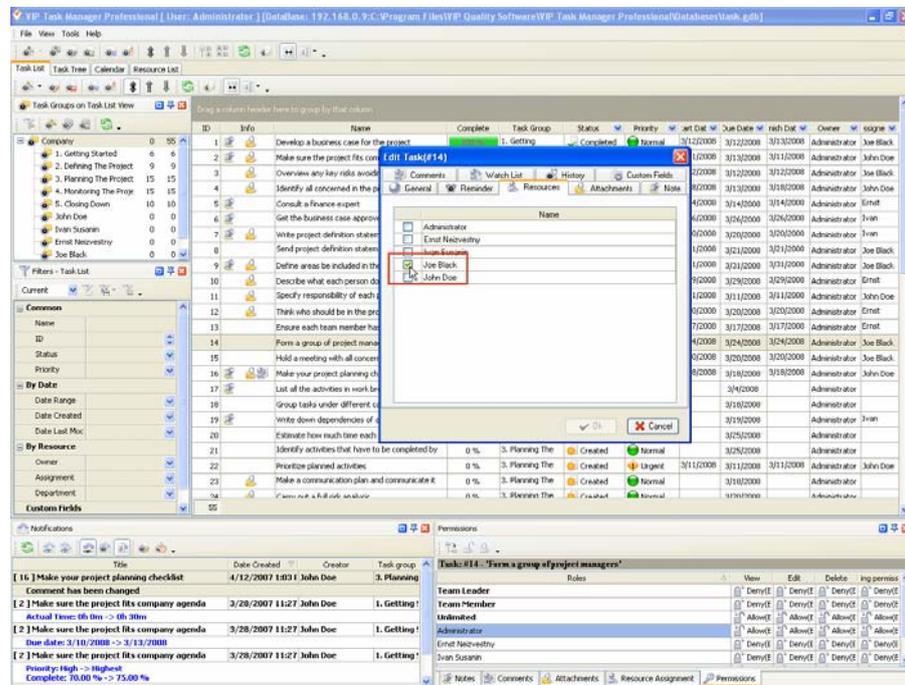
"Develop task approach while delegating" To Do List

- Define the person you want the task to delegate to and assess his or her potential

- Accordingly to your analysis and the result that you want to get, develop the approach to this task
- Clearly describe your employee what you want to get at the end of his work and how he should do it
- Use software to list the task, assign it to particular employee and describe its details

Action plan

1. Start your [team management software](#)
2. Create the task you want to delegate
3. Track the resource list to select the employee, assess his or her capabilities
4. Assign the task to selected employee and enter its details into task Notes section



Don't try to heap everything on your shoulders

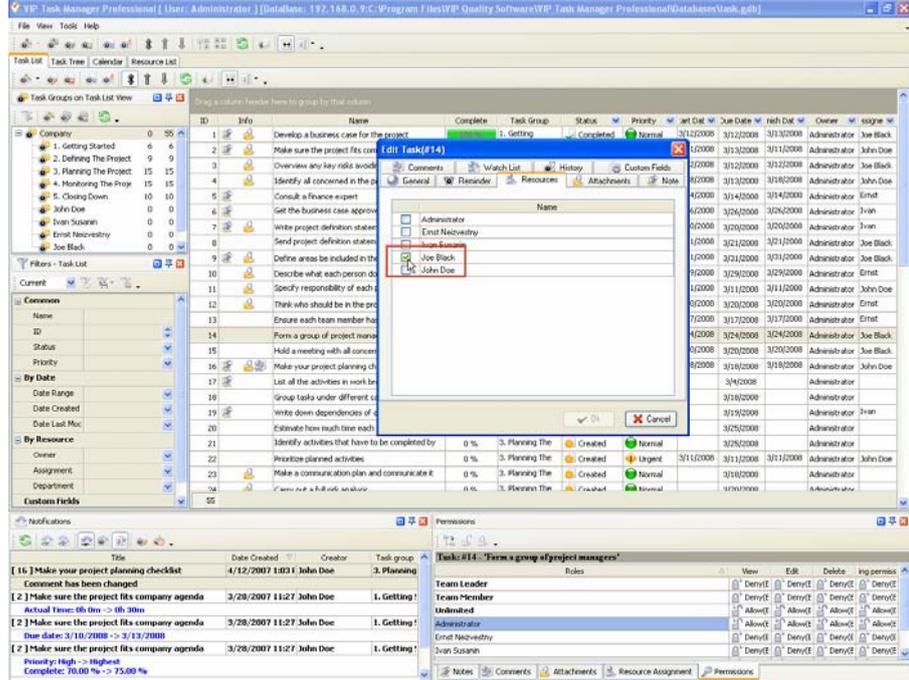
One man no man

Very often business owner tries to do the whole work by himself. In his opinion he and only he can do everything and will accomplish the whole work better than others. Even if he is worth the whole team he will soon feel himself overwhelmed and consequently get mediocre results. Instead of heaping everything on his shoulders he would better turn his energy to develop new business ideas or directions of his company activities. So it would be a lot smarter to delegate considerable amount of his tasks to his employees. It's a great way to save time, energy and to focus on things determining company's course.

"Delegate the tasks to your employees" To Do List

- Look through your tasks and define those you can delegate to your employees instead of doing them by yourself
- When setting tasks describe the requirements as clear as possible to avoid misunderstanding from your employee
- Think of the skills each of your employees has and assign the task to one who is capable to do this particular task better than others

- Use software to create a task, assign it to particular employee and describe all details concerning it



Action plan

1. Start your [team management software](#)
2. Track your Task List to find the tasks you can delegate to somebody
3. Enter detailed task description into the task notes section
4. Assign the task to your employee

Check if the person you delegate the task is not overloaded

Overload will hardly stimulate your employee productivity

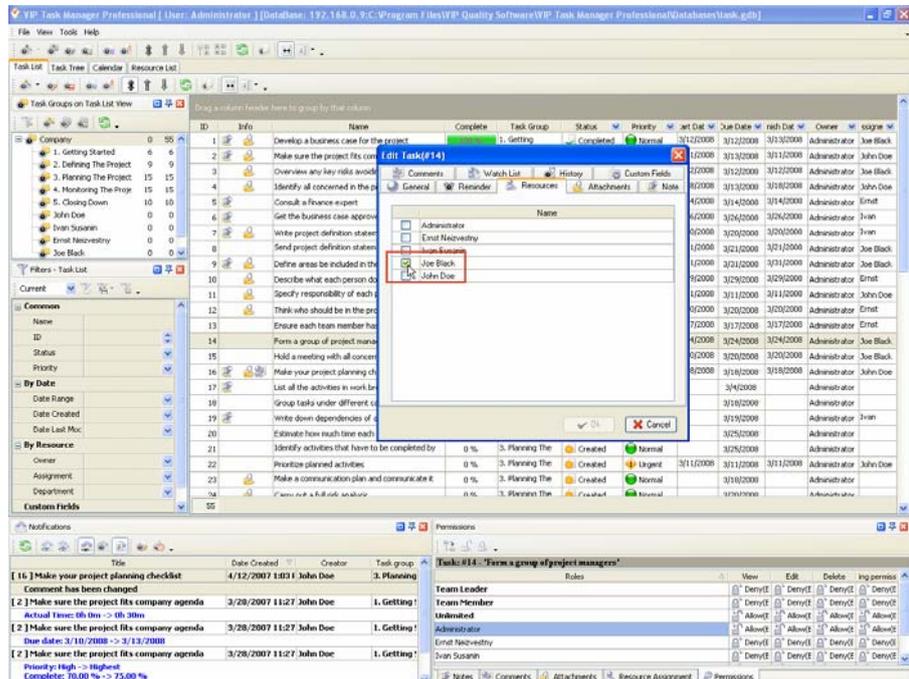
If you add one more task to the person who is overloaded, it won't help you to accomplish the work but will make him feel more stress. This feeling will hardly stimulate him working faster and more effective. That's why you should be careful while delegating tasks to other people. Task management software can help you make the delegation more effective and productive.

Delegate to the right person in the right time

Make sure the employee who you assign the task to can do it today at all. Track his or her today task list to analyze the estimated time of all his existing tasks, their priority and performance status. Maybe it's better to delegate this task to another person who is also able to do it, has enough knowledge and skills for this particular task and is less busy at that moment. Or wait if it's possible till the next day when your employee has much time to focus on this new task.

Action plan

1. Start your [team management software](#)
2. Set filter to display only tasks assigned to particular employee on today
3. Right click on footer under the Estimated Date column and select 'Sum' to track the total estimated time of his or her current tasks
4. Sort the tasks by their priority to see if he has important or urgent tasks



5. According to the situation assign new task to that or other person on that or next day

Assign one person to one task

One task, one employee

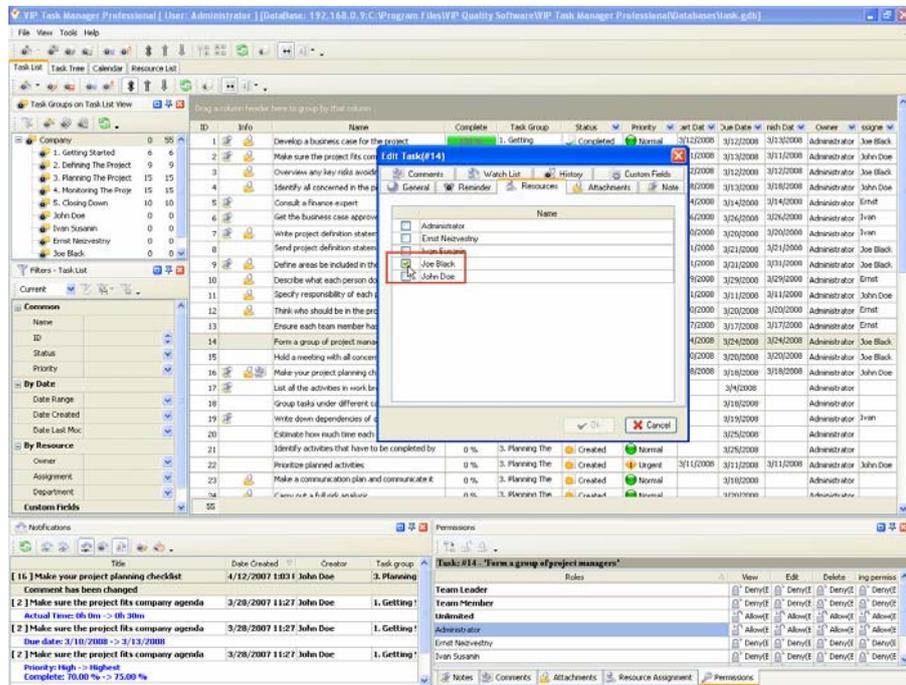
If you assign two or more people to do one task it means that this task is not correctly set. There may be exceptions but in most cases the "finite task" can be done by one executor at a time. When you delegate a task "Make product presentation" and assign John, Paul and Bill to organize everything, this task has much more chances not to be done the way you want it to.

Delegation hint

Each time you think of delegating a task to more than one employee, it is a hint for you that this task should be broken down to several subtasks. So the task "Make product presentation" becomes a 'task group' and contains the tasks "Write product description, main features and benefits" assigned to John, "Take pictures of the product" assigned to Bill and "Create presentation document in PDF format" assigned to Paul. It will take you a couple of minutes more, but will save your team from possible procrastination.

Action plan

1. Start your [team management software](#)
2. Create a task group
3. Create tasks within this task group
4. Assign each task to only one employee



Make sure your team members know the goals

Why your team members should understand the goals

When team members don't know why they do certain tasks, they can do the tasks not in the way you want them to. You, as a team leader, know the reasons why this or that task should be done because you see the whole picture, when you assign the tasks to your team. However, your team may not understand the goals so clear as you, because they see only part of the project or plan.

3. Add notes that will help you to continue the work on this task faster in the future
4. Apply the notes to the task

Keep the manager informed about your task state

How to keep the manager aware of your work

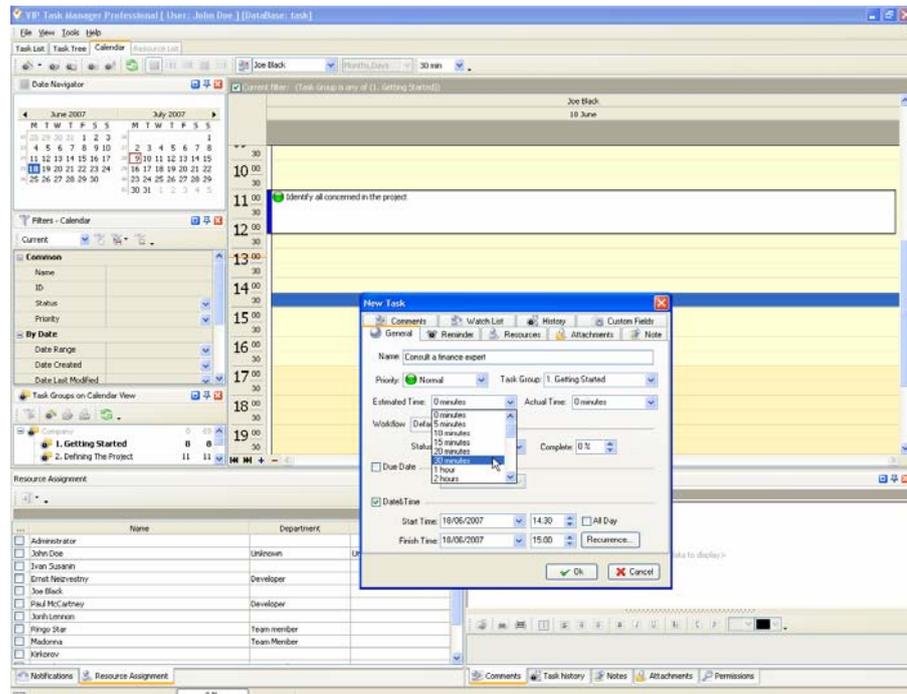
Let's imagine the situation that when you are doing some task, your team leader approaches you and asks how much is already done and how much it will take you to complete it. This question may distract you from the work and make feel pressure and stress. But you can't complain against team leader's meddling, as it's his legal right to control your work and take an interest in your task estimated and actual time in order to plan your further working process. The best thing you can do in such case is to use specific software that will help you to keep the manager aware of the current state of your To Do List.

“Tasks in real time mode” To Do List

- When you start doing the task, record its estimated time in order to let your manager realize how much you may need to accomplish this task successfully
- While doing the task note the changes in task status and completion degree
- Inform your manager when the task is completed
- Use software to enter task estimated time and change task status and completion

Action plan

1. Start your [team management software](#)
2. Enter task Estimated Time
3. When doing the task, change its 'Complete' field value
4. Change task status to 'Complete' when the task is accomplished



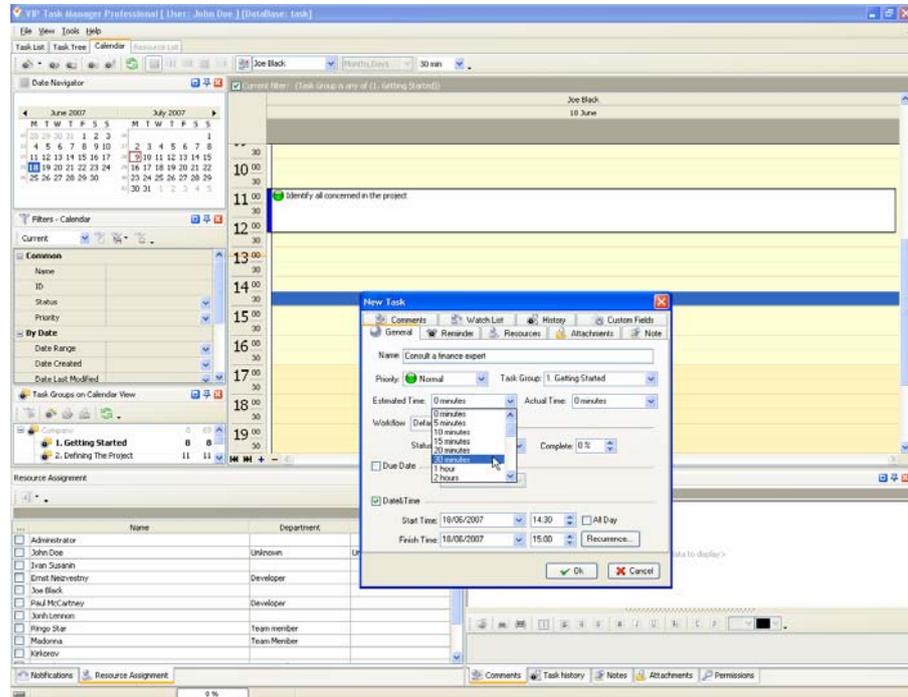
How to make yourself accomplish complex task

Complex task should be encouraging

As is often the case, it's very difficult to make yourself start doing complex task. The result is permanent procrastinations. How can you struggle against it? Here is one simple tip. Select the small part of the task that you can accomplish during the half an hour. Invent some reward for this part of the task, e.g. a cup of coffee or scanning your favorite magazine. Now it will be easier for you to start the task. And once you started it, you may become enthusiastic about this task and spend much time for its accomplishment then you planned. After that enjoy your reward and the work you've done.

"Set the reward and start working" To Do List

- If you have a task that you procrastinate with, stop putting it off! Divide the task into smaller ones
- Select the easiest small part of the task, assign half an hour for its accomplishment and set the reward that you will get in half an hour
- When you start doing the task, remember that the reward is guaranteed
- In a half an hour as soon as you want to stop, get your reward and enjoy it
- Use software to assign the task and the reward for its accomplishment



Action plan

1. Start your [task management software](#)
2. Select the task you procrastinated with
3. Select the small part of the task and assign a short time interval for it
4. Schedule some time for your reward for accomplishing this part of the task
5. Start doing the task

Start the task in advance to have enough time for unexpected obstacles

Don't put off till the last minute

When you have a task, try to proceed to it as soon as possible. Even if there are two weeks before its due date, don't put the task off if you have the possibility to accomplish it earlier. It's never possible to be sure in advance that there won't be any problems with task accomplishment. If you procrastinate with the task until the last minute, you may feel stress and overwhelming when doing it in a hurry and trying to overcome some problems. But if you start doing the task beforehand, you will have enough time to cope with all difficulties and successfully complete the task by its due date.

"Proceed to the task in advance" To Do List

- If you have a possibility to accomplish some extra task, open your Task List
- Find the task that is next in your schedule even if its due date expires not soon
- Start doing this task to have enough time to overcome any unexpected obstacles

- Use software to track your Task List and pick out some tasks to accomplish them in advance

Action Plan

1. Start your [task management software](#)
2. Set filter to display the tasks assigned to tomorrow or some other days in the future
3. Start doing this task in advance

The screenshot displays the VP Task Manager Professional software interface. The main window shows a task list with columns for ID, Info, Name, Status, Complete, Priority, Due Date, Actual Time, Owner, Finish Date, Assigned, Date Last Modified, and Task Group. A filter dialog box is open, allowing users to apply filters based on Date Range, Date Created, Date Last Modified, By Resource, and Custom Fields. The task list includes tasks such as 'Write down', 'Identify activities', 'Appoint a team', 'Check the project', 'Make a Gantt', 'Write down', 'Prioritize planned', 'Estimate how', 'List all the', 'Group tasks', 'Make a', and 'Carry out a full'. A detailed view of a task is shown on the right, titled 'Task #14: Make your project planning checker!', with a list of steps for upgrading to the latest version.

Keep to your working plan to avoid distractions during the day

Interrupt or go ahead

When you made your working plan, it means that you've done the first step to your success. The second step to success is to keep to the plan you've worked out. In real life we have lots of distractions that may appear almost each minute and tempt us to interrupt our planned tasks. If you fall under the influence of all emergent obstacles, you may lose the sense of time and fail with your plans. That's why if you want to achieve success and avoid wasting time, you need to carefully keep to the plan you've worked out.

"Keep to your plan" To Do List

- When you start your work at the beginning of the day, keep to your today plan nearby
- When you complete definite task, avoid distracting to something secondary
- Interrupt your planned work only in case of absolute necessity
- Firmly keep to your today plan and put on hold all nascent tasks
- Use software to keep to your plan during the work

Action plan

1. Start your [task management software](#)
2. Filter tasks to display ones assigned on today
3. Follow your task list while accomplishing tasks

This screenshot is identical to the one above, showing the VP Task Manager Professional software interface. It displays a task list with various filters and a detailed view of a task titled 'Task #14: Make your project planning checker!'. The interface includes a menu bar, a toolbar, and a main task list area with columns for task details. A filter dialog box is open, and a detailed task view is shown on the right side of the window.

4. Create new tasks if they appear but don't interrupt your work because of them

Determine the importance of your task before doing it

How to determine the most important 20% of the tasks

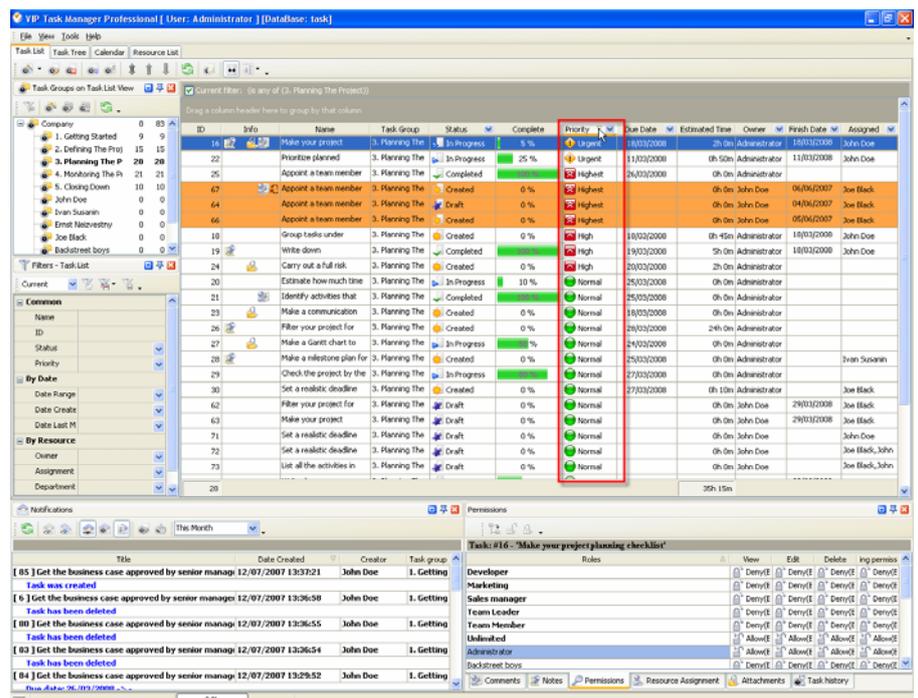
It's very important to determine the importance and value of your tasks before you start accomplishing them. If you pick out the most important 20% of all your tasks, they will cause 80% of your future results. It's well-known Pareto principle. How can you determine whether a task is important or not? Think about the consequences of task non-fulfilment or delay. Consider long-term advantages of this task. If this has significant influence on your or your team mates' future results, then it's exactly one of your most important tasks. Accomplishing this and other similar tasks, you will get 80% of your goals and success.

"Consider task importance" To Do List

- Look at your task list and think about each task importance
- Think what consequences may have each particular task, whether it has long-term benefits that will significantly influence your future work
- Think if this task procrastination will affect others and have damaging results in your future work
- If it is really necessary for you and your team to accomplish this task, set higher priority to it; to less significant tasks set lower priority
- Before doing the tasks, first sort them by their priority and start accomplishing the most important ones
- Use software to set tasks priority and sort them by priority

Action plan

1. Start your [task management or organizer software](#)
2. Create your task list
3. Consider each task importance and in accordance with it set its priority
4. Before start doing the tasks, sort them by their priority
5. Start doing the tasks



| ID | Name | Task Group | Status | Complete | Priority | Due Date | Estimated Time | Owner | Finish Date | Assigned |
|----|----------------------------|-----------------|-------------|----------|----------|------------|----------------|---------------|-------------|-----------------|
| 16 | Make your project | 3. Planning the | In Progress | 5% | Urgent | 11/03/2008 | 0h:00m | Administrator | 15/03/2008 | John Doe |
| 22 | Prioritize planned | 3. Planning the | Completed | 100% | Urgent | 11/03/2008 | 0h:00m | Administrator | 11/03/2008 | John Doe |
| 25 | Appoint a team member | 3. Planning the | Completed | 100% | Highest | 26/03/2008 | 0h:00m | Administrator | | |
| 67 | Appoint a team member | 3. Planning the | Created | 0% | Highest | | 0h:00m | John Doe | 06/04/2007 | Joe Black |
| 64 | Appoint a team member | 3. Planning the | Draft | 0% | Highest | | 0h:00m | John Doe | 04/04/2007 | Joe Black |
| 66 | Appoint a team member | 3. Planning the | Created | 0% | Highest | | 0h:00m | John Doe | 05/04/2007 | Joe Black |
| 10 | Group tasks under | 3. Planning the | Created | 0% | High | 18/03/2008 | 0h:45m | Administrator | 18/03/2008 | John Doe |
| 19 | Write down | 3. Planning the | Completed | 100% | High | 19/03/2008 | 5h:00m | Administrator | 18/03/2008 | John Doe |
| 24 | Carry out a full risk | 3. Planning the | Created | 0% | High | 25/03/2008 | 2h:00m | Administrator | | |
| 20 | Estimate how much time | 3. Planning the | In Progress | 10% | Normal | 25/03/2008 | 0h:00m | Administrator | | |
| 21 | Identify activities that | 3. Planning the | Completed | 100% | Normal | 25/03/2008 | 0h:00m | Administrator | | |
| 23 | Make a communication | 3. Planning the | Created | 0% | Normal | 18/03/2008 | 0h:00m | Administrator | | |
| 26 | Filter your project for | 3. Planning the | Created | 0% | Normal | 28/03/2008 | 24h:00m | Administrator | | |
| 27 | Make a Gantt chart to | 3. Planning the | In Progress | 50% | Normal | 24/03/2008 | 0h:00m | Administrator | | |
| 28 | Make a milestone plan for | 3. Planning the | Created | 0% | Normal | 25/03/2008 | 0h:00m | Administrator | | |
| 29 | Check the project by the | 3. Planning the | In Progress | 50% | Normal | 27/03/2008 | 0h:00m | Administrator | | |
| 30 | Set a realistic deadline | 3. Planning the | Created | 0% | Normal | 27/03/2008 | 0h:10m | Administrator | | |
| 62 | Filter your project for | 3. Planning the | Draft | 0% | Normal | 0h:00m | 0h:00m | John Doe | 29/03/2008 | Joe Black |
| 63 | Make your project | 3. Planning the | Draft | 0% | Normal | 0h:00m | 0h:00m | John Doe | 29/03/2008 | Joe Black |
| 71 | Set a realistic deadline | 3. Planning the | Draft | 0% | Normal | 0h:00m | 0h:00m | John Doe | | John Doe |
| 72 | Set a realistic deadline | 3. Planning the | Draft | 0% | Normal | 0h:00m | 0h:00m | John Doe | | Joe Black, John |
| 73 | List all the activities in | 3. Planning the | Draft | 0% | Normal | 0h:00m | 0h:00m | John Doe | | Joe Black, John |
| 28 | | | | | | | 35h:15m | | | |

Use Pareto principle when start doing your tasks

80/20 rule - what is it and how to use it?

When you want to accomplish particular task, don't just plunge into doing it. Like everywhere in your life, you can apply Pareto principle in your everyday work. It means that 20% of all the efforts cause 80% of final results, while other 80% of your efforts cause only 20% of final results. The same rule works for your Task List. Let's say you have a goal "to make 1 million \$ a year" and planned many tasks to reach this goal. According to statistics

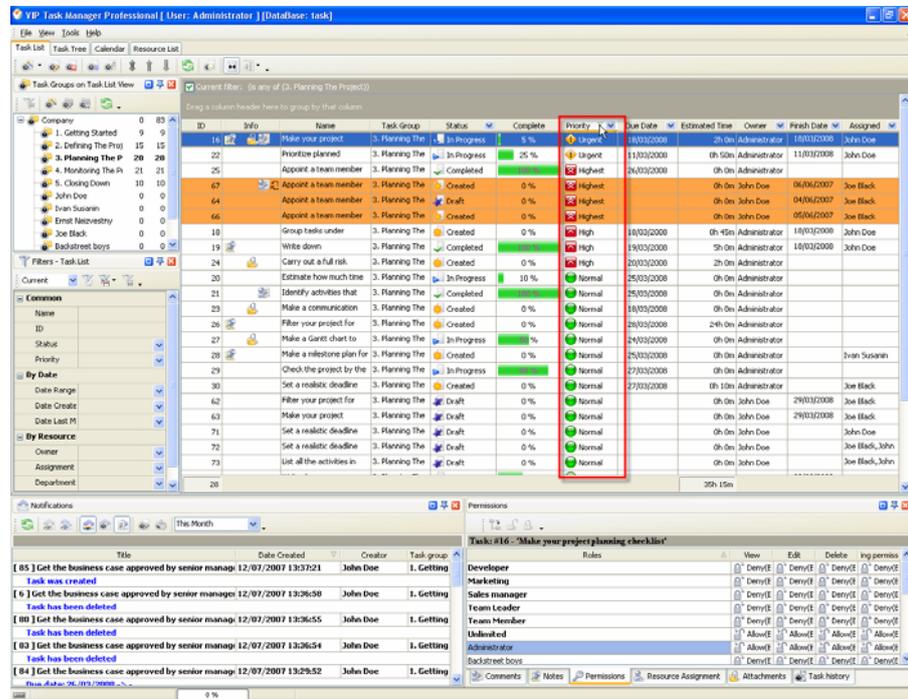
80% of your tasks are not so effective as 20% that really get you closer to your dream. So, it is logical that you should concentrate on these important tasks.

"20% of task list" To Do List

- When you have particular goal and many tasks to achieve it, don't hurry up doing all of them, first analyze your task list
- Pick out those tasks that are the most important for achieving your goal
- Set the higher priority for these tasks and accomplish them first of all
- Use software to track your task list and sort the tasks by their priorities

Action plan

1. Start your [task management software](#)
2. Create a task list
3. Set task priority to each of your tasks
4. Before you start accomplishing the tasks sort them by priority
5. Start doing the tasks with higher priority



Analyze your mistakes in order that you and your colleagues will avoid them in the future

Learn your experience and share it with your colleagues

While doing the task you may make some mistakes. If not analyzing them and keeping them in mind you or your colleagues will be repeating them again and again in the future. Before you throw away the task when it is completed you should learn the mistakes that were done during task accomplishment in order to avoid them in the future. Also it would be useful to share your experience with your teammates to prevent them from repeating your mistakes. If you act in such way, you will spend less time when doing next tasks and help your colleagues to increase their knowledge, save their time and energy.

"Learn your mistakes" To Do List

- Start your task management or team management software
- If you find out that you've made a mistake while doing the task, open it to make changes
- Select Note tab and enter the description of your mistake

- Save changes of the task
- Continue doing the task

Action plan

1. Start your [task management software](#)
2. Set filter to display tasks assigned on today
3. Sort tasks by their priority and select those one that has higher priority and differs from your previous work
4. Start doing the task
5. Continue your previous work when this task is completed

Start doing your part of the task so that everyone has time to do his one

Think not only about your own work but the whole team

It's a common situation that a task includes several steps to be accomplished. These steps may be assigned to different employees, and each of them has to wait till his colleague finishes his or her stage. If at least one of team members procrastinates with the accomplishment of his or her part of task, it will be the delay and stress for the whole team. To avoid such situations each employee should realize the importance of timely task accomplishment. If everybody does the task in good time, the whole team will get required successful results and avoid tress and disappointment.

"Accomplish task in good time" To Do List

- When you have a task in your To Do List, pay attention if the result that you will get after accomplishing it, is final or somebody else has to continue it
- If your task is only the part of a big task, estimate the time that your colleague needs to accomplish his or her stage of this task
- Estimate the time you need for your part of task and start doing it so that the whole task will be finished by its finish date
- Use software to track task resources and finish date and estimate the time you and your colleagues have to accomplish each part of task

Action plan

1. Start your [task management software](#)
2. Open the task you are assigned to, select Resources tab
3. If you are not the only person who is assigned to this task, estimate the time you and other employees need to accomplish the task in time

4. Set your own finish date in accordance with your estimation
5. Start doing the task so that you will be able to accomplish it in time

Make your short term to do list and concentrate your attention exactly on it

Why do you need short term task list?

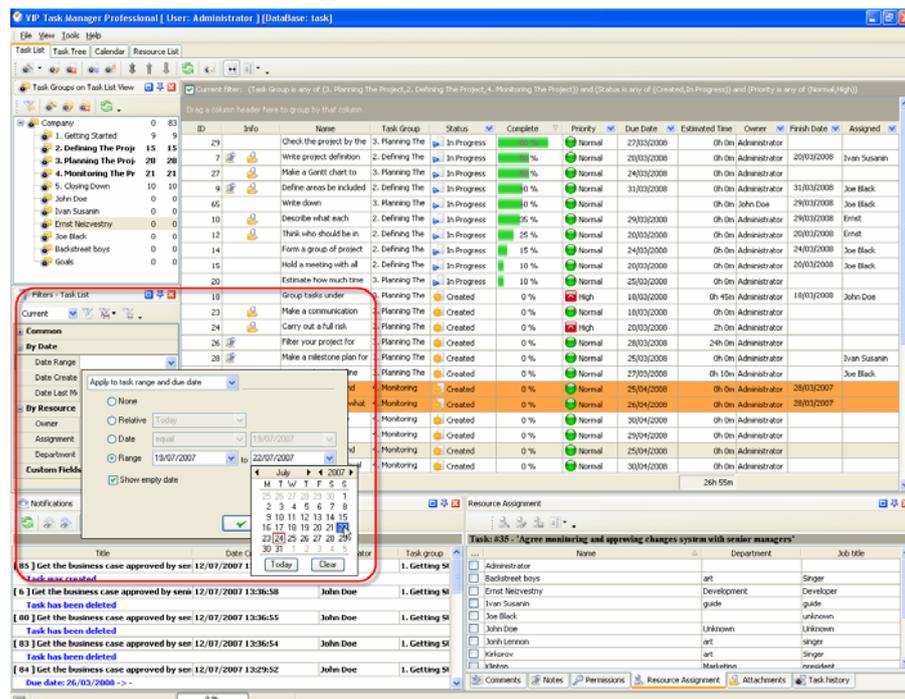
When you have too many tasks in your task list it's very difficult to orientate in it. Even if the most part of these tasks must be accomplished not this day or even this week, endless list of tasks will disappoint you and make feel stress. If you decrease the number of tasks in your current to do list and concentrate your attention only on those of them that should be done in the near future, you will avoid overwhelming and distraction. Just make your daily or weekly to do lists, use them during these periods of time and forget about your endless task list.

"Create daily or weekly list" To Do List

- Decide what kind of to do list is more suitable for you, for example daily, weekly or maybe you want to make a list of tasks on the nearest three or six days, etc.
- Pick out the tasks assigned on the time period that you are interested in, and make a to do list of these tasks
- Use software to filter your task list by due date and display only tasks concerning required time interval

Action plan

1. Start your [task management software](#)
2. Decide what kind of to do list is more suitable for you at this moment
3. Set filter to display tasks that should be done during required time interval
4. Start doing the tasks from this task list



Switch to other task when your mind gets tired from monotonous work

Our mind is in need of various kinds of activities

It's useful to do similar tasks together, but if you are doing them too long, you can find yourself in a routine. When you are occupied with the same monotonous work, your mind may get caught in an endless loop. Our mind works like a safety device. When it gets tired, it automatically stops concentrating on your current work and shifts

to something different. If you make your mind continue working exactly at this kind of tasks, you probably won't get required results. It would be more productive to switch to other task that also must be accomplished today, but differs from your current work. This will help you to refresh your mind and go on working effectively.

"Change your work direction" To Do List

- If you realize that your mind is tired of monotonous work, complete its current stage and pause
- Look through your today task list and select the task assigned on today with higher priority that differs from those that you were doing before
- Start doing this task and when you accomplish it continue the previous one
- Use software to filter tasks by their finish date, sort by priority and select required task to accomplish

Action plan

1. Start your [task management software](#)
2. Set filter to display tasks assigned on today
3. Sort tasks by their priority and select those one that has higher priority and differs from your previous work
4. Start doing the task
5. Continue your previous work when this task is completed

The screenshot displays the VP Task Manager Professional software interface. The main window shows a task list with columns for ID, Name, Task Group, Status, Complete, Priority, Due Date, Estimated Time, Owner, and Finish Date. The Priority column is highlighted in red, and a task with 'Highest' priority is selected. The interface also shows filters, notifications, and a permissions table.

| ID | Name | Task Group | Status | Complete | Priority | Due Date | Estimated Time | Owner | Finish Date | Assigned |
|----|----------------------------|-----------------|-------------|----------|----------|------------|----------------|---------------|-------------|-----------|
| 16 | Make your project | 3. Planning The | In Progress | 0% | Target | 10/01/2008 | 2h 0m | Administrator | 12/01/2008 | John Doe |
| 22 | Priority planned | 3. Planning The | In Progress | 95% | Target | 11/01/2008 | 0h 50m | Administrator | 11/01/2008 | John Doe |
| 25 | Appoint a team member | 3. Planning The | Completed | 100% | Highest | 24/01/2008 | 0h 0m | Administrator | 05/04/2007 | Joe Black |
| 67 | Appoint a team member | 3. Planning The | Created | 0% | Highest | 04/04/2007 | 0h 0m | John Doe | 04/04/2007 | Joe Black |
| 64 | Appoint a team member | 3. Planning The | Draft | 0% | Highest | 04/04/2007 | 0h 0m | John Doe | 04/04/2007 | Joe Black |
| 66 | Appoint a team member | 3. Planning The | Created | 0% | Highest | 05/04/2007 | 0h 0m | John Doe | 05/04/2007 | Joe Black |
| 18 | Group tasks under | 3. Planning The | Created | 0% | High | 18/03/2008 | 0h 45m | Administrator | 18/03/2008 | John Doe |
| 19 | Write down | 3. Planning The | Completed | 100% | High | 19/03/2008 | 5h 0m | Administrator | 18/03/2008 | John Doe |
| 24 | Carry out a full risk | 3. Planning The | Created | 0% | High | 20/03/2008 | 2h 0m | Administrator | 20/03/2008 | John Doe |
| 20 | Estimate how much time | 3. Planning The | In Progress | 10% | Normal | 25/03/2008 | 0h 0m | Administrator | 25/03/2008 | John Doe |
| 21 | Identify activities that | 3. Planning The | Completed | 100% | Normal | 25/03/2008 | 0h 0m | Administrator | 25/03/2008 | John Doe |
| 23 | Make a communication | 3. Planning The | Created | 0% | Normal | 18/03/2008 | 0h 0m | Administrator | 18/03/2008 | John Doe |
| 26 | Filter your project for | 3. Planning The | Created | 0% | Normal | 28/03/2008 | 24h 0m | Administrator | 28/03/2008 | John Doe |
| 27 | Make a Gantt chart to | 3. Planning The | In Progress | 10% | Normal | 24/03/2008 | 0h 0m | Administrator | 24/03/2008 | John Doe |
| 28 | Make a milestone plan for | 3. Planning The | Created | 0% | Normal | 25/03/2008 | 0h 0m | Administrator | 25/03/2008 | John Doe |
| 29 | Check the project by the | 3. Planning The | In Progress | 10% | Normal | 27/03/2008 | 0h 0m | Administrator | 27/03/2008 | John Doe |
| 30 | Set a realistic deadline | 3. Planning The | Created | 0% | Normal | 27/03/2008 | 0h 0m | Administrator | 27/03/2008 | John Doe |
| 62 | Filter your project for | 3. Planning The | Draft | 0% | Normal | 0h 0m | John Doe | 29/03/2008 | 0h 0m | John Doe |
| 63 | Filter your project for | 3. Planning The | Draft | 0% | Normal | 0h 0m | John Doe | 29/03/2008 | 0h 0m | John Doe |
| 71 | Set a realistic deadline | 3. Planning The | Draft | 0% | Normal | 0h 0m | John Doe | 29/03/2008 | 0h 0m | John Doe |
| 72 | Set a realistic deadline | 3. Planning The | Draft | 0% | Normal | 0h 0m | John Doe | 29/03/2008 | 0h 0m | John Doe |
| 73 | List all the activities in | 3. Planning The | Draft | 0% | Normal | 0h 0m | John Doe | 29/03/2008 | 0h 0m | John Doe |
| 28 | | | | | | | | | | |

Re-estimate the task while doing it, if you underestimated it while planning

Why do you need to re-estimate your schedule?

It is often difficult to estimate how much time tasks will take at the very start of a project. During tasks accomplishment you can face with unexpected problems that will slow down the process. If the schedule is not updated as you learn more about the project while working with it you are left with a wrong schedule. It may cause the muddle in your workflow and disorganize you. If you re-estimate the time you need on your tasks during their accomplishment and make corresponding changes in your schedule, you'll avoid disappointment and frustration and make yourself disciplined.

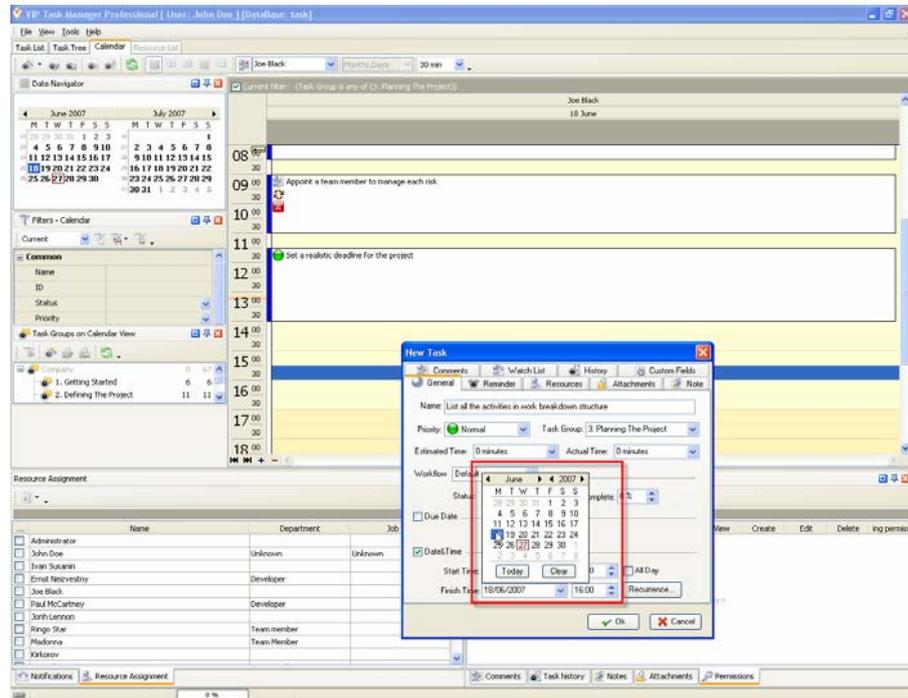
"Update your schedule" To Do List

- Estimate how much time you need to accomplish particular task
- Start doing this task and re-estimate the time if you face any difficulties or you underestimated the task
- On the basis of your conclusions update your schedule to make it more veritable

- Use software to over plan your schedule

Action plan

1. Start your [scheduler software](#)
2. Create a new task and set its start and finish date
3. When you start doing the task estimate actual time you need to accomplish it
4. Change task finish date in accordance with your analysis
5. Continue doing the task



Set goals for the tasks you have already started to do

Better later than never

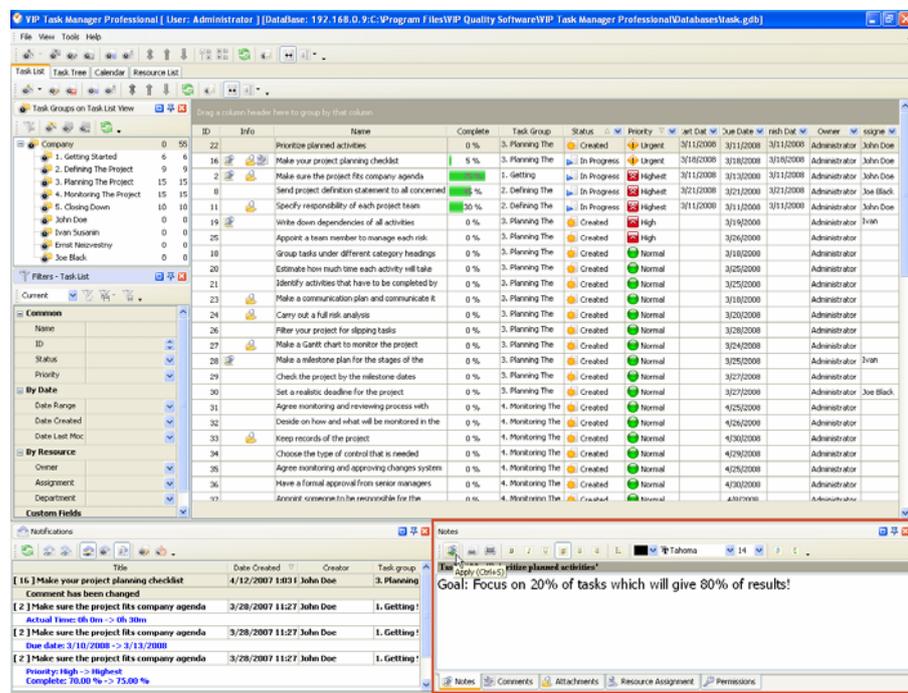
If you want to achieve anything significant you need first set your goals. However, in spite of the importance of goals setting we often pay little attention to this process. One of the excuse we have is lack of time. We start just doing the task thinking “I’ll set goals someday later when I get more time”, but we never end up finding the time. It would be more effective if you stop lying to yourself and putting off setting the goals. If you set the goals for your current tasks you may find that you don’t need to do it any more because it has a low priority, or alternatively you’ll realize that you are able to attain to more outstanding results and become more concentrated and focused on your aims.

"Set goals for current tasks" To Do List

- Think about the time when your mind is fresh to clearly formulate your thoughts
- Schedule goal setting at the time you’ve defined
- When the time comes look through your tasks and projects
- Use Notes section to set goals for each of them

Action plan

1. Start your [task management software](#)



2. Select the time in your timetable when it would be better to set your goals
3. Create a new task 'Goals setting'
4. Schedule this task at the time you've selected
5. At appointed time set the goals for all the tasks you are doing

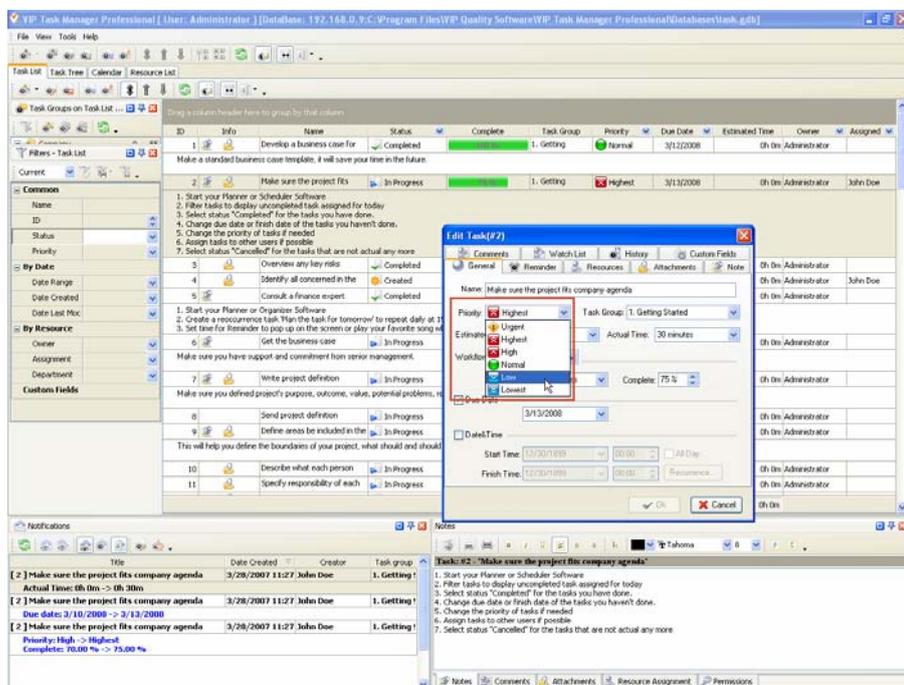
Never put off till tomorrow what you can do today

It's easier to put off the problem till tomorrow than think how to do it today

People often postpone the important or urgent tasks which they can do just now. It happens due to different reasons, but the main one is that they are used to do so. It's more convenient to put the problem off till some uncertain date than to think right now how to do it this day. The problem is that there is a risk that people won't accomplish this task at all. Or they can complete the task but no one will need the result anymore because the situation changes very quickly nowadays. If you want to avoid that it's necessary to teach yourself and your employees to look for the ways of doing the task this day rather than to search the reasons to put it off till later. It's not easy, but as soon as you replace your negative habit with positive one, the word 'procrastination' will leave your vocabulary forever.

"Do important and urgent tasks now" to do list

- Ask yourself how urgent the new task is at the moment and how important it is in future
- If the task has a high priority, look through your today tasks. Maybe it's necessary to put off the tasks with lower priority.
- Think what you should do to accomplish this task this day or at least start doing it if it's big enough.
- Use software to list the task into your To Do List and to work with it in future



Action plan

1. Start your [task management software](#)
2. Set filter to display tasks assigned to 'today'
3. Assign low priority task to some other day
4. Create a new task and set its priority

Discuss the task while doing it

Why it is good to discuss the tasks

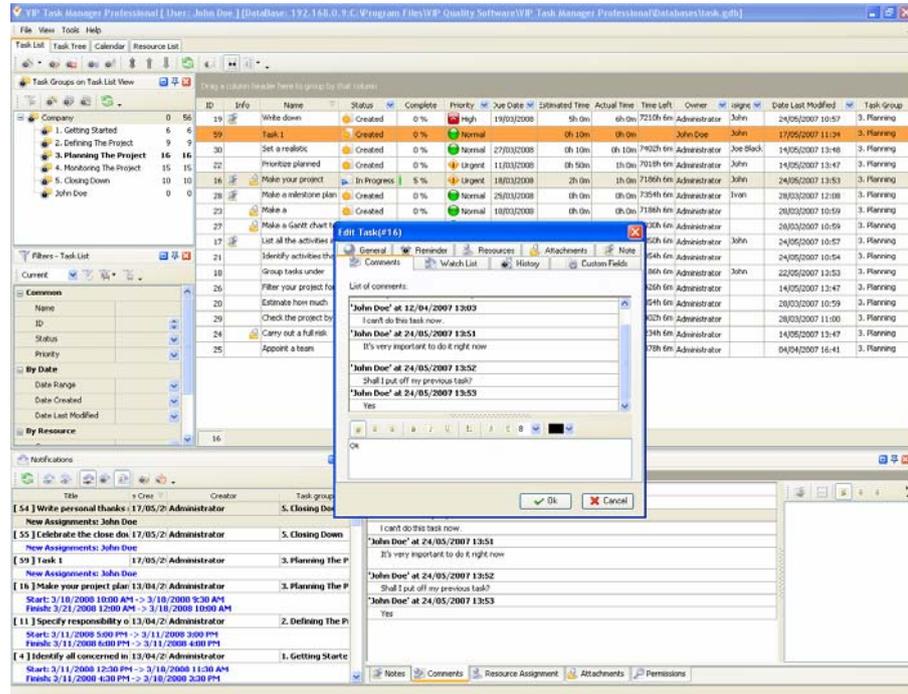
While doing a task your employee may have many questions on the task to discuss with you. The questions may arise due to some intermediate results he achieved, methods he should apply, unexpected changes in situation, an obstacle, etc. Without possibility to discuss all of this your employee may start procrastinating or doing the task the wrong way.

Use software for communication

If you and the person you would like to discuss the task with are not in the same room you can use some network communication software to exchange comments on the task, but it is better to use task management software with Task Comments feature. It will save the comments you've made so you will be able to return to the comments history later and refresh them in your mind.

Action plan

1. Start your [task management software](#)
2. Select a task you would like to discuss
3. Use Comments panel to enter your questions or answers
4. Look through the task comments when you need to refresh them in your mind



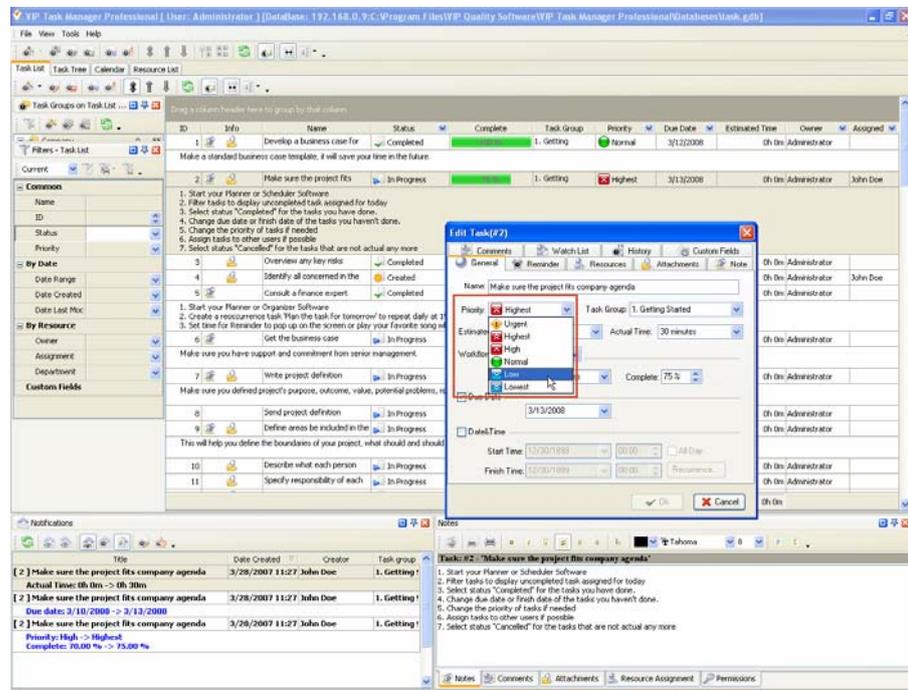
Being busy vs. being effective

Being busy is not the same as being effective

Busy people are always on the go. They have noisy phones, bursting e-mail inboxes, back-to-back meetings, they are always doing something, but it doesn't mean they spend their time productively. It sounds strange, but many of them waste much time. Just imagine the situation when the phone rings while you're answering an e-mail and your colleague is approaching your desk with a question. What should you do first: talk over the phone, keep working on e-mails or speak with your colleague? The right answer to these questions will make you more effective, the wrong answer will make you even busier.

Do the tasks with higher priority

There are always 101 factors affecting decisions about giving this or that task a higher priority. If the tasks are assigned to you, then it is a question to your boss. If it is your tasks then only you know the right answer. When you have a new task on your to do list, the main thing before starting this task is to stop and ask yourself several questions such as "Is this important?", "Is this urgent?" "What deadlines should I meet?", etc. Once you answer them, use priority tools of your time management



software to arrange your business time more effectively.

Action plan

1. Start your [to do list software](#)
2. Enter tasks you have to do as soon as they appear
3. Set priority for each of the tasks
4. Sort the tasks by their priority

Focus on what you are doing at the moment

Mind blinkers

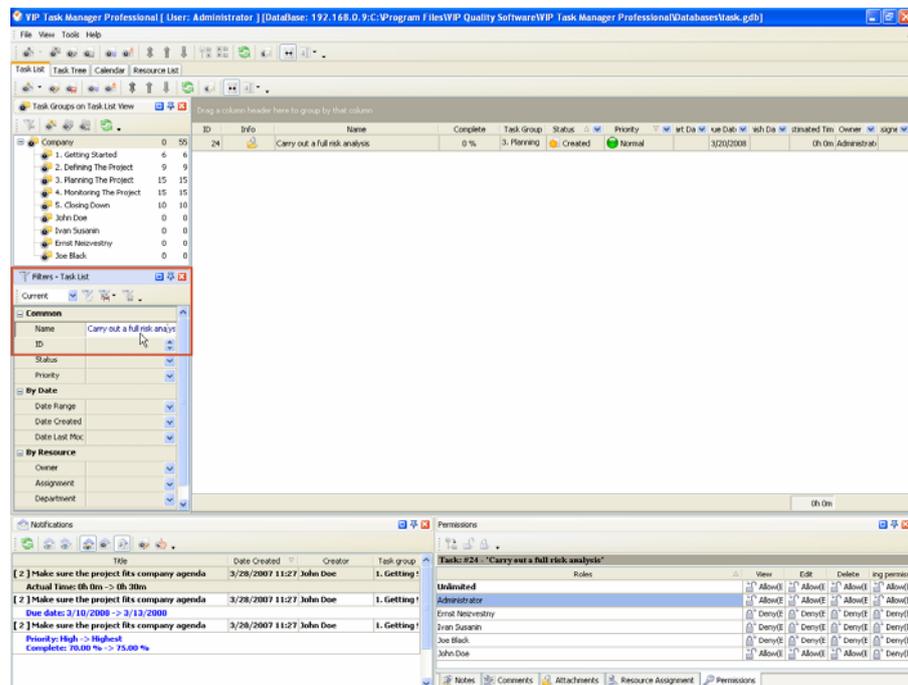
Focusing on the tasks we are doing is 50% of its successful completion. It is a simple advice, yet it is very difficult to follow as our attention is distracted not only by other people, but also by our off-topic thoughts. We can easily put a "do not disturb" sign on our door and turn off your phone, however, we can not put 'blinkers' on our mind to focus on a task for more than 20 minutes.

Get focused but don't get stuck

We need to develop a habit that will help us focus on what we are doing now. Very often we lose focus because of other tasks we have on our to do list. When we know we need to do the task by all means, we can set filter to display only the task that should be done now. So each time we see the list with one task we realize we can move forward only when we complete it. Of course if we get stuck it is better to take a break or move to another task as sitting there stuck will not bring you to a solution.

Action plan

1. Start your [to do list software](#)
2. Enter the "Name" or the "ID" of the task in the Filters panel
3. Start doing the task
4. Click on "Clear Filter" button only when you complete the task.



Do the worst task first

Swallowing the frog

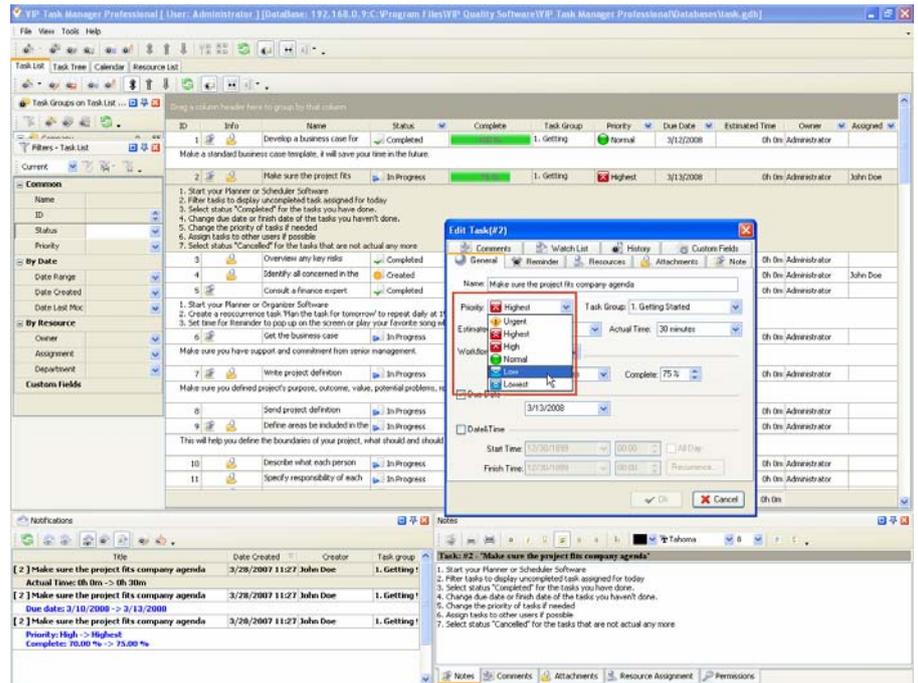
"If you start your day by swallowing the frog the rest of your day we seem perfect." In task management this joke means you should begin your working day by doing the thing you hate doing and postpone it to the end of the day (Of course when in the evening you don't have time for it). These tasks usually become "residents" of your task list and lead you to procrastination.

Some exceptions

In case the task is big enough you can do it during several days but at least moving it forward step by step. You will know that you are making progress and it will motivate you to finish it as soon as possible. Also, there may be some exceptions, for example, sometimes we don't completely understand how to do the task, - then you should look before you leap and it's better to do the task later, but don't put it on the shelf for too long.

Action plan

1. Start your [Planner or Scheduler Software](#)
2. Take a look at your Task List
3. Select the Task you should have finished long time ago.
4. Set the urgent priority for this Task.
5. If you don't have more urgent Tasks start doing it right now.



Tracking Tasks

How to track tasks to know what you have already done and what you have to do yet

Don't forget the task that you put off temporarily

Out of sight, out of mind

The task that you are assigned to do may become non-relevant at some moment and should be put off till the time when it is important again. It's a normal situation but the problem is that we can easily forget to come back to this task and it will never be accomplished. Postponed once, the problem is put aside and disappears from our mind till we come across it by chance. But when it happens, we probably don't need it any more. What can be done to avoid such situation?

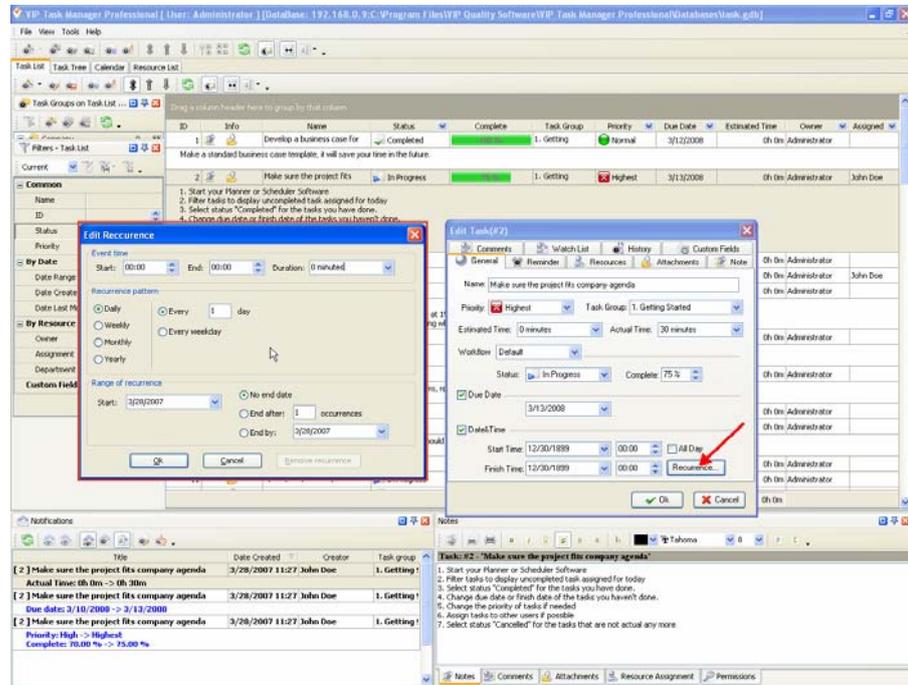
"Tracking postponed tasks" To Do List

- If you put off a certain task in your To Do List till some time, don't forget to come back to it
- Get into a habit to track the tasks that were postponed for some time

- Use software to create a recurrent task to track the tasks that you put off

Action plan

1. Start your [Task Management software](#)
2. Create a new task 'Track put off tasks'
3. Set it to repeat every week or every month
4. Continue doing your tasks



Compare what you've done and what you planned to do

Tracking the tasks can motivate you to accomplish more

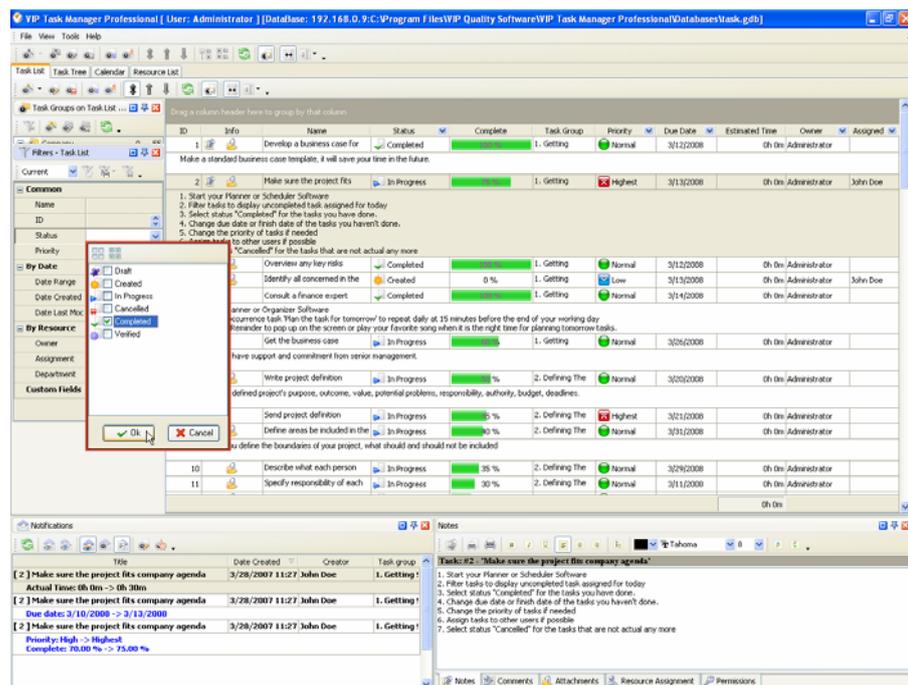
Comparing the tasks that you scheduled to this day and the tasks that you actually accomplished is very important part of work organization. Firstly, if the task is overdue and it happens more and more often, you can timely discover problems with your [time management](#) and start working on its improvement. Secondly, you will motivate yourself to work more productively when you realize that the task is accomplished in time or even earlier. So, in any case it's useful for your effectiveness to track your To Do List during the day.

"Tracking the tasks during the day" To Do List

- As you accomplished a task, mark it as completed and record the time that you spent on it
- During the day compare the state of your actual work with your today To Do List
- Make proper conclusions in accordance with your work results
- Use software to track the tasks assigned to this day

Action plan

1. Start your [task management software](#)
2. Set filter to display only the tasks assigned to this day
3. As you accomplished some task, change its status to 'Completed' and enter Actual time



- From time to time track the tasks and realize whether you are as productive as you planned



Track your plans and correct them if required

Everything changes and the plans also

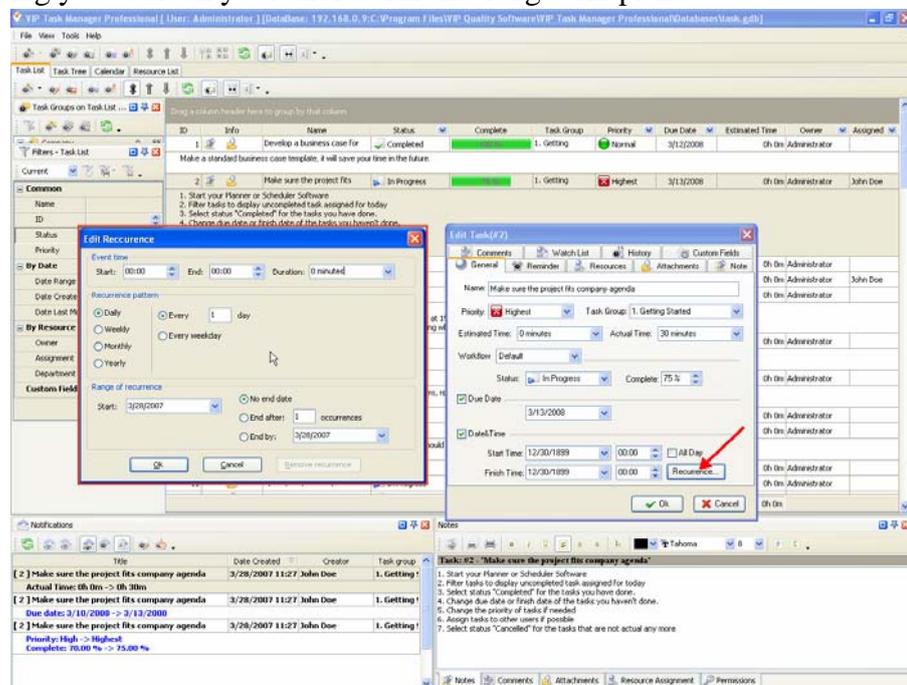
We live in a constantly changing world and it's naturally that the plans you made are not permanent at all. For example, your daily plan may need some changes during this day. The same is with your short-term, long-term plans and even with the main goals. There is nothing terrible in it, just the opposite it is recommended to revise the plans from time to time in spite of the period they are assigned to. It will help you to correct your goals and plans in time in accordance with the current obstacles.

“Tracking the plans” To Do List

- From time to time track all of your plans, whether they are daily, weekly or yearly
- It's recommended to track your short-term plan each one or two weeks
- Long-term plans should be tracked not less than each four or six months
- Once a year you should revise your main goals and consider whether they are as actual as were earlier or need some changes
- Use software to create the tasks reminding you to track your short-term and long-term plans

Action plan

- Start your [task management software](#)
- Create a new task ‘Track short-term tasks’ and assign it to repeat each week or two
- Create a new task ‘Track long-term tasks’ and assign it to each four or six months
- Create a new task ‘Track main goals’ and assign it to repeat once a year
- Make changes into your tasks, if required



Check if you are able to accomplish a task by its due date

Track your To Do List before accepting a new task

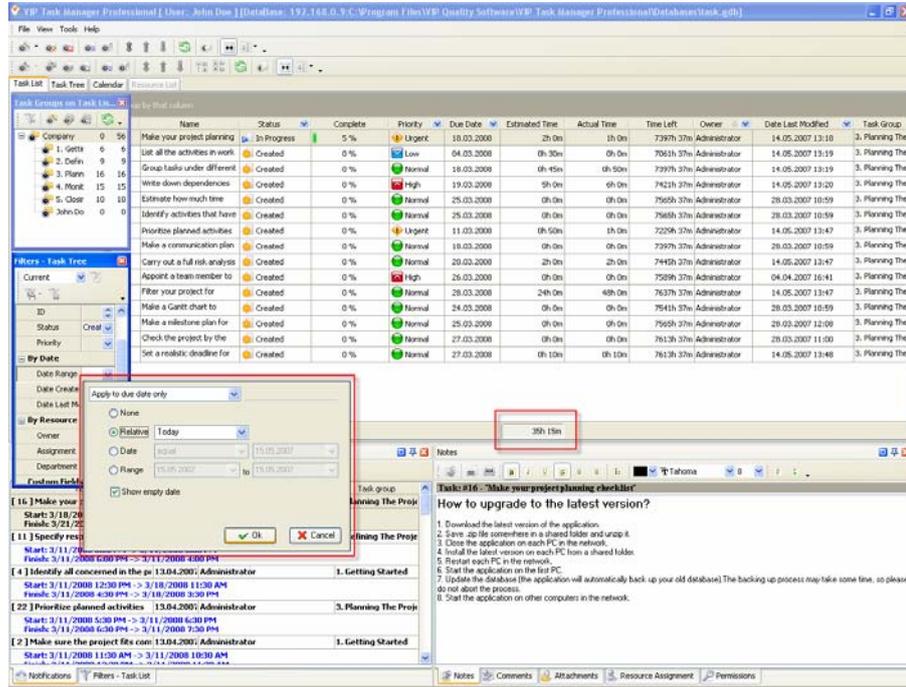
Almost each task has the date by which it should be accomplished. If the task is overdue, it may cause the procrastination with other assignments. Besides that, we start feeling stress and may lose self-confidence. But the reason of procrastination may be not in our skills or discipline, but in incorrect deadline setting. One of the mistakes is that we often agree with the due dates that are offered to us by other people and forget to co-ordinate them with our To Do List. If we first look at our current tasks and estimate when we can accomplish a new one, we'll avoid stress and procrastinations in the future.

“Due date setting” To Do List

- When you get a new task with the certain due date, don't hurry up to accept it as is
- Track your Task List and determine if the offered due date is possible for you
- If you realize that you won't have enough time to accomplish the task in time, discuss this question with the task owner and if it's possible correct task due date together
- Use software to track your tasks and add comments to the task

Action plan

1. Start your [task management software](#)
2. Set filter to display the tasks that must be accomplished by required date
3. If you have no time to fulfil a new task by its due date, open it and add comment to its owner
4. If it's possible, correct new task due date



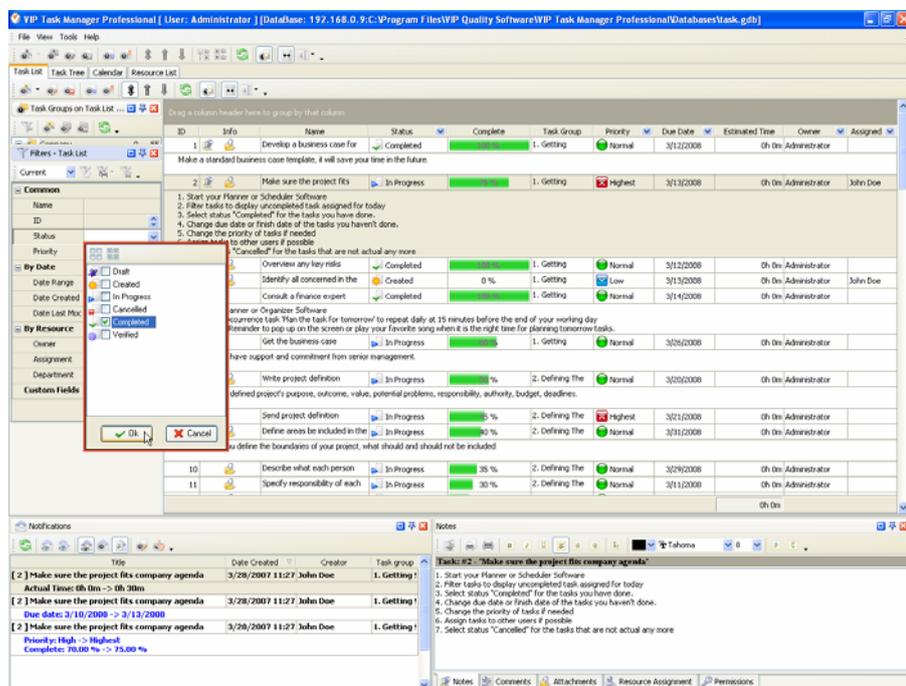
Track task Due date to avoid procrastinations

Discover the procrastinations in time

People often have a tendency to procrastinate with the tasks they have to accomplish. It may cause the stress, understated self-appraisal and the reputation of irresponsible person among other people. That's why it's very important to control the tasks to be accomplished in time. If you get into a habit to track how much time is left before task due date, you will be able to recognize the procrastination in time, take measures to overcome it, successfully complete the task and create a good impression on interested people.

"Avoid procrastinations" To Do List

- When you create a new task in your To Do List, record the date by which it has to be done
- From time to time track the tasks in your To Do List and estimate how much time is left before the due date of each task
- If there is some task you are procrastinating with, take required measures to accomplish it in time
- Use software to track the tasks by their due date



Action plan

1. Start your [task management software](#)
2. Display “Due Date” column on Task List grid
3. Set filter to display only uncompleted tasks
4. Track tasks’ Due Date and pay attention to those ones that must be accomplished soon

Complete undone tasks before you start new ones

Don't tackle a dozen jobs at once

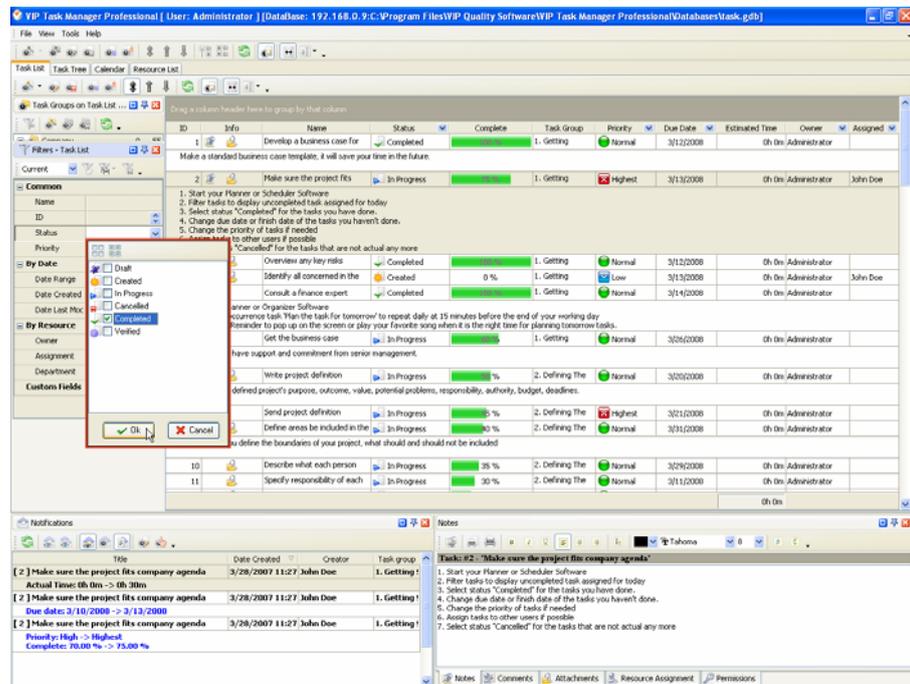
Have you ever faced with the situation that you have lots of unfinished tasks in your To Do List and you don't know what should be caught first? As everything seems to be important and urgent, you start feeling stress and overwhelming. It's better to avoid such situations in advance. Get into a habit not to start a new project till you have too much uncompleted projects or tasks into your Task List. Concentrate your efforts on accomplishing existing tasks faster and then proceed to planning and working on new ones.

“Complete existing tasks” To Do List

- Before you start working on a new project, check whether you are able to concentrate your attention on it
- If you have some uncompleted tasks in your To Do List, it's better to accomplish them first of all
- After all your current tasks are done, proceed to the new ones
- Use software to track uncompleted tasks

Action plan

1. Start your [task management software](#)
2. Set filter to display all undone tasks
3. Sort uncompleted tasks by their Priority field
4. Accomplish the tasks in accordance with their priority
5. Start planning new projects or tasks



How to store completed tasks more carefully

Give up keeping everything on your desk

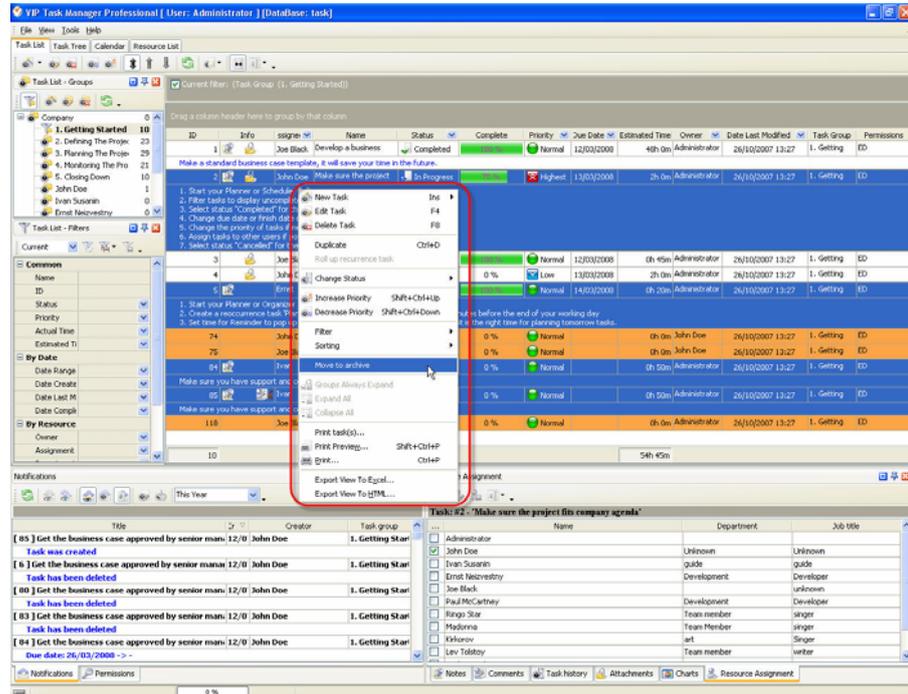
Sometimes there is a need to store some completed tasks or even the whole projects in order to track them somehow in the future. But if these tasks are somewhere on your desk, they may bring disorder to your work and distract your attention from your current tasks. Even if the task history is neatly lying in your file cabinet, you may spend much time to find required tasks. The best solution for such cases is to use software that can help you to keep the tasks in archive, access and filter them any time easily.

"Archive mode" To Do List

- When you have the tasks that are already completed but may be of use somehow in the future, move them to archive
- When you need to find some of these tasks, just go to archive and restore required tasks
- Use software to move the tasks to archive, set filter to display required tasks in archive mode and restore them

Action plan

1. Start your [task management software](#)
2. Right click on required tasks or task groups and select "Move to archive" from drop-down list
3. When you need some tasks from archive, use main menu command [File->Archive mode]
4. Set filter to display required tasks in archive mode
5. Right click on required tasks or task groups and select "Restore from archive" from drop-down list



Get a profit of each free minute in your working day

Accomplish one more task if you have time for it

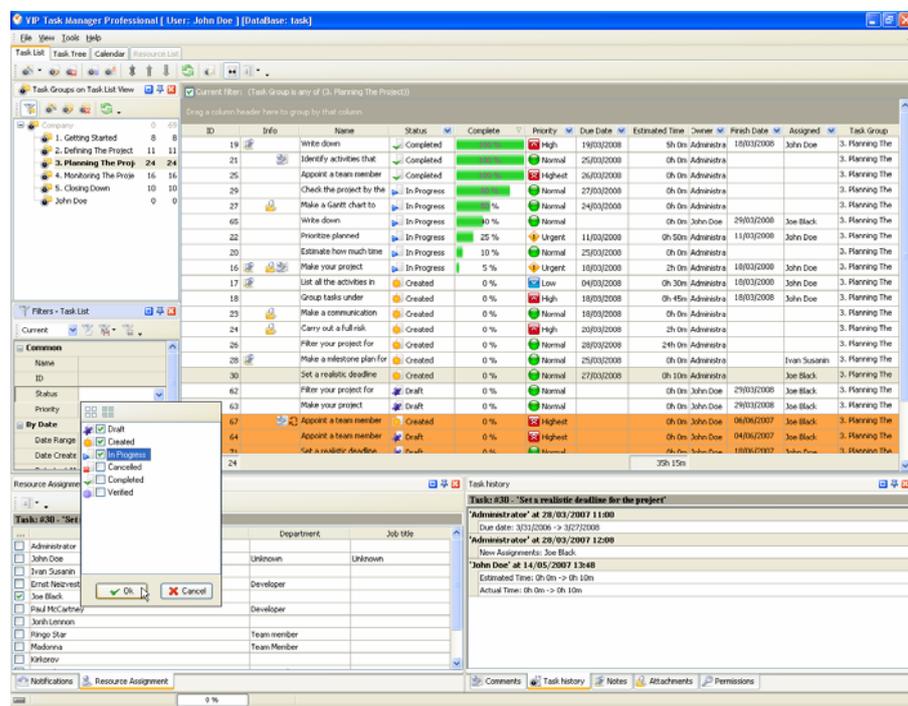
Let's imagine the situation, when you have some free time at the end of your working day and can accomplish one more task from your To Do List. In such situation we wouldn't recommend to start the task that you won't have time to accomplish this day, of course if it isn't urgent. It would be better to select the task that you will be able to finish at one sitting and won't need to divide into several approaches. As you estimate approximate time that each task may take, you can easily find required one and use your free time effectively and productively.

'Filtering by Estimated Time' To Do List

- Define how much time you have at your disposal to accomplish the task
- Track your To Do List and select the task that may be accomplished for this time
- Use software to track your task list and select required task to be accomplished

Action plan

1. Start your [task management software](#)



2. Set filter to display the tasks with required “Estimated Time” field, e.g. less than 30 minutes
3. Select the most appropriate task
4. Start doing the task

Estimate the time you need to check your employees work

Different tasks require different time for checking them

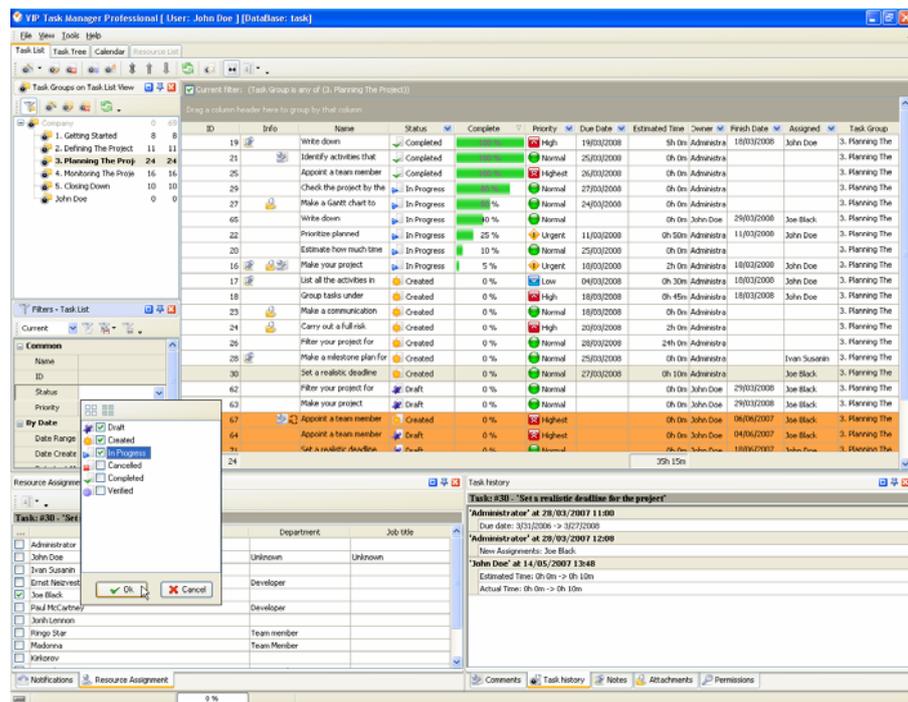
It's very important to check the tasks that were done by your employees. How long it will take you depends on the quantity of completed tasks and their complication. Some tasks can be skipped through, but others may require much time and efforts. So, first of all you should track the list of completed tasks, estimate them and only then you will be able to define the time you need and plan your working day more effectively and rationally.

“Checking tasks” To Do List

- Before scheduling the time to check others' tasks, track employees' task list and select the tasks that have 100% complete.
- If there are a lot of serious tasks that claim your attention, schedule their checking on the time when you have possibility to concentrate on them.
- If the tasks don't need lots of efforts from your side then you can attend to them later after you finish more important things.

Action plan

1. Start your [Team Management software](#)
2. Set filter to display the tasks that you created and that are 100% completed
3. In accordance with task quantity and completion estimate the time that you need to check them



Record and compare the time you spend on the similar tasks

Competitive conditions make person work more effectively

One of the ways how to motivate yourself to accomplish similar unpleasant tasks faster is to compare the time that you spend on them each time. Person is organized in such a way that the calculation of expended time will encourage him/her to compete with himself/herself and work more productively. Use this human characteristic for

your career's welfare. If you track the tasks that are already completed and compare the time they took, you will unconsciously want to cope with them faster next time.

"Compare Actual time" To Do List

- If you tend to procrastinate with the accomplishment of unpleasant tasks, don't become upset about it
- When you accomplish each of unpleasant tasks, record the time that you spent on it
- Motivate yourself by comparing the time that you spent on the similar tasks earlier
- Use software to track completed tasks, enter their Actual time and compare it

Action plan

1. Start your [task management software](#)
2. Set filter to display only completed tasks
3. Enter Actual time for each task
4. Compare the time that you spent on them

The screenshot shows the VP Task Manager Professional interface. The main window displays a task list with columns: ID, Name, Status, Complete, Priority, Due Date, Estimated Time, Owner, Fresh Date, and Assigned. A filter dialog is open, showing options for Status (Draft, Created, In Progress, Completed, Verified) and Resource Assignments. A task history window is also open, showing details for a task named 'Set a realistic deadline for the project'.



Ease the access to often used tasks

How to save time on tracking the tasks

Manager of a large company with great number of employees may face a necessity to frequently work with the tasks of the same employees, with the same statuses and priorities or the tasks of the same time interval. If he/she will pick out these tasks by required attributes each time when there is a need in them, it will be irrational use of time and energy. To gather a big pile of paper To Do Lists, that are constantly tracked, on the desk also isn't properly. The best solution is to develop the approach that will allow to quickly access any required task list, save the time and keep a desk cleared-up.

"Quickly track the tasks" To Do List

- Pay attention to what kind of task lists you often use
- Avoid keeping these tasks on your desk and picking them out each time when you need them
- Use software to set filter to display only required tasks and save filter

Action plan

The screenshot shows the VP Task Manager Professional interface. The main window displays a task list with columns: ID, Name, Complete, Status, Task-Group, Cost, Date Created, and Date Last Modified. A filter dialog is open, showing options for Status (Created, In Progress) and Priority (Low, Normal, High). A task history window is also open, showing details for a task named 'List all the activities in work breakdown structure'.

1. Start your [team management software](#)
2. Set filter to display the tasks that you often need to track
3. Save this filter
4. Apply this filter any time when you are interested in this group of tasks

Track completed tasks at the end of the week and feel proud of yourself for them

Motivate yourself with rewarding

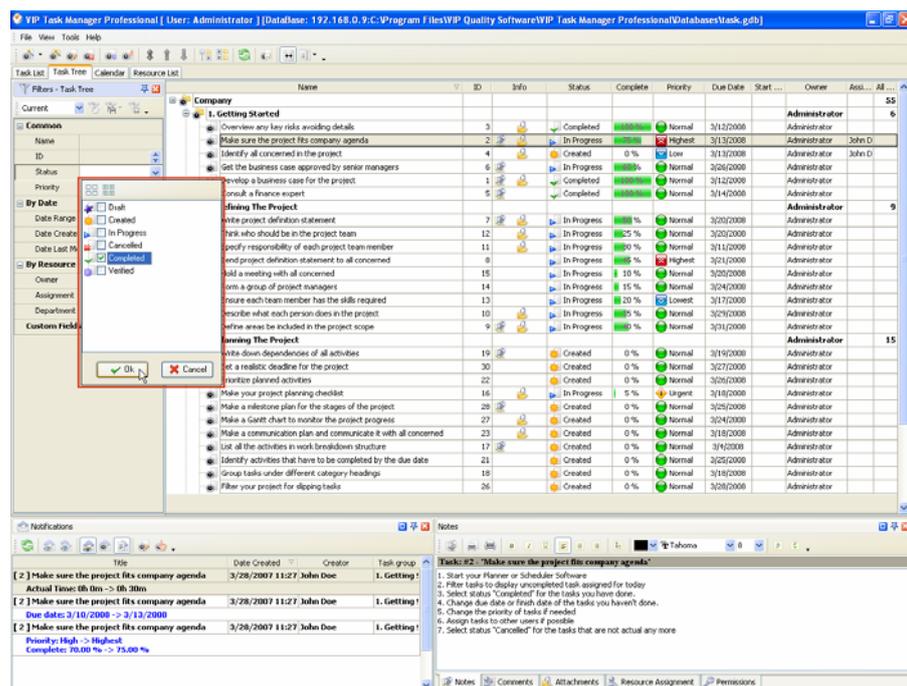
The best way to motivate yourself for further success is to reward yourself for already achieved progress. When you realize that you are capable and skillful to successfully complete your tasks, you feel much power to move forward, accomplish more and more and be as productive as possible. So, let's say, at the end of the week track the tasks that you've completed during this week, feel proud of yourself for your active and successful work, praise yourself for that and keep on moving in the same way. It's undoubtedly that you will start your next working week full of energy and enthusiasm.

"Be proud of your success" To Do List

- At the end of the week don't hurry up to leave your work at once
- Open your weekly task list and track completed tasks
- Congratulate yourself with their accomplishment and enjoy sense of proud during the week end
- Use software to track the tasks completed during the week

Action plan

1. Start your [task management software](#)
2. Set filter to display the tasks assigned to this week
3. Set filter to display completed tasks
4. Track these tasks and congratulate yourself with this success



The screenshot shows the YIP Task Manager Professional interface. The main window displays a task list with columns for Name, ID, Info, Status, Complete, Priority, Due Date, Start, Owner, and Ass. A dialog box is open over the task list, and a notification window is visible at the bottom.

| Name | ID | Info | Status | Complete | Priority | Due Date | Start | Owner | Ass. |
|---|----|---|-------------|----------|----------|-----------|-------|---------------|---------|
| 1. Getting Started | 3 | Overview any key risks avoiding details | Completed | 100% | Normal | 3/12/2008 | | Administrator | 55 |
| 2. Make sure the project fits company agenda | 2 | Make sure the project fits company agenda | In Progress | 0% | Highest | 3/13/2008 | | Administrator | 6 |
| 4. Identify all concerned in the project | 4 | Identify all concerned in the project | Created | 0% | Low | 3/13/2008 | | Administrator | John D. |
| 6. Get the business case approved by senior managers | 6 | Get the business case approved by senior managers | In Progress | 0% | Normal | 3/26/2008 | | Administrator | John D. |
| 1. Develop a business case for the project | 1 | Develop a business case for the project | Completed | 100% | Normal | 3/12/2008 | | Administrator | John D. |
| 5. Seek a finance expert | 5 | Seek a finance expert | Completed | 100% | Normal | 3/14/2008 | | Administrator | John D. |
| Living The Project | | | | | | | | Administrator | 9 |
| 7. Write project definition statement | 7 | Write project definition statement | In Progress | 0% | Normal | 3/20/2008 | | Administrator | John D. |
| 12. Hire who should be in the project team | 12 | Hire who should be in the project team | In Progress | 0% | Normal | 3/20/2008 | | Administrator | John D. |
| 11. Define responsibility of each project team member | 11 | Define responsibility of each project team member | In Progress | 0% | Normal | 3/11/2008 | | Administrator | John D. |
| 8. Develop project definition statement to all concerned | 8 | Develop project definition statement to all concerned | In Progress | 0% | Highest | 3/21/2008 | | Administrator | John D. |
| 15. Hold a meeting with all concerned | 15 | Hold a meeting with all concerned | In Progress | 10% | Normal | 3/25/2008 | | Administrator | John D. |
| 14. Form a group of project managers | 14 | Form a group of project managers | In Progress | 15% | Normal | 3/24/2008 | | Administrator | John D. |
| 13. Ensure each team member has the skills required | 13 | Ensure each team member has the skills required | In Progress | 20% | Lowest | 3/17/2008 | | Administrator | John D. |
| 10. Describe what each person does in the project | 10 | Describe what each person does in the project | In Progress | 25% | Normal | 3/23/2008 | | Administrator | John D. |
| 9. Define roles to be included in the project scope | 9 | Define roles to be included in the project scope | In Progress | 30% | Normal | 3/19/2008 | | Administrator | John D. |
| 15. Review The Project | | | | | | | | Administrator | 15 |
| 19. Write down dependencies of all activities | 19 | Write down dependencies of all activities | Created | 0% | Normal | 3/19/2008 | | Administrator | John D. |
| 30. Set a realistic deadline for the project | 30 | Set a realistic deadline for the project | Created | 0% | Normal | 3/27/2008 | | Administrator | John D. |
| 22. Monitor planned activities | 22 | Monitor planned activities | Created | 0% | Normal | 3/26/2008 | | Administrator | John D. |
| 16. Make your project planning checklist | 16 | Make your project planning checklist | In Progress | 5% | Urgent | 3/18/2008 | | Administrator | John D. |
| 28. Make a milestone plan for the stages of the project | 28 | Make a milestone plan for the stages of the project | Created | 0% | Normal | 3/25/2008 | | Administrator | John D. |
| 27. Make a Gantt chart to monitor the project progress | 27 | Make a Gantt chart to monitor the project progress | Created | 0% | Normal | 3/24/2008 | | Administrator | John D. |
| 23. Make a communication plan and communicate it with all concerned | 23 | Make a communication plan and communicate it with all concerned | Created | 0% | Normal | 3/18/2008 | | Administrator | John D. |
| 17. List all the activities in work breakdown structure | 17 | List all the activities in work breakdown structure | Created | 0% | Normal | 3/16/2008 | | Administrator | John D. |
| 21. Identify activities that have to be completed by the due date | 21 | Identify activities that have to be completed by the due date | Created | 0% | Normal | 3/25/2008 | | Administrator | John D. |
| 18. Group tasks under different category headings | 18 | Group tasks under different category headings | Created | 0% | Normal | 3/18/2008 | | Administrator | John D. |
| 26. Filter your project for slipping tasks | 26 | Filter your project for slipping tasks | Created | 0% | Normal | 3/28/2008 | | Administrator | John D. |

Track your employees' task list to solve any problems they have

Prevent further procrastination ASAP

If you delegate some tasks to other employees, don't ignore controlling further process. While you rely that everything goes according to plan, you may lose sight of some problems and pass the moment when you can

- Use software to make up your Master list, track your To do list by task status and replace new tasks to this list

Action plan

1. Start your [Task Management software](#)
2. Create a new task group "Master List" and all tasks that you have to do assign to it
3. Before adding new task to your To Do List set filter to display all tasks except completed
4. Replace the tasks from Master list when your To Do list is empty
5. Start doing the task and change its status to 'Completed' when it's accomplished

The screenshot shows the VP Task Manager Professional software interface. The main window displays a task list with columns for ID, Name, Status, Complete, Task Group, Priority, Due Date, Estimated Time, Owner, and Assigned. A 'Filters - Task List' dialog box is open, showing options to filter tasks by Date, Resource, and other criteria. The task list includes tasks such as 'Develop a business case for...', 'Make sure the project files...', 'Start your Planner or Scheduler Software', and 'Filter tasks to display uncompleted task assigned for today'.

When you are delegated a task, think if you are able to accomplish it

Always saying "Yes" may overload you

When you accept each task assigned to you, you always need to give up something else. If this 'something' has higher priority than your new task has, it will be more effective to continue your current work than give it up. When a new task comes to you, first track your task list to realize whether you have enough time to accomplish it without prejudice to more significant tasks. Doing so you will be able to concentrate your energy on urgent and important work and avoid overloading that may produce stress and reduce your productivity.

"Track your tasks before accepting new ones" To Do List

- When you are delegated a new task don't hurry up to accept it, first track your existing Task List
- Analyze your current tasks priority and think about the time that you will have for a new task
- If you are not overloaded at this moment or this new task has lower priority than others accept it
- Otherwise continue your current work and reject new task or put it on hold
- Use software to track your Task List and analyze tasks priority

Action plan

1. Start your [task management software](#)

The screenshot shows the VP Task Manager Professional software interface. The main window displays a task list with columns for ID, Name, Status, Complete, Task Group, Priority, Due Date, Estimated Time, Owner, and Assigned. The 'Priority' column is highlighted in red, and the 'Task List' is filtered to show tasks with a priority of 'High' or 'Urgent'. The task list includes tasks such as 'Make your project...', 'Prioritize planned...', 'Appoint a team member...', and 'Group tasks under...'.

2. Track your Task List to watch how many tasks you must accomplish
3. Sort your Task List by tasks priority and compare them with new task's importance
4. Accept new task if you are not overloaded or it is more important at that moment than others

Analyze completed tasks to foresee the mistakes of similar tasks in future

Don't step the same rake twice

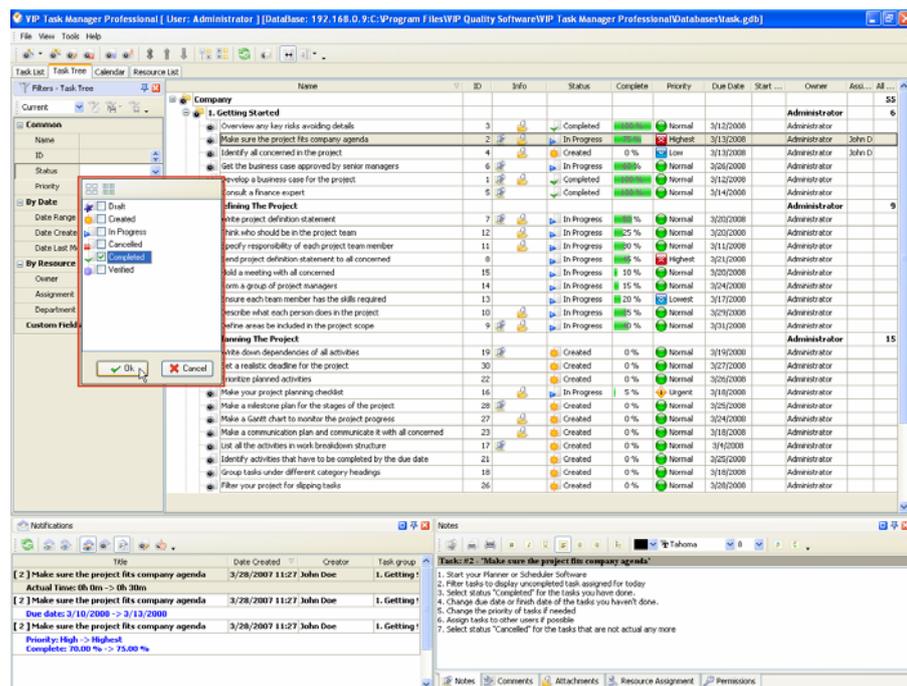
There can be lots of similar tasks in your to do list and while doing them you can meet similar problems and obstacles. If you ignore analyzing these problems when you first meet them you'll be doing the same unnecessarily work each time you have to accomplish similar tasks. It would be more rational if you track completed tasks, study their problem moments and make required conclusions. This will help you to complete the tasks faster next time when you meet similar situations.

"Track completed tasks" To Do List

- Track your task list and pick out those tasks that are already completed
- Study the problems that you had during these tasks accomplishment
- Make required conclusions that will help you to quickly overcome similar obstacles next time
- Use software to track completed tasks and enter required notes

Action plan

1. Start your [Task Management software](#)
2. Set filter to display only completed tasks
3. Study these tasks and enter your conclusions into task notes section
4. Save changes of the tasks



The screenshot shows the VP Task Manager Professional software interface. The main window displays a task list with columns for Name, ID, Info, Status, Complete, Priority, Due Date, Start, Owner, and Assign. A filter menu is open over the 'Status' column, showing options: All, Done, Created, In Progress, Cancelled, and Completed. The 'Completed' option is selected. Below the task list, there is a 'Notes' section for a specific task, titled 'Task: #2: Make sure the project fits company agenda'. The notes contain a list of steps: 1. Start your Planner or Scheduler Software, 2. Filter tasks to display uncompleted task assigned for today, 3. Select status 'Completed' for the tasks you have done, 4. Change due date or fresh date of the tasks you haven't done, 5. Change the priority of tasks if needed, 6. Assign tasks to other users if possible, 7. Select status 'Cancelled' for the tasks that are not actual any more.

Why do you store some tasks in your to do list for months?

If you find out the reason for procrastination it will be easier to struggle with it

Have you ever thought why you procrastinate with your tasks? If you find out the problem it will be easier to struggle with it. And vice versa if you ignore analyzing the reasons why you put off doing some of your tasks, you'll continue making the same mistakes and probably never avoid procrastinations. As the reasons of your

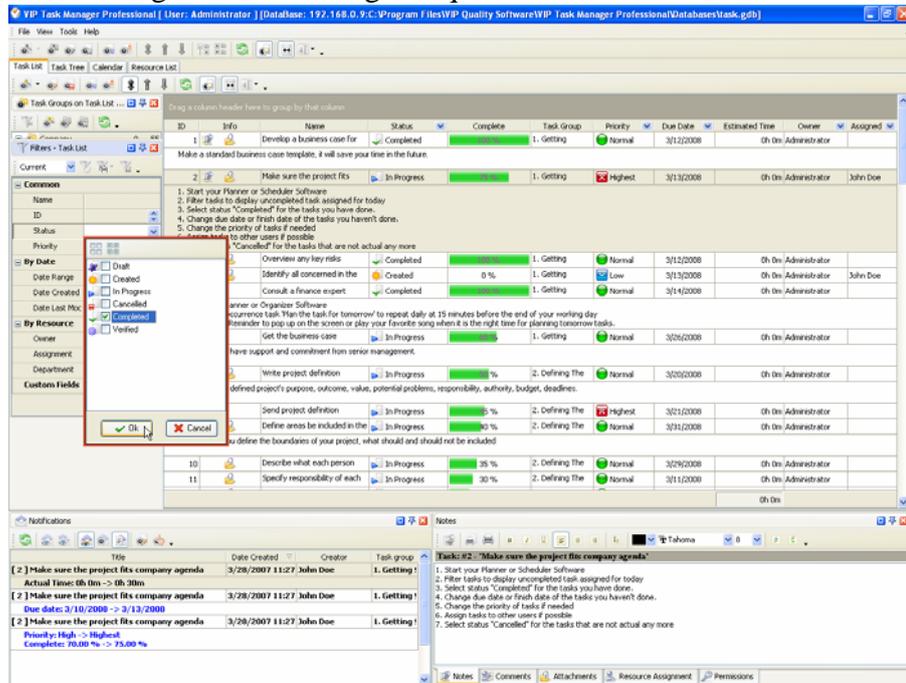
inefficiency can be various for each particular task you should overlook those tasks that you procrastinate with and make general conclusions why you act so. For example if you put off the task because of its complexity, break it into smaller ones that are easier to accomplish. Next time when you face with the same problem you'll be ready to quickly overcome it and avoid procrastination.

"Track undone tasks" To Do List

- Track your To Do List to find the tasks that you procrastinate with
- Analyze each of them to find out the reasons why you didn't accomplish them
- In accordance with your conclusions try to change your approach to the tasks or task setting in such way that you'll be able to accomplish them without procrastination
- Use software to track your task list and make changes to task setting if required

Action plan

1. Start your [task management software](#)
2. Set filter to display uncompleted tasks
3. Overlook the task and define why you didn't accomplish them
4. Enter required changes into task setting
5. Start doing tasks



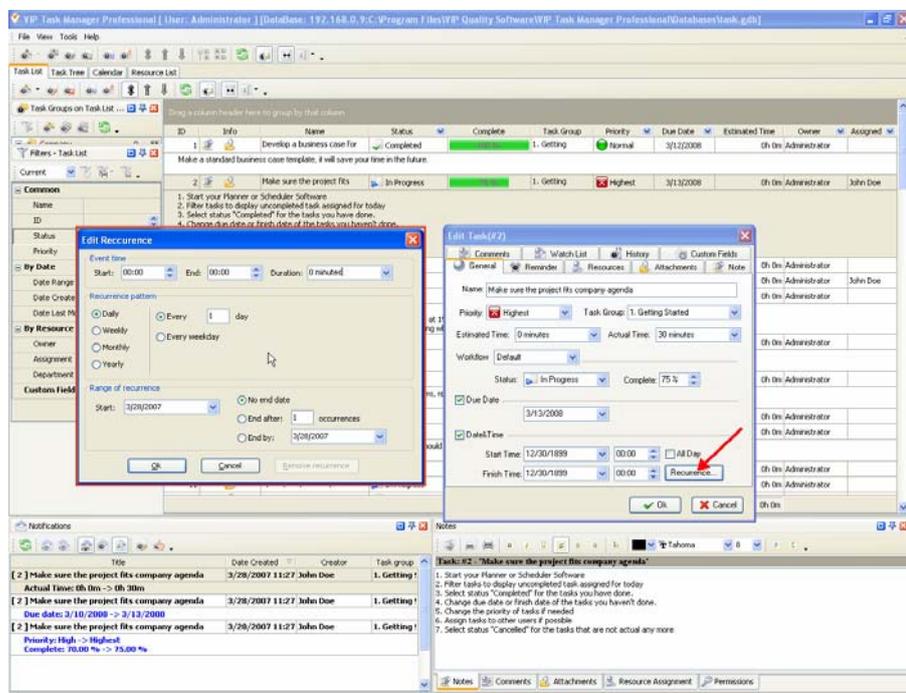
Create a task that will remind you to track your team's

Do you remember to track your team's tasks

As a manager you clearly realize what should be done to reach your goals. To be sure that everything takes a normal course you should check what your employees do. If you interrupt your own work each time when you remember to track other's tasks, your working day may turn into chaos. It will not lead to productive work, but will only disappoint and distract you. More effective way is to pick out the special time in your timetable to track your employees tasks. It will bring order and discipline to your workflow.

Setting time to track team's tasks

Get into a habit to check your employees at a certain time. The frequency of tracking



employees' tasks depends on your workflow. Decide what is the best time for doing this. Use your task management software to create task 'Tracking team's tasks' and put it into your schedule as a recurring task. Don't ignore this simple tip to increase your productivity.

Action plan

1. Start your [Task Management software](#)
2. Create task 'Tracking team's tasks'
3. Set it to repeat daily or weekly at a certain time
4. Track tasks according to your timetable, don't do it at other time

Track 'completed' task to make sure they are completed

Completed or not completed

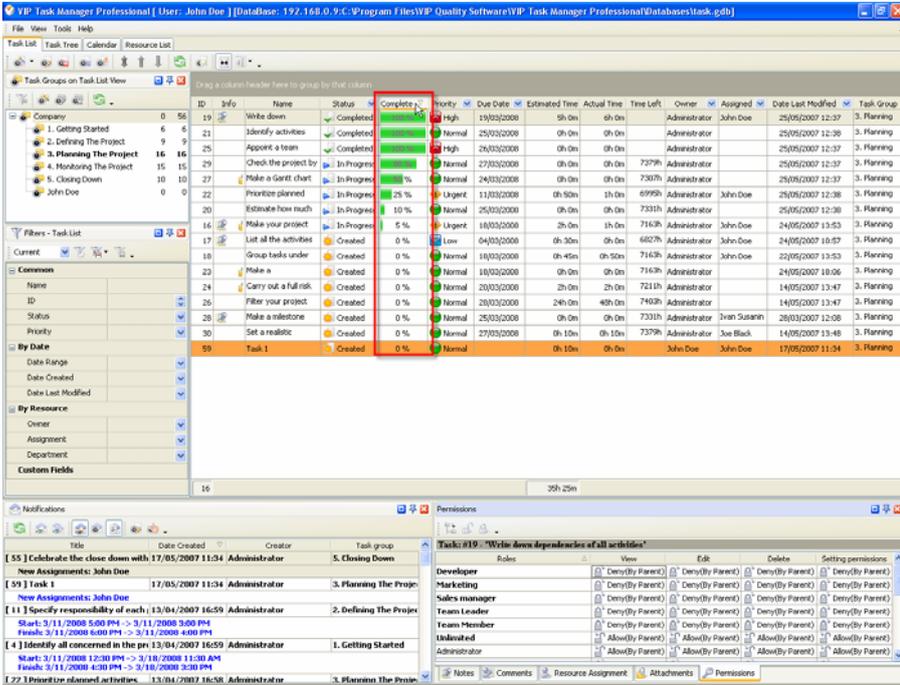
Team leader not only delegates tasks, but also tracks the tasks to see if they are really completed. Your employee may think that he has completed the task well, while you will find some mistakes or gaps in his work. In this case you need to return the task back and tell the employee what he should do for you to accept the task. How to quickly track completed tasks and assign the uncompleted tasks back to employee? Use Task Management software to make it quickly and easily.

Return the task back to employee or verify it

You can track team tasks completion any time by using task management software. You can sort task list by completion and check tasks that have 100% complete. If in your opinion the task is not finished yet or result is not that you expected, you can easily change task completion from 100% to what you think is right. Your employee will receive notification that task isn't completed yet and also some instructions. In case everything is right and task result is exactly what you want, set 'Verified' status to let your employee know that everything is ok.

Action plan

1. Start your [Task Management software](#)
2. Sort task list by completion and check if completed tasks are accomplished with the result you expected
3. If you think that some tasks need any improvement just change its % of completion
4. Set 'Verified' status if you confirm that task is completed



The screenshot shows the VFP Task Manager Professional interface. The main window displays a task list with columns: ID, Info, Name, Status, Complete, Priority, Due Date, Estimated Time, Actual Time, Time Left, Owner, Assigned, Date Last Modified, and Task Group. The 'Complete' column is highlighted in green for tasks that are 100% complete. Below the task list, there are sections for 'Filters - Task List', 'Common' (Name, ID, Status, Priority), 'By Date' (Data Range, Date Created, Date Last Modified), and 'By Resource' (Owner, Assignment, Department, Custom Fields). At the bottom, there are 'Notifications' and 'Permissions' panels.

Get rid of tasks that will never become important enough to get done

Why it is important to track the tasks

If you are up to your neck in your work and it's your everyday state, it's a high time to do the task tracking. There maybe some tasks in your list your manager wanted you to complete two weeks ago but the list was so huge that you didn't notice them or put them on hold and then forgot. These tasks could be very important while they get lost in the tasks with lower priority or the task that should be canceled from the list long ago.

The question is not what priority something is, but whether it needs doing at all

The result is that a huge, indigestible lump of uncompleted or even untried tasks is growing day after day. Many of them will never become urgent or important enough to get done and 'Priority' tool will not help them. So if there is no need to do them any more, why are they on your list in the first place? First rule of time management: the question is not what priority something is, but whether it needs doing at all.

Action plan

1. Start your [task tracking software](#)
2. Sort tasks by their priority, due date, time left, status
3. Select more important tasks and increase their priority by clicking "Increase Priority" button and vice versa click "Decrease Priority" button for less urgent tasks
4. 'Delete' or 'cancel' Tasks there is no need to do any more
5. Start doing the tasks

The screenshot shows the VP Task Manager Professional interface. The main window displays a task list with columns: ID, Info, Name, Complete, Task Group, Status, Priority, Due Date, Estimated Time, Owner, and Assigned To. A red arrow points to the 'Increase Priority' button in the task list header. Below the task list, there are sections for Notifications and Permissions. The Notifications section shows a list of tasks with their titles, dates, and creators. The Permissions section shows a table of roles and their permissions for a specific task.

Track tasks by projects or groups

Why it is better to track tasks by groups

Tasks within one group or project often should be done in a certain order following one another or they may depend on each other. It's not easy to focus on tasks of particular project or task group if you have plenty of them on the list. You will track the tasks better and probably faster if you do it within a task group or even task subgroup (of course if the tasks of different task groups are not dependent)

Tracking tasks within a group

Once you have a list of tasks that belong to one task group or subgroup you can sort tasks the way you want. If you sort these tasks by priority you will see what tasks should be done first, if the important tasks

The screenshot shows the VP Task Manager Professional interface. The main window displays a task list with columns: ID, Info, Name, Complete, Task Group, Status, Priority, Due Date, Estimated Time, Owner, and Assigned To. A red arrow points to the 'Task Groups on Task List View' button in the task list header. Below the task list, there are sections for Notifications and Notes. The Notifications section shows a list of tasks with their titles, dates, and creators. The Notes section shows a list of notes with their titles, dates, and creators.

were successfully completed, if less important tasks need a higher priority at the moment. If you sort tasks by number you will see if the order in which the tasks were supposed to be done was followed strictly or some of the tasks were missed.

Action plan

1. Start your [task tracking software](#)
2. Set filter to Task Group or Task Subgroup
3. Sort tasks within the group by required field, ex.: number, name, priority, etc.



Reporting Tasks

How to report tasks to see if you and your team were productive enough

How to save time on creating reports about completed tasks

Reports on completed tasks are useful both for a group of employee and employer

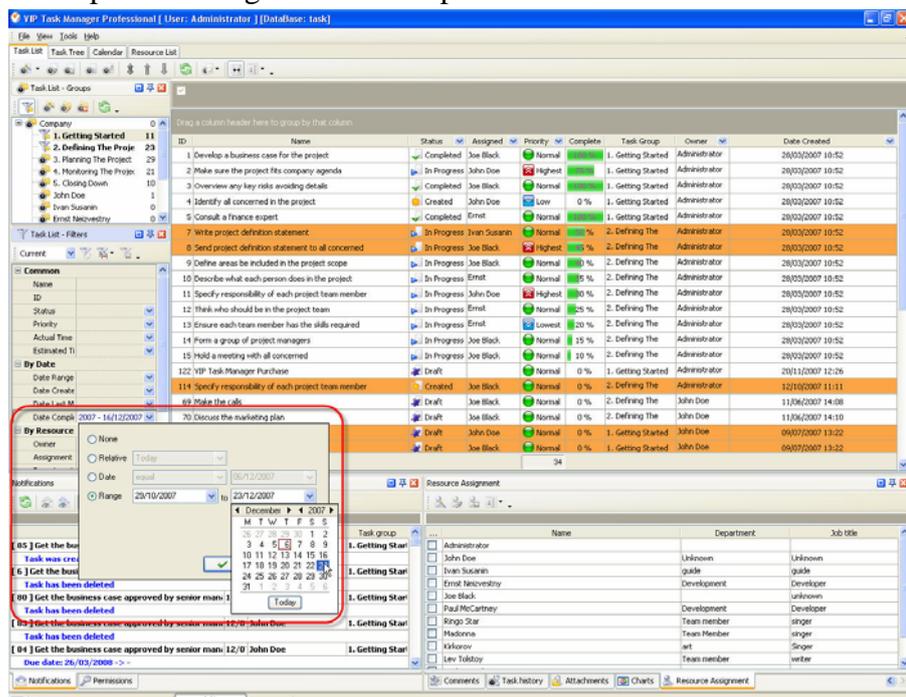
Creating reports is integral part of any work as any team leader needs to control the work of his/her company or department. Reports on completed tasks allows manager to evaluate the work that was carried out by the employee, and team members can demonstrate how much productive they are. When the employee remembers that the work he/she does will be checked, it motivates him/her to work more effectively in order that employer can appreciate spent efforts at their true value.

"Reporting on completed tasks" To Do List

- Define what time interval you need to report about
- Find out what kind of report your employer wants, printed out or exported to Excel
- Use software to make report on the tasks completed during definite time period

Action plan

1. Start your [task management software](#)
2. Set filter to display only tasks completed during required time interval
3. Print out the tasks or export them to MS Excel
4. Continue doing your work



Save time on making similar calculations frequently

Use software to save time and efforts

In our business life we often face the necessity to make some statistics calculations per the projects or groups of tasks. For example, you need to calculate total budget obtained as a result of several sales operations. It takes much time and energy especially when there is a great volume of data. Why waste the time on the task that can be automated with the help of software. It would be more effective to automate the calculation process, use saved time for other more important tasks and in that way increase your productivity and save the efforts.

"Automate calculations" To Do List

- Pay attention what kind of calculations you frequently make to get some statistics per the project or the tasks you've done
- Think if it's possible to arrange this data and calculations in such a way that they can be automated
- Use software to store the data and calculate them

Action plan

1. Start your [task management software](#)
2. Create a new task group, e.g. **'Project 1'**
3. Create a new custom field, for example **'Budget'**
4. If required, make it aggregated per other data, e.g. **budget = quantity * price**
5. Make it aggregated for the task group, e.g. count the total budget for **'Project 1'** task group

| Name | Budget | Status | Complete | Due Date | Assigned | Actual Time | Priority | Date Last Modified | Estimated ... |
|------------------|------------|-------------|----------|------------|---------------|-------------|----------|--------------------|---------------|
| Project 1 | 162,000.00 | | 0 % | 23/07/2007 | | | | 04/12/2007 13:42 | 12h 15m |
| Set report | 90,000.00 | In Progress | 1 % | | John Doe | 0h 0m | Normal | 04/12/2007 13:42 | 0h 15m |
| Sale | 70,000.00 | Created | 0 % | | John Doe | 0h 0m | High | 04/12/2007 13:42 | 0h 0m |
| Bryan Berlied | 525,596.00 | Created | 0 % | | | 0h 0m | Normal | 04/12/2007 13:42 | 0h 30m |
| After sale | 30,000.00 | Created | 0 % | | Administrator | 0h 0m | Normal | 04/12/2007 13:42 | 0h 0m |
| Analyze needs | 55,632.00 | Created | 0 % | | Administrator | 0h 0m | Normal | 04/12/2007 13:42 | 0h 0m |
| Develop solution | 105,300.00 | Created | 0 % | | Administrator | 0h 0m | Normal | 04/12/2007 13:42 | 0h 0m |
| Identify needs | 91,200.00 | Created | 0 % | | Administrator | 0h 0m | Normal | 04/12/2007 13:42 | 0h 0m |
| Present solution | 100,000.00 | Created | 0 % | | Administrator | 0h 0m | Normal | 04/12/2007 13:42 | 0h 0m |
| Sale | 20,000.00 | Created | 0 % | | Administrator | 0h 0m | Normal | 04/12/2007 13:42 | 0h 0m |
| After sale | 134,400.00 | Created | 0 % | | Administrator | 0h 0m | Normal | 04/12/2007 13:42 | 0h 0m |
| Develop solution | 75,600.00 | Created | 0 % | | Administrator | 0h 0m | Normal | 04/12/2007 13:42 | 0h 0m |
| Tam Nguyen | 446,204.00 | In Progress | 1 % | | Administrator | 0h 0m | Normal | 04/12/2007 13:42 | 0h 15m |
| Identify needs | 49,654.00 | Created | 0 % | | Administrator | 0h 0m | Normal | 04/12/2007 13:42 | 0h 0m |
| Present solution | 95,350.00 | Created | 0 % | | Administrator | 0h 0m | Normal | 04/12/2007 13:42 | 0h 0m |
| Analyze needs | 63,000.00 | Created | 0 % | | Administrator | 0h 0m | Normal | 04/12/2007 13:42 | 0h 0m |
| Sale | 28,000.00 | Created | 0 % | | Administrator | 0h 0m | Normal | 04/12/2007 13:42 | 0h 0m |
| After sale | 134,400.00 | Created | 0 % | | Administrator | 0h 0m | Normal | 04/12/2007 13:42 | 0h 0m |
| Develop solution | 75,600.00 | Created | 0 % | | Administrator | 0h 0m | Normal | 04/12/2007 13:42 | 0h 0m |

Compare project estimated and actual time

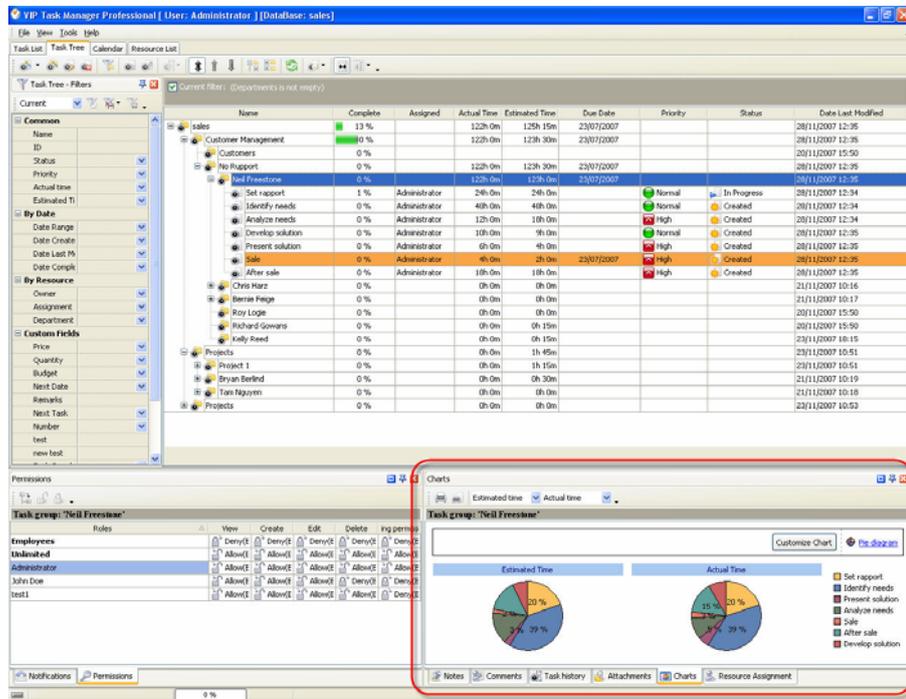
Control the time that you spent on the project

When the project is already accomplished, it's useful to compare the time that was estimated for its tasks at the beginning of the work and the time that was actually spent. By analyzing the difference between them, you and your colleagues can make up a conclusion about your productivity or procrastinations. Constant control under the time that you spend on the tasks will give you a possibility to discover whether you have any problems with time management, and to start working at your self-improvement in time.

"Reports on Actual and Estimated time" To Do List

- When the project is completed, don't give it up at once
- Pick out the tasks that are related to this project and record the time that you actually spent on them

- Use software to make graphic report on project Estimated and Actual time and print it out



Action plan

1. Start your [task management software](#)
2. Set filter by required project's task group
3. Enter task's Actual time
4. Go to Charts panel and select 'Estimated time' from the first drop-down list and 'Actual time' from the second drop-down list on Charts toolbar
5. Print out the report

How to make reports on the time spent by different departments or employees

Time spent on report creation can be saved

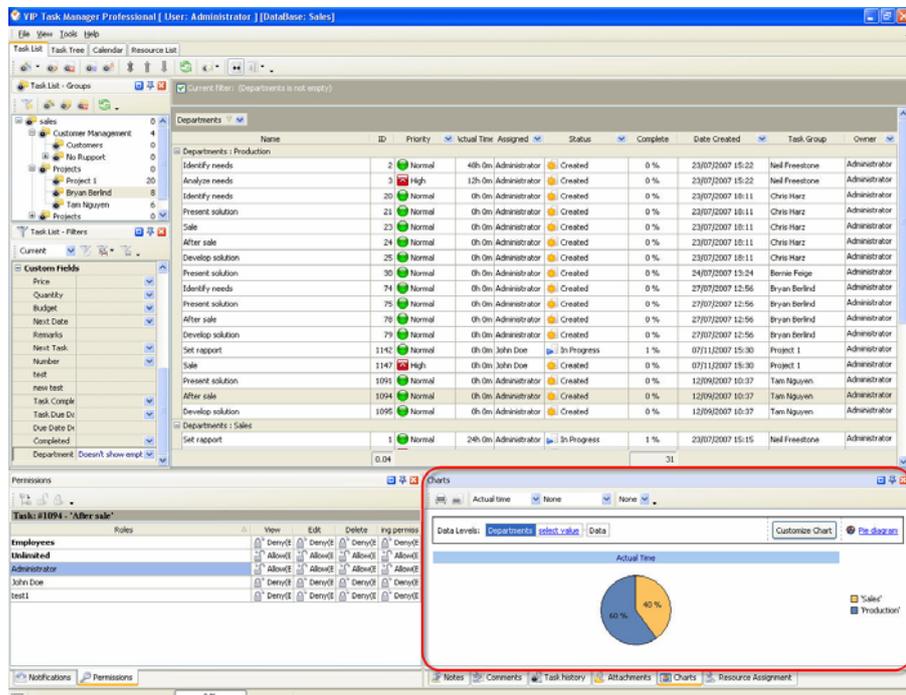
It's often required to give the leader reports on the time that was spent on some tasks by different employees or the whole departments. Such reports allow tracking the productivity of each department or team member and comparing which one can more effectively manage their work. But making report may become a time-consuming task, if not automated. By using specific software you can minimize the time spent on report's creation.

"Actual time reports" To Do Lis

- Define the time period you need to report about
- Pick out the tasks that are already completed by required employees or departments
- Use software to make report on task Actual time of required employees or departments

Action plan

1. Start your [team management software](#)
2. Set filter to display only completed tasks from required time interval
3. Group the tasks by 'Department' or 'Assigned' field
4. Go to Charts panel and select 'Actual time' from the drop-down list of Charts toolbar
5. Print out the chart



Use software to make reports on task due date deviation

Save time by using software

If you have to make a report about the timeliness of task accomplishment, you will need to consider each task separately, define whether it is completed or not, remember when it had be done and determine if it was accomplished in time, before due date or it was overdue. This process may take much time and effort, especially if you have many tasks in your To Do List. So, it's better to automate it with the help of specific software and in that way you will be able to concentrate your attention on accomplishing more tasks.

“Reporting on task due date” To Do List

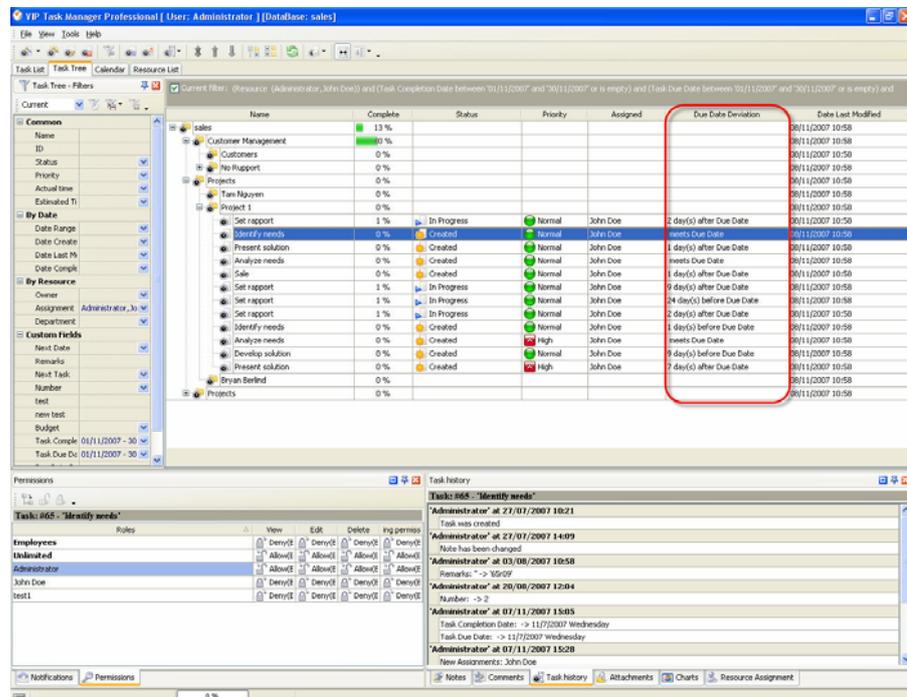
- When making report on task due date deviation, define whether each task is accomplished or not
- If it's already completed, determine if it was accomplished before due date, after or in time
- Use software to calculate the deviation from task deadline and make report about it

Action plan

1. Start your [task management software](#)
2. Create your custom field “Due Date Deviation”
3. Enter following formula into custom field ‘Formula’ field:

```
iif($due_date>$finish,  
ToString($due_date-$finish) + "  
day(s) before Due  
Date",iif($finish>$due_date,  
ToString($finish-$due_date) + "  
day(s) after Due  
Date",iif($due_date=$finish, "  
meets Due Date", "")))
```

4. Set filter to display only completed tasks
5. Display ‘Due Date Deviation’ column on Task List or Task Tree grid
6. Print out the report



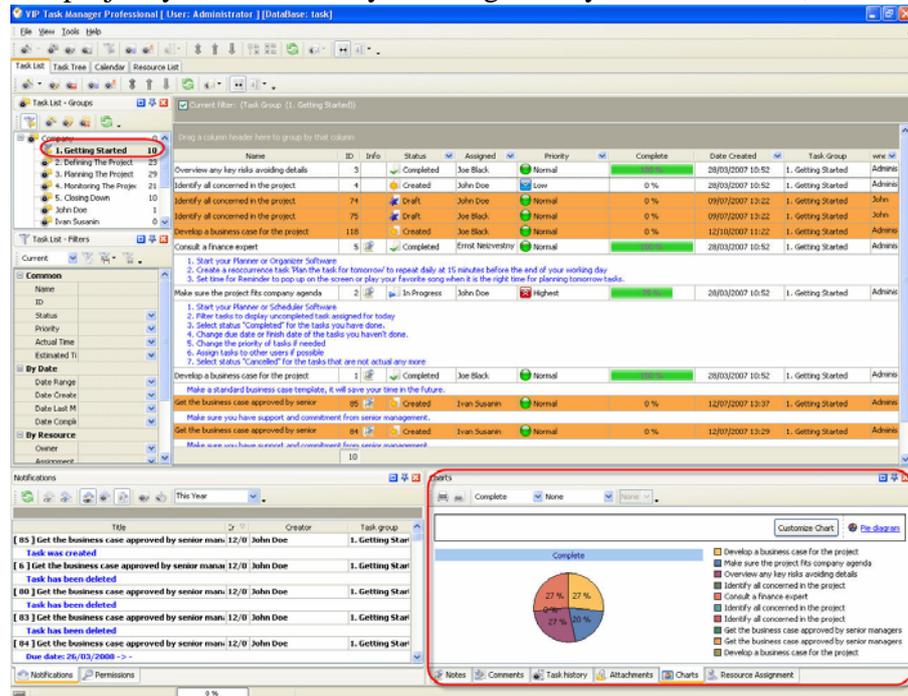
Make graphic reports on the project accomplishment

Use charts while making reports

While team members are working on some project, they most likely need to make reports on project accomplishment. They have to estimate how much is already done and how much still should be done. The easiest way to do it is to diagram what part of the project is completed, what is still not and to visualize the completion degree of undone tasks. Such graphic reporting can lighten the process of creating the detailed report on the project for the employees and make it easier for the manager to perceive obtained information he/she is interested in.

“Reporting the project” To Do List

- If you need to demonstrate the state of the project you are currently working on to your team leader, do it with the help of the chart
- Describe on the diagram how many tasks are already done, how many of them are 50%-done, 30%, etc
- Use software to make a graphic report on the project



Action plan

1. Start your [task management software](#)
2. Set filter by project task group you need to report about
3. Go to Charts Panel and select “Complete” field from drop-down list on Charts toolbar
4. Print out the chart

Easy and quick report on particular tasks

Need a report? There is nothing easier

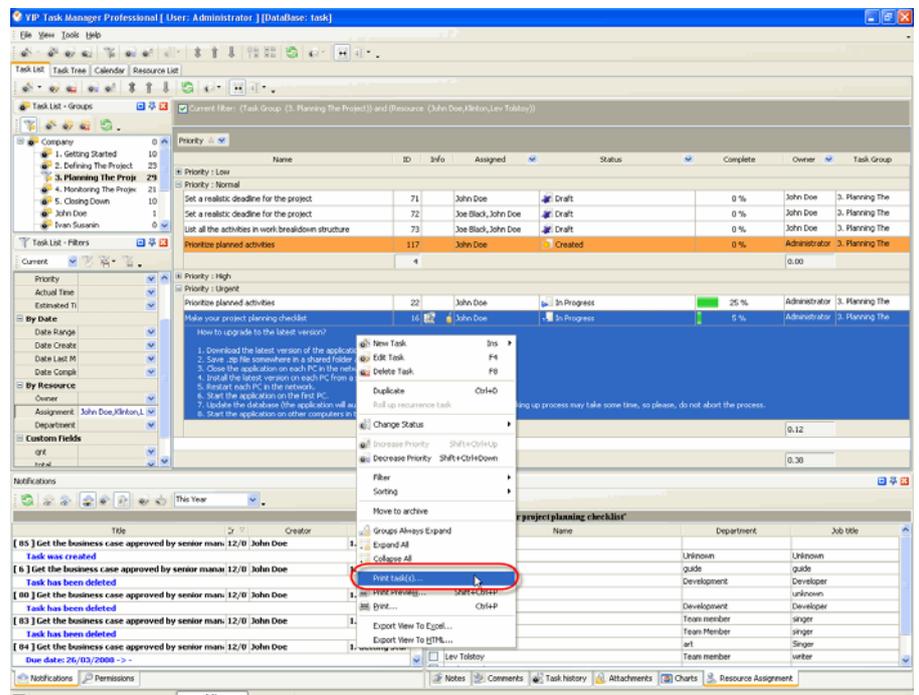
Imagine that you need to make a report on the particular task or several certain tasks of the project you work at. You need to describe tasks’ completion degree, inform about their due dates, start and finish time, etc. Moreover, the person who will check your report may be not up on the tasks’ goals or problems that you faced during their accomplishment. It may take you much time to include all required details into your report. In order to save your time and concentrate your attention on accomplishing more tasks, we’d recommend you to use software while creating reports on your To Do List.

“Reporting tasks” To Do List

- Determine the tasks you need to report about
- Decide what details and task properties you need to describe in your report
- Use software to make reports on particular tasks

Action plan

1. Start your [task management software](#)
2. Display the fields you need to include into your report
3. Select required task(s)
4. Right click on these tasks and select “Print task(s)...” from drop-down list
5. Create your own print design, if required, and print out the report



Make graphic reports on each project to control their completion degree

Control equal accomplishment of all the projects

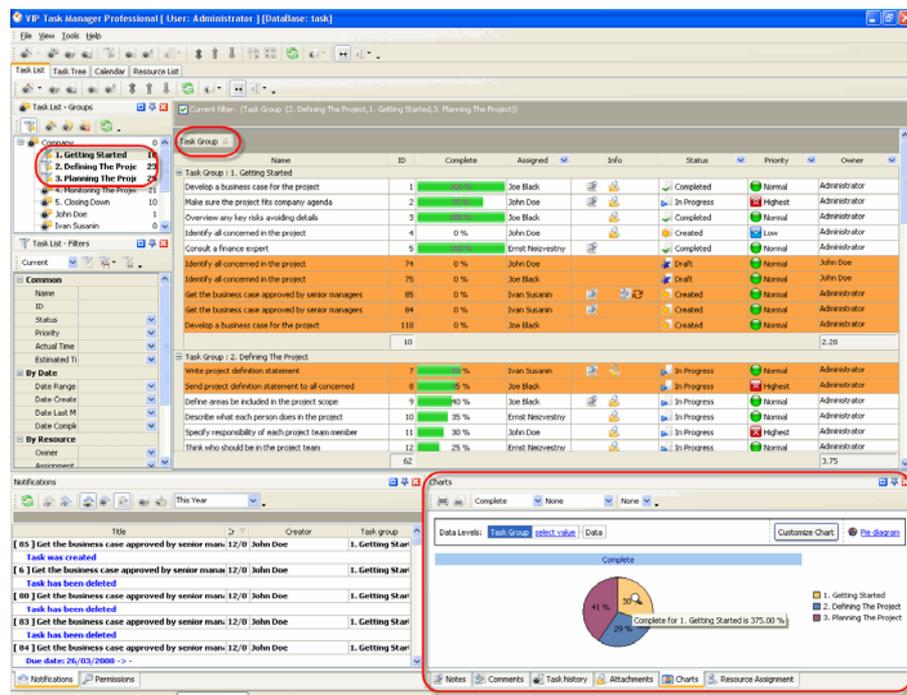
Most often company works at several projects simultaneously. If these projects are equally important for company policy, it's necessary to control their development and accomplishment. If the progress on one of the projects is left behind, it should be discovered in time. As it can appear, some projects are successfully realized, but others are neglected and forgotten. In order that the company won't face such situations, the leader should keep an eye on each project accomplishment and control the efforts that are given to each of them.

"Tracking project accomplishment" To Do List

- From time to time, track the completion degree of each project
- As it's more convenient to perceive the information in the form of charts, make graphic reports on the completion degree of each project
- If you realize that some project is neglected, take steps to catch up with it
- Use software to make graphic reports on completion of different projects and compare them

Action plan

1. Start your [team management software](#)
2. Set filter by task groups that contain the tasks of required projects
3. Group the tasks by task group
4. Go to Charts panel and select "Complete" field from drop-down list on Charts toolbar
5. Compare completion degree of selected projects



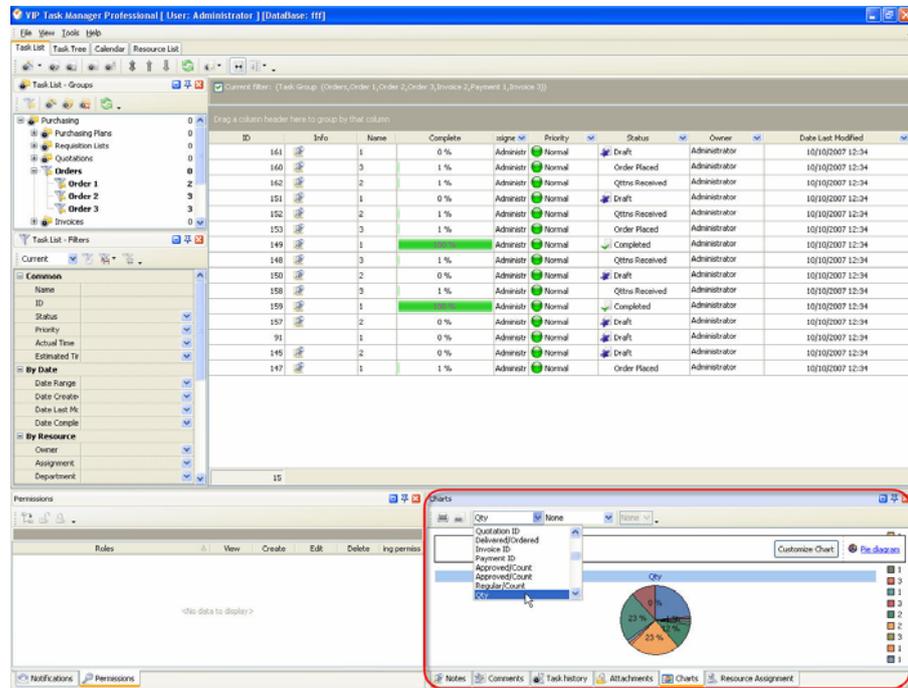
Present the information in the form of diagram for better perception

Visual memory is more effective than oral one

Information is better conceived when it is described in a graphic form, because visual memory is more capacious than oral one. So, when you need to submit any data for consideration and there is no necessity to discuss precise numbers, but only general tendency, don't try to write out or memorize numerical information. Just diagram this data and your listeners will be able to see and remember trend of concerned question easily and avoid filling their head with useless numbers.

"Visualize the numbers" To Do List

- When you are preparing for the meeting and need to submit some statistics, avoid learning each number by heart or making an endless list of data
- Just map these data in a diagram form
- When it's time to present the information, it will be easily for you to recall it and comment basic tendency to your listeners using the charts
- Use software to diagram the information



Action plan

1. Start your [task management software](#)
2. Create a new task group, e.g. "Orders"
3. Create a new custom field, e.g. "Quantity", it may have type "integer"
4. Create new task, e.g. "Order 1" and enter required quantity
5. Set filter by this task group, plot the diagram and print it out



How to ease reports on your department tasks

Use software to make a report

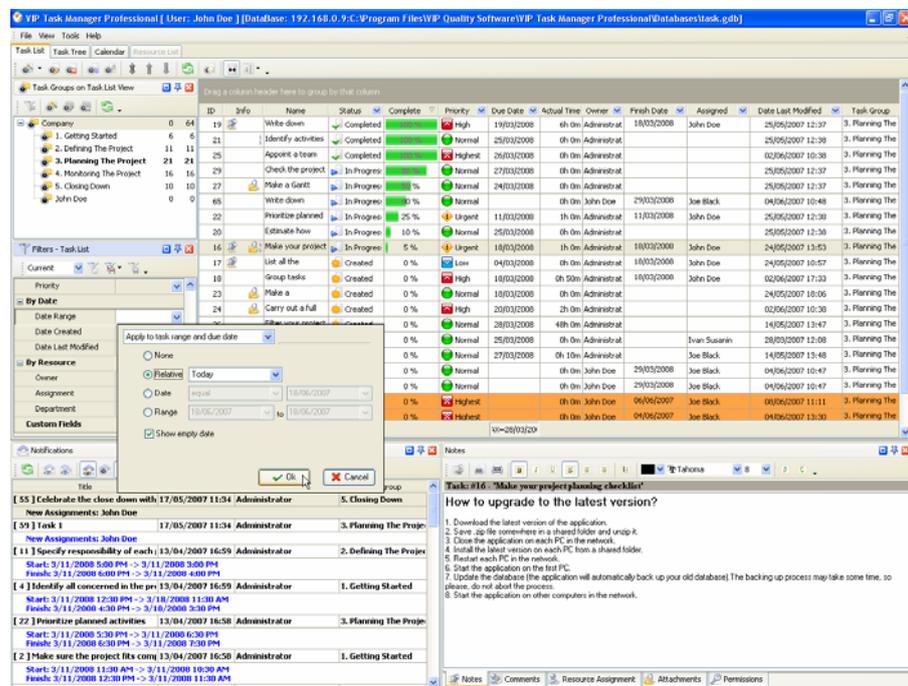
You need to make a report about the work of some particular company department. But you don't want to spend much time on describing each task, its goals and results, interrupting the employees of this department with the request to report about their tasks. How can you avoid it? You can reduce time losses and avoid distracting others if you use software that allows to keep the tasks of the whole company and make reports about them.

"Make report about the department" To Do List

- When there is a need to make the report about the work of particular department, don't waste time on describing each task and don't distract the employees to do it
- Determine what time period you need to report about
- Use software to make a report about the work of the department

Action plan

1. Start your [team management software](#)
2. Set filter to display the tasks assigned to required time interval
3. Set filter to display tasks of particular department



- Export tasks to **Microsoft Office Excel** or print them out

How to make reports about big projects that have lots of participants

One person can save time of many others

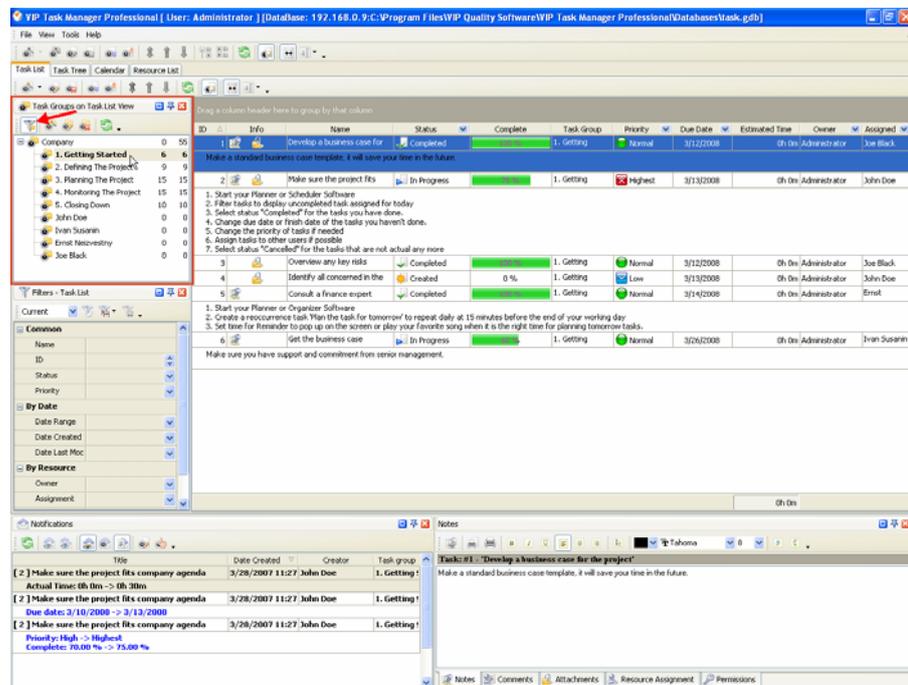
As there may be a group of employees who take part in accomplishing a project, making a report about this project may become time-consuming process. Each team member should make a report about his/her part of work, describe a completion degree and results of the tasks, therefore it takes much time for the whole group. If the report can be made by one participant of the project, it will save much time and energy for the rest of the group and give them possibility to concentrate their efforts on more urgent and useful tasks.

"Report about the project" To Do List

- When there is a need to make a report about the whole project, don't require each project member to make his/her personal report
- Make a report of the whole project at once and in that way save the time of the whole group
- Use software to easily make a report about the project

Action plan

1. Start your [team management software](#)
2. Set filter to display the tasks of particular project task group
3. Group tasks by "Assigned" field to make it easier to read the report
4. Export task list to **Microsoft Office Excel** or print it out



How to make reports about the group of employees at once

Avoid wasting much time on reports

When you need to make a report about the work of several employees at once, it may interrupt accomplishing your current task for a long time. You need to pick out each team member's tasks that were done or started during required time period and describe their current completion degree. If you multiply the time that should be spent on it by the quantity of employees, you'll see that it's too time-consuming process and isn't worth the time that is wasted on it. There is an easier and faster way to make the report about any number of people.

"Make report about the group" To Do List

- Think about the employees that you need to make report about
- Define the time period that should be described in your report
- Use software to set time interval, display required employees' tasks, group them by employees and export or print them out

The screenshot shows the 'Task List' window in VP Task Manager Professional. The main window displays a list of tasks with columns for ID, Name, Complete, Status, Task Group, Date Created, and Date Last Modified. A 'Filters - Task List' dialog is open, showing filters for Status, Priority, Date Range, Date Created, Date Last Modified, and By Resource. The 'By Resource' filter is set to 'Assigned'. Below the task list, a 'Resource Assignment' table is visible, listing resources like Administrator, John Doe, Ivan Susatoh, Email Necessity, Joe Black, and Paul McCarty with their departments and job titles.

Action plan

1. Start your [team management software](#)
2. Set filter to display the tasks that were worked at during required time interval
3. Set filter to display the tasks of particular employees who you need to report about
4. Group tasks by "Assigned" field
5. Export report to Microsoft Office Excel or print it out



Make reports of uncompleted tasks with great ease

Making reports becomes easier

Imagine the situation when you need to make a report of all the tasks that you haven't accomplished yet. It may take much your time and interrupt your current work, if you start writing them down manually. You need to look through all your tasks, pick out only uncompleted ones and measure the completion degree of each of them. And finally after you spent lots of time for this task and the report is ready, it turns out that it is already not so urgent as it was at the beginning, and you threw off your work at that moment in vain. The best solution for such cases is to automatize the process of making reports in order to get them quickly and easily. It will save your time, energy and keep your attention on your current tasks.

"Uncompleted tasks reports" To Do List

- When you are asked to make a report, don't rush into creating it manually and throwing off your current work
- Determine during what time period your manager needs your report
- Use software to display only uncompleted tasks during required time period

The screenshot shows the 'Task List' window in VP Task Manager Professional. The main window displays a list of tasks with columns for ID, Name, Status, Complete, Priority, Due Date, Estimated Time, Actual Time, Time Left, and Date Last Modified. A 'Filters - Task List' dialog is open, showing filters for Status, Priority, Date Range, Date Created, Date Last Modified, and By Resource. The 'By Resource' filter is set to 'Assigned'. Below the task list, a 'Permissions' table is visible, listing permissions for various users like Team leader, Team member, Uninvited, Administrator, Email Necessity, Ivan Susatoh, Joe Black, and John Doe.

Action plan

1. Start your [task management software](#)
2. Set filter to display tasks assigned to required time interval

3. Set filter to display all tasks except completed ones
4. Export tasks to **Microsoft Office Excel** or print them out

How to save your time when creating reports

Creating reports manually you waste your time twice

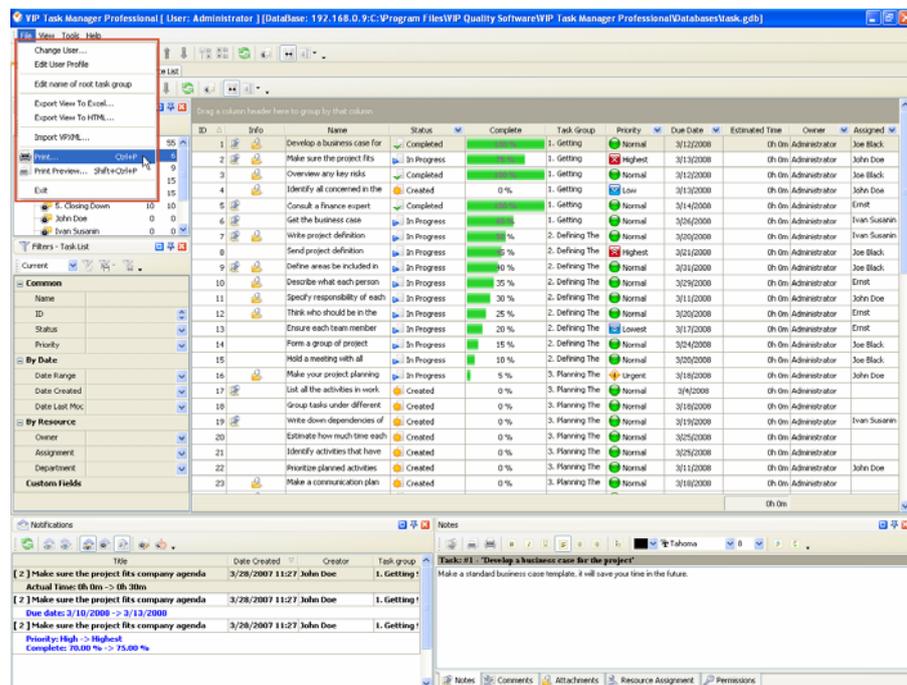
Have you ever met the situation when you have to give your manager full report that clearly shows the picture with your tasks immediately? If the answer is "yes", you know how difficult is to interrupt your current work and describe each task with its status, due date, time left and other attributes. While you are spending lots of time on describing each task, accounting how much time is spent on it and how much percentages of it are already done, you will lose sight from your current work. As you can see, such report will waste your time twice – when you spend much time on creating it and then when you need time to focus on your previous work again. Undoubtedly, it's necessary to find more suitable way for creating reports.

"Make real-time report" To Do List

- If you are asked to give a report about current situation with your task list, don't hurry up to start creating and describing it manually
- Find out what time period must be described in your report
- Use software to make a report and to export it to **Microsoft Office Excel** or print it out

Action plan

1. Start your [task management software](#)
2. Set filter to display only tasks assigned to you
3. Set filter to display only daily, weekly, monthly tasks or another time period you need to report about
4. Export task list to **Microsoft Office Excel** or print it out



Make reports on estimated and actual time

Why is it important to compare estimated and actual time?

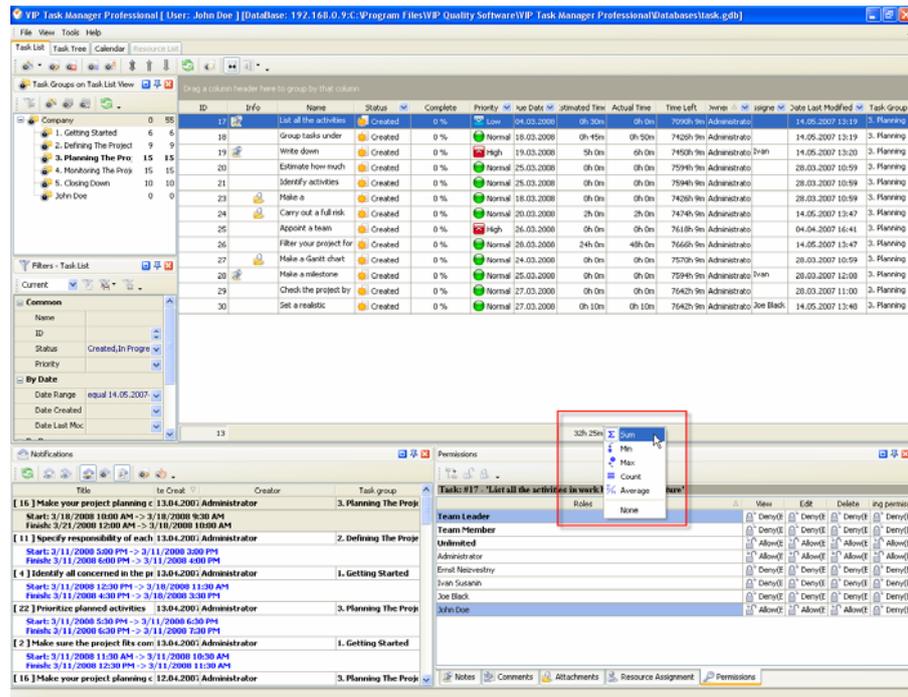
The reports that show the difference between estimated and actual time not only help you to see if you or your employees are productive. They can help you plan the time more accurately. It is not easy to estimate the right time the task will take. Especially if the task is new to you or you are planning the task for someone else. When you plan less time than the task really takes it may lead to stress and undermine the productivity.

Use reports to become more effective while planning

When comparing estimated and actual time you should distinguish the reasons why the data in two columns is different. In one case you or your employee may be not well qualified for this task and it took more time to be accomplished than you expected. In another case you didn't realize well how much time this task will take, and its an experience for you to plan this type of task better next time. In both cases the report generated by task management software will help you to become more effective as a team leader or when you plan your own tasks.

Action plan

1. Start your [task management software](#)
2. Enter estimated time while planning tasks
3. Enter actual time when the task is complete
4. Set filter to display only tasks assigned to particular resource on particular date or period of time
5. Right click on footer under Estimated and Actual Time columns and select 'Sum'
6. Export task list to MS Word/MS Excel format or print it out and analyze you Estimated and Actual time



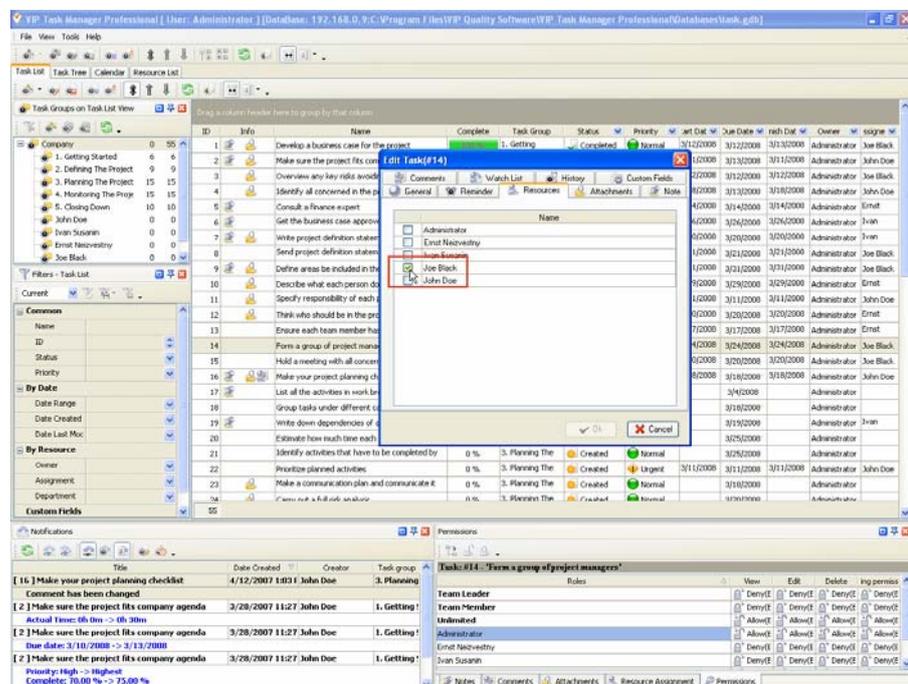
How to make sure you will have a report from your team

Forgetting to change the status

When your employee accomplished his task and changed its status to 'complete', task management software makes it easy for you to generate a report. The problem is that many employees forget to change the status of the task and it remains to be 'undone' in the list. They don't do this intentionally, they could be just focused on doing the job or sidetracked by plenty of other tasks you have assigned them to.

"Bad memory" solution

Task management software provides several solutions for this problem. For example, if the task is overdue (assigned to Tuesday but on Wednesday its status is still not 'completed') it may become highlighted in the list with a background color. It is a good feature as task in 'red' are very annoying and make people change their status to get rid of red color in their task list. Another thing you can do is to create a special task "Mark all your completed tasks as done" that should repeat, lets say, each Friday at 5 pm, set reminder and assign it to employees with a "bad memory".



Action plan

1. Start your [Task Management Software](#)
2. Create a task "Mark all your completed tasks as done"
3. Set it to repeat every day, week or month
4. Set reminder to appear 5 minutes before the appointed time
5. Assign it to employees that forget to report their tasks



Win-win reporting

Inevitable evil or control panel?

Many employees consider reports to be inevitable evil which take time that could be spent on doing their job. Many employers think that reports let them know if their employees are productive, and what is also important, reports motivate the employees to do something or, ideally, to raise their productivity. There is a solution that turns reports into a win-win tool.

Reports in one click

Spending much time on report is no good for both employees and employers as employees could do more work for that time. You, as employer or team leader, can create all the conditions for your staff or your team to report on tasks they are assigned in a very easy way, ex.: change status of a task; increase its % of completion, etc. All you have to do is one click to generate a required report from your team task list.

Action plan

1. Start your [task management software](#)
2. Set filter to display only tasks assigned to today, this week, last month, etc.
3. Set filter to display only tasks assigned to particular employee or team member
4. Export task list to MS Word/MS Excel format or print it out

| ID | Name | Status | Complete | Task Group | Priority | Due Date | Estimated Time | Owner | Assigned |
|----|---------------------------------|-------------|----------|-----------------|----------|-----------|----------------|---------------|-------------|
| 1 | Develop a business case for | Completed | 100% | 1. Getting | Normal | 3/12/2008 | 0h 0m | Administrator | Joe Black |
| 2 | Make sure the project fits | In Progress | 50% | 1. Getting | Highest | 3/12/2008 | 0h 0m | Administrator | John Doe |
| 3 | Overview any key risks | Completed | 100% | 1. Getting | Normal | 3/12/2008 | 0h 0m | Administrator | John Doe |
| 4 | Identify all concerned in the | Created | 0% | 1. Getting | Low | 3/12/2008 | 0h 0m | Administrator | John Doe |
| 5 | Consult a finance expert | Completed | 100% | 1. Getting | Normal | 3/14/2008 | 0h 0m | Administrator | Ernst |
| 6 | Get the business case | In Progress | 10% | 1. Getting | Normal | 3/24/2008 | 0h 0m | Administrator | Ivan Susann |
| 7 | Write project definition | In Progress | 5% | 2. Defining The | Normal | 3/20/2008 | 0h 0m | Administrator | Joe Black |
| 8 | Send project definition | In Progress | 10% | 2. Defining The | Highest | 3/21/2008 | 0h 0m | Administrator | John Doe |
| 9 | Define areas to be included in | In Progress | 10% | 2. Defining The | Normal | 3/21/2008 | 0h 0m | Administrator | Ernst |
| 10 | Describe what each person | In Progress | 25% | 2. Defining The | Normal | 3/29/2008 | 0h 0m | Administrator | Ernst |
| 11 | Specify responsibility of each | In Progress | 20% | 2. Defining The | Normal | 3/11/2008 | 0h 0m | Administrator | John Doe |
| 12 | Think who should be in the | In Progress | 25% | 2. Defining The | Normal | 3/20/2008 | 0h 0m | Administrator | Ernst |
| 13 | Ensure each team member | In Progress | 20% | 2. Defining The | Lowest | 3/17/2008 | 0h 0m | Administrator | Ernst |
| 14 | Form a group of project | In Progress | 15% | 2. Defining The | Normal | 3/24/2008 | 0h 0m | Administrator | Joe Black |
| 15 | Hold a meeting with all | In Progress | 10% | 2. Defining The | Normal | 3/20/2008 | 0h 0m | Administrator | Joe Black |
| 16 | Make your project planning | In Progress | 5% | 3. Planning The | Largest | 3/18/2008 | 0h 0m | Administrator | John Doe |
| 17 | List all the activities in work | Created | 0% | 3. Planning The | Normal | 3/9/2008 | 0h 0m | Administrator | Ernst |
| 18 | Group tasks under different | Created | 0% | 3. Planning The | Normal | 3/18/2008 | 0h 0m | Administrator | Ernst |
| 19 | Write down dependencies of | Created | 0% | 3. Planning The | Normal | 3/19/2008 | 0h 0m | Administrator | Ivan Susann |
| 20 | Estimate how much time each | Created | 0% | 3. Planning The | Normal | 3/25/2008 | 0h 0m | Administrator | Ernst |
| 21 | Identify activities that have | Created | 0% | 3. Planning The | Normal | 3/25/2008 | 0h 0m | Administrator | John Doe |
| 22 | Prioritize planned activities | Created | 0% | 3. Planning The | Normal | 3/11/2008 | 0h 0m | Administrator | John Doe |
| 23 | Make a communication plan | Created | 0% | 3. Planning The | Normal | 3/18/2008 | 0h 0m | Administrator | John Doe |



Miscellaneous

How to manage tasks in general and create the best environment for doing tasks

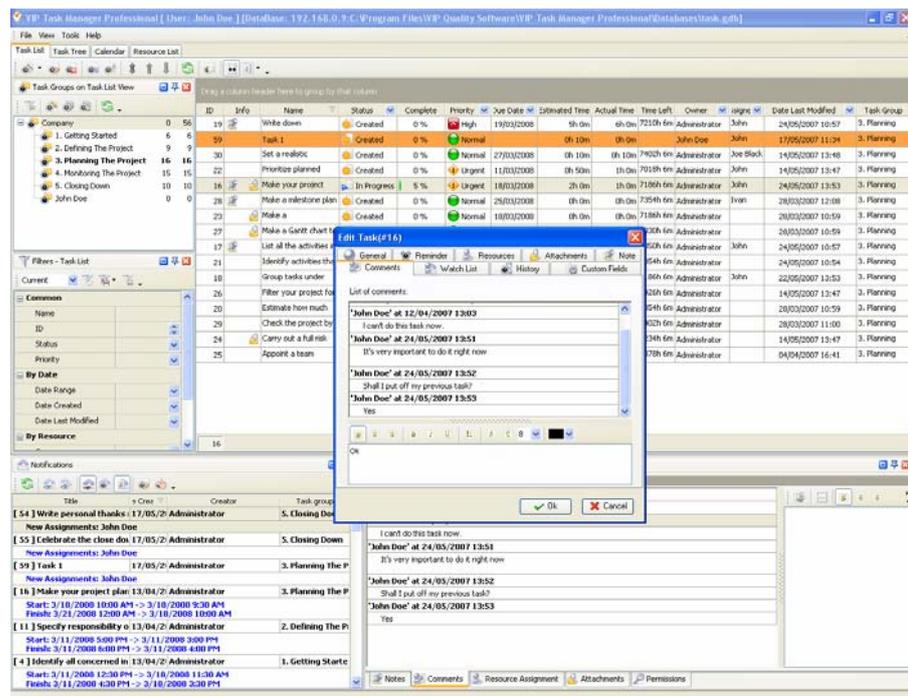
Motivate your team members by the words of praise and approval

Encouraging words can greatly motivate employees

Each person needs to be important and valuable for the company and people he or she works with. It can motivate the individual to become more and more productive. Sometimes it's enough to say one encouraging word and the employee feels that you appreciate his/her professional and personal characteristics. It takes you a moment but may make a great profit in the future. Just deposit several minutes and you will have well-motivated and highly-effective team member.

"Appreciating employees" To Do List

- Think how often you say encouraging words to your employees
- If you didn't pay attention to it earlier, change your politics now and don't forget to motivate your team members with some kind and encouraging words. It may be while you are assigning a new task to them or checking already done one, etc
- Use software to add some comments to employees' tasks



Action plan

1. Start your [team management software](#)
2. Open the task that you assigned to your employee
3. Open task Comments section and add some encouraging words
4. Continue your work

Let your colleagues see that you are busy

How to prevent your colleagues from overloading you

Do you suffer from constantly growing list of the tasks assigned to you? You work hard and productively but your [To Do List](#) doesn't become smaller, but bigger and bigger. What is the reason? Maybe your colleagues and employers don't realize the volume of your current work and constantly add some more one. The only solution is to let them know that you are up to your neck in work. In that case they will first think whether you are able to accomplish one more task without stress and overwhelming and won't press on you.

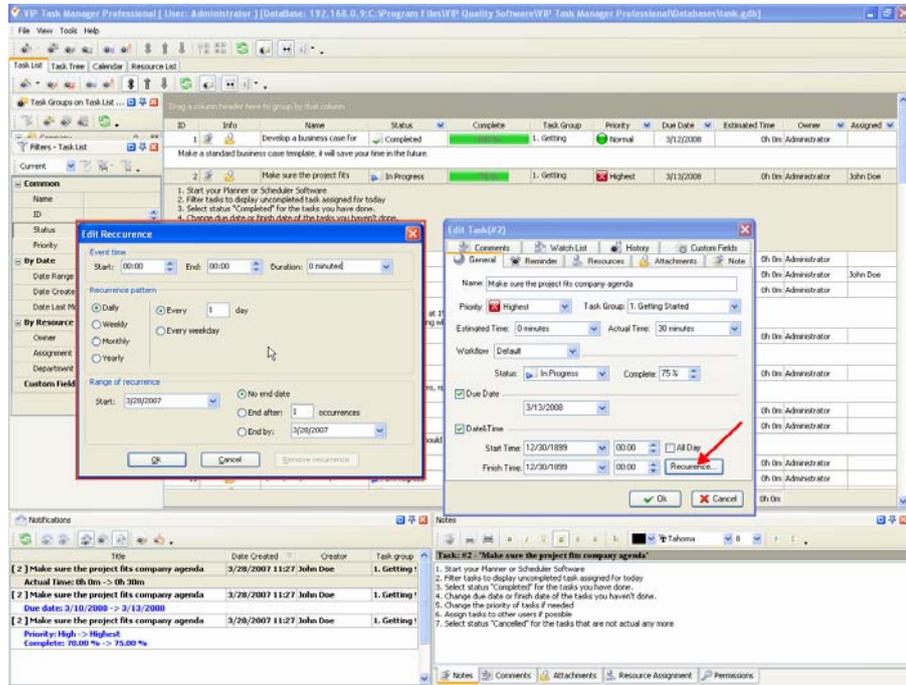
"Available task list" To Do List

- Put all your tasks, their due dates and statuses on the list
- Keep this list available for your employers and colleagues

- Use software to keep your colleagues aware of the tasks in your To Do List

Action plan

1. Start your [team management software](#)
2. Create the tasks you need to accomplish
3. Enter their statuses and due dates
4. Grant your colleagues the permission to view your task list



How to increase the productivity of the meeting

'Newmavashy' method

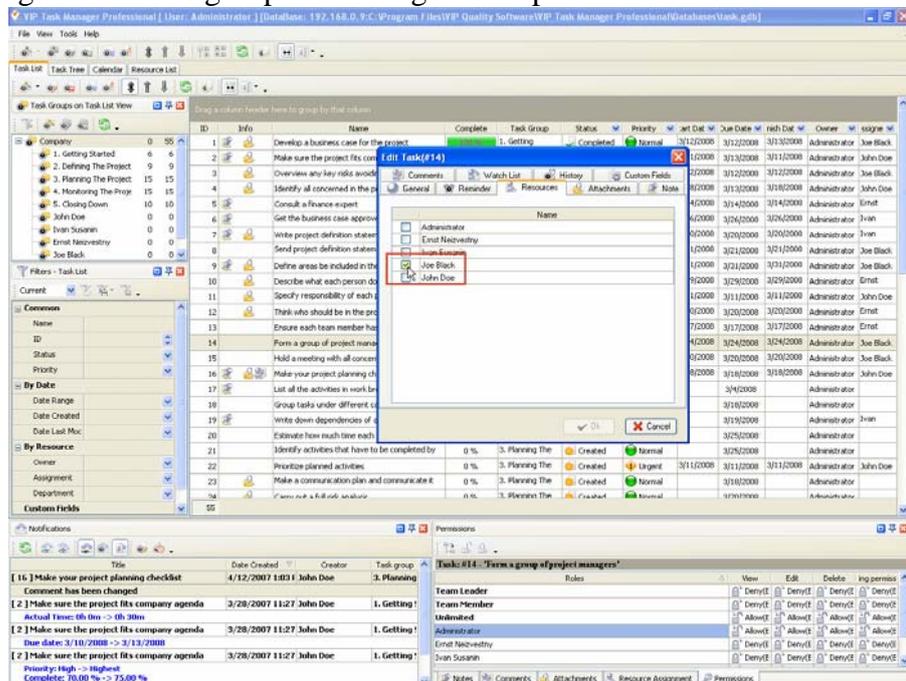
If you think how to increase the productivity of the meetings in your company, we recommend you to try Japanese technique 'newmavashy'. It consists in holding a meeting to prepare for the main meeting. It means the discussion of the subject within each of several team groups of the specialists. After that one or two persons from each group take part in the meeting. This method allows to effectively discuss the subject of the meeting and save the time of the teams.

"Newmavashy method" To Do List

- Before the meeting where specialists of different groups should take part, assign the meetings within each group
- After these small meetings assign one or two persons of each group to represent their group at the main meeting
- Use software to schedule small meetings within the groups and assign the representatives for the main meeting

Action plan

1. Start your [team management software](#)
2. Create new tasks 'Discuss the subject'
3. Schedule them to the time before the main meeting and assign to required teams
4. Create a new task 'Attend a meeting'
5. Assign required employees to this task



Save the time your team spends on the meetings

Meeting may be replaced by data exchange via computer

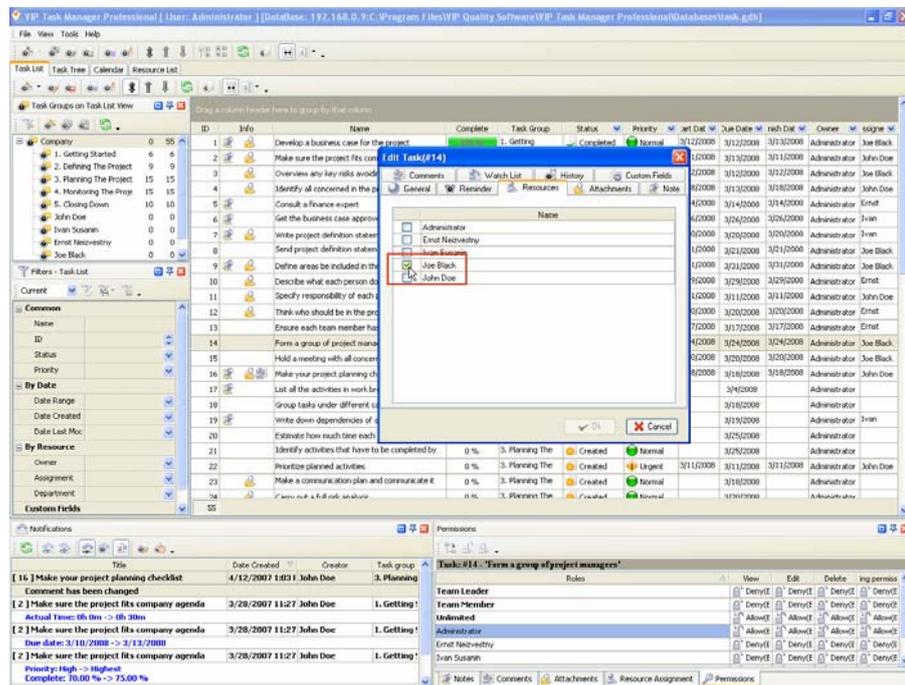
Everybody knows how much time can be wasted during the meeting. Frequently the aim of the meeting is to inform the team of some work innovations or project's details and so on. There is no necessity to hold a meeting in order to spread such kind of information. By using a computer and specific software designed to exchange the data among the members of the team, you can easily provide required employees with new information and save their time for more important tasks.

"Information exchange" To Do List

- Before holding a meeting, stop and think whether it is really necessary
- If you just need to inform the team of some task or project details, don't waste your employees' time on attending the meeting
- Use software to provide the employees with required information

Action plan

1. Start your [team management software](#)
2. Open a task you need to discuss
3. Add comments to this task comments section
4. Assign required employees to receive notifications about task changes



Gather additional information on the problem to take well-considered decision

The problem decision should be well-weighted

No work goes without solving different problems. There is nothing awful in it, it's a component part of working process. So, you shouldn't be afraid of it and just learn how to take proper decisions. But if you always try to solve the problem immediately as it appears, you have a chance to overlook some important details and get undesirable results in the future. It's rather smarter to put off the problem-solving for a certain time if there is no hurry and return to it when you have enough information that can help to take the right decision.

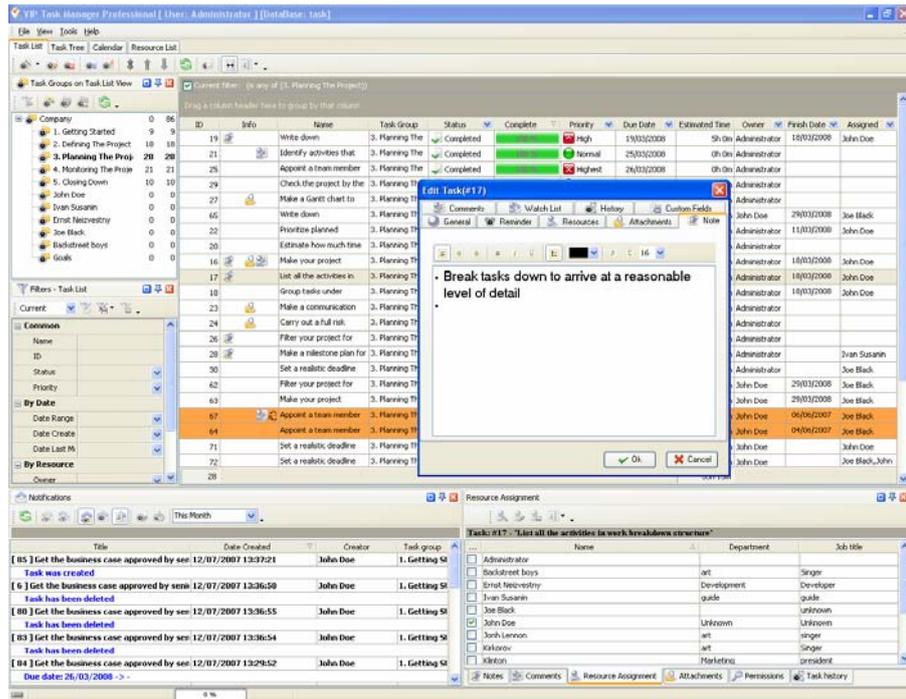
"Making a decision" To Do List

- Before taking a decision on a certain problem, stop and think whether it's so important to do it right now and whether you have enough information to solve it correctly now

- If the matter is not urgent and you find difficulty in estimating the situation at the moment, put off the problem-solving and start gathering additional information about this question
- Return to this problem when you have enough data to take a proper decision
- Use software to register the problem that should be solved in the future and enter additional information about it into task notes section

Action plan

1. Start your [task management software](#)
2. Create a new task, e.g. 'Decide whether Smith's offer is profitable'
3. When you obtain the information about this task, enter it into task notes section
4. Take a decision when you have enough data and change task status to 'Completed'



Make checklists for frequently recurring tasks

Avoid duplicating your work

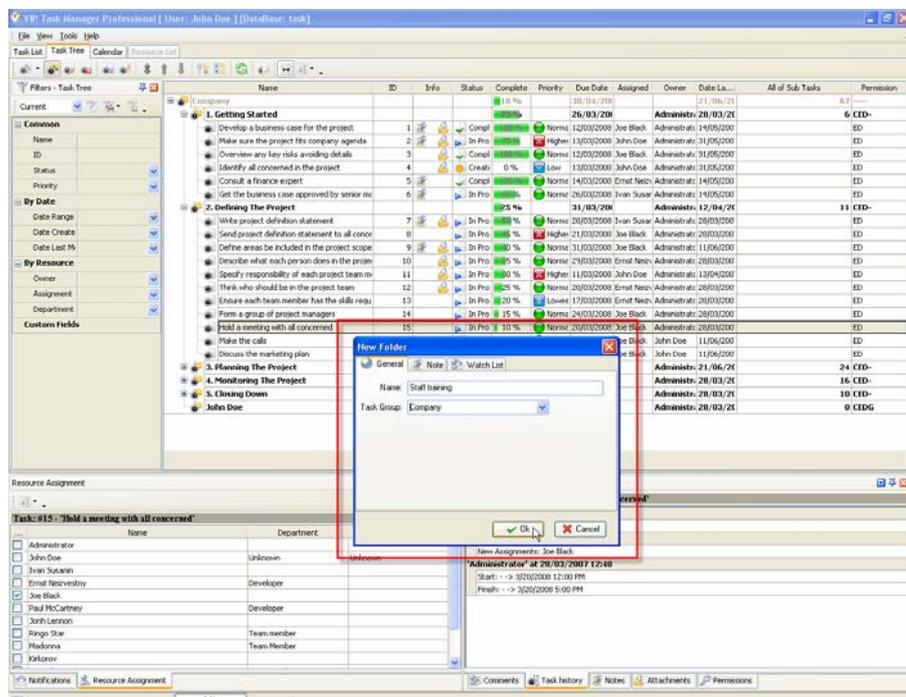
You may often face the situations, when you need to repeat the sequence of actions that you had done earlier. For example, you prepare documents for discharge of taxes each month. If you rethink the operations you have to do for that each month, you will spend your time nonproductively and irrationally. It will be smarter if you make a checklist that will include the tasks that you need to repeat frequently. In such a way you will have only to use already prepared and well-organized task list and thus save your time and will have a possibility to concentrate your attention on more important tasks.

"Use checklist" To Do List

- If you often need to repeat the same sequence of actions, avoid rethinking them each time
- Describe these actions and any details concerning them one time and then use this list in the future
- Use software to make checklists and use them whenever you need

Action plan

1. Start your [task management software](#)
2. Create a new task group, e.g. "Tax Deduction Checklist"
3. Create the tasks that describe the actions that you have to do



- Assign these tasks to task group "Tax Deduction Checklist" and enter task details into task notes section
- Use this checklist each time when you need it

Carefully keep all new ideas to process them in the future

Any idea may be useful in the future

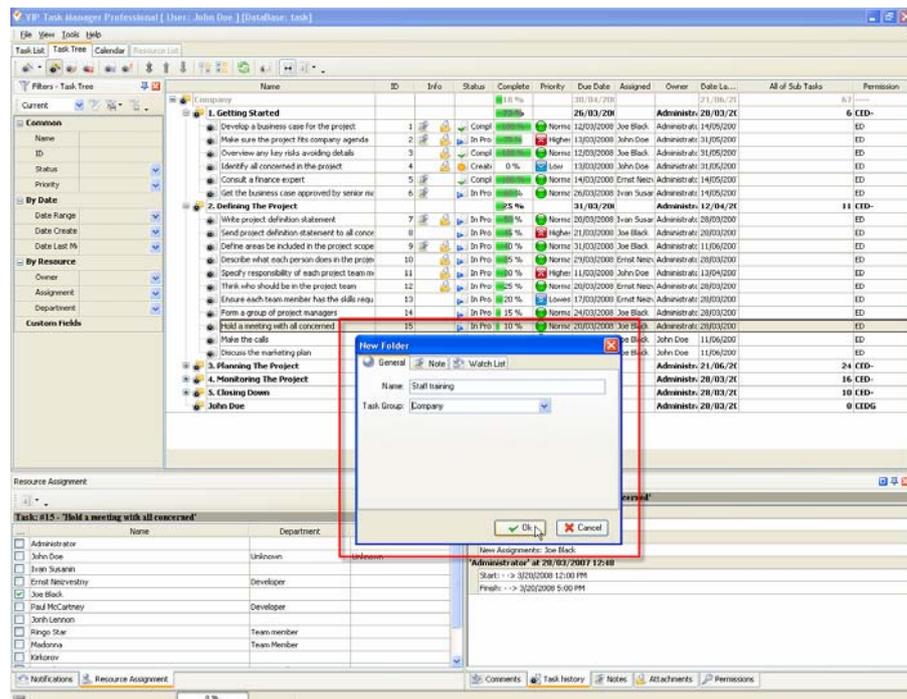
New idea may appear in your mind suddenly, and as you can be busy with some other tasks at this moment, it also can be quickly forgotten. If you don't fix originated thought at once, later you will probably need to spend lots of time remembering that fleeting new idea in order to process it. Or you may even forget that a new idea existed at all. That's why it is very important to record it as soon as possible and keep it on hand, because any new idea, thought or concept may be very useful and determining in the future.

"Record a new idea" To Do List

- Whenever a new idea appears in your mind, don't lose it
- No matter how busy you are at this moment, find a minute to record a new idea
- Use software to keep all your new ideas for further processing them

Action plan

- Start your [task management](#) or [organizer software](#)
- Create a new task group "New ideas"
- When a new idea appears, create a new task with its name
- Assign this task to "New ideas" task group
- If required enter some details about this idea into task notes section



Take into account employees' differences while collaborating with them

All people are different

When you collaborate with your staff you should remember that all people are unique. They may have differences that come out of employee's culture, gender, age, education, work experience, views of life or any other factors. If you want to establish good working relations with your team, you should take into account particular employee's personality and develop personal approach to each person. So, when you take on a new worker you need to take

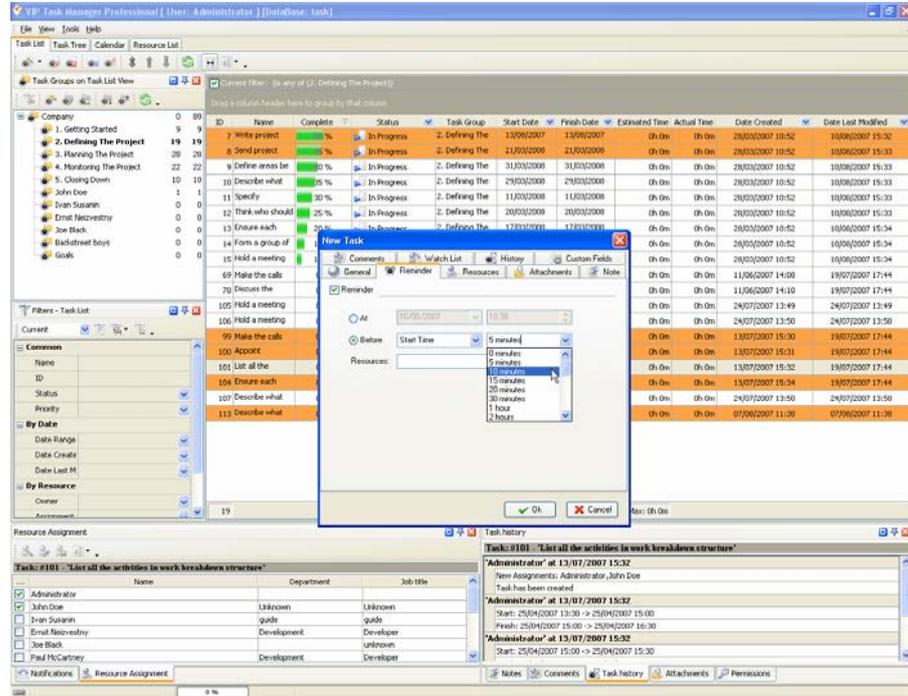
time to know him/her better. It will help you to draw a clear picture about this person in your mind and take into account his/her character properties in future.

"Know new worker better" To Do List

- When you have a new employee in your company, find some time to communicate with him/her
- During your meeting try to know as much as possible about him/her, but don't hurt his/her self-esteem
- Take into account received information in your collaboration with this employee
- Use software to remind you of better knowing your new worker

Action plan

1. Start your [team management software](#)
2. If a new employee appeared in your company, create user account for this person and assign him/her to receive notifications of all changes
3. Create a task "Communicate with a new employee" and assign it to you and your employee at the nearest suitable time
4. Set reminder for you and your employee at this time



Keep your staff motivated by serving them as example

Nothing motivates better than good example

As a manager of a company or a department, you should motivate your staff to work in the most effective way. The best method to motivate the employees is to serve as an example to them. When your team members realize that you don't demand the impossible things from them and your working day is the same as their one, it will keep them more motivated to work productively. So, show them that you are working the same hours your staff do, your work is no easier or less responsible than their, and you will be rewarded with increasing productivity and success.

"Work as equals" To Do List

- When you assign a task to your employee, think if you are able to do it yourself
- If the task is too complex don't ask your team member to do it, because it will stress him/her and reduce his/her self-motivation
- Work the same hours as your employees and keep them aware of your working day

- Use software to create your and your staff schedules and keep them aware of your own work

Action plan

1. Start your [team management software](#)
2. Create users accounts for all your staff
3. Grant them the permission to view your task list
4. Start doing your tasks

The screenshot displays the VP Task Manager Professional interface. The main window shows a task list with columns for Name, ID, Info, Status, Complete, and Priority. The tasks are organized into groups like '1. Getting Started', '2. Defining The Project', '3. Planning The Project', '4. Monitoring The Project', and '5. Closing Down'. Below the task list, there are sections for 'Resource Assignment' and 'Permissions'. The 'Permissions' section shows a table of roles and their permissions for various tasks.

| Role | Task Group: '2. Defining The Project' | View | Create | Edit | Delete | ing permss |
|-------------------|---------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| Unlimited | Allow | Allow | Allow | Allow | Allow | Allow |
| Administrator | Allow | Allow | Allow | Allow | Allow | Allow |
| Backstreet boys | Deny | Deny | Deny | Deny | Deny | Deny |
| Ernst Neisvestroy | Deny | Deny | Deny | Deny | Deny | Deny |
| Ivan Susann | Deny | Deny | Deny | Deny | Deny | Deny |
| Joe Black | Inherited From Parent | Inherited | Inherited | Inherited | Inherited | Inherited |
| Paul H.Catney | Deny | Deny | Deny | Deny | Deny | Deny |

Take care that you won't miss any important information when you are out of office

Spend 10 minutes for your calls and messages safety

When you go away from your office at the end of workday, you should care of your working place. If you leave everything as it is, you risk to miss some important calls or not to receive urgent e-mails in time. So, you should switch your phone to voicemail or activate e-mail and phone redirection to those ones that are available after you leave the office. This will give you possibility to stay in touch in case of emergency and not miss any important information. Then shut down your computer, printer and monitor and you will leave your office with sense that you are productive, efficient and successfully cope with your work.

"Switch and shut down" To Do List

- Get into a habit to take care of your working place before you leave the work
- Activate your phone and e-mail redirection or switch on your voicemail
- Shut down your computer, printer, monitor and other devices
- Use software to remind you about your office organization at the end of the day

Action plan

1. Start your [Organizer software](#)
2. Create a new task "Switch and shut down the equipment"
3. Set it to repeat daily ten minutes before you usually leave the office
4. Set reminder at that time

The screenshot displays the VP Task Manager Professional interface. The main window shows a task list with columns for ID, Info, Name, Status, Complete, Task Group, Priority, Due Date, Estimated Time, Owner, and Assigned. The tasks are organized into groups like '1. Getting Started', '2. Defining The Project', '3. Planning The Project', '4. Monitoring The Project', and '5. Closing Down'. Below the task list, there are sections for 'Resource Assignment' and 'Permissions'. The 'Permissions' section shows a table of roles and their permissions for various tasks.

| ID | Info | Name | Status | Complete | Task Group | Priority | Due Date | Estimated Time | Owner | Assigned |
|----|---|---|-------------|----------|------------|----------|-----------|----------------|----------|----------|
| 1 | Develop a business case for | Develop a business case for | Completed | 100% | 1. Getting | Normal | 3/12/2008 | | John Doe | John Doe |
| 2 | Make a standard business case template, it will save your time in the future. | Make a standard business case template, it will save your time in the future. | In Progress | 75% | 1. Getting | Highest | 3/12/2008 | | John Doe | John Doe |



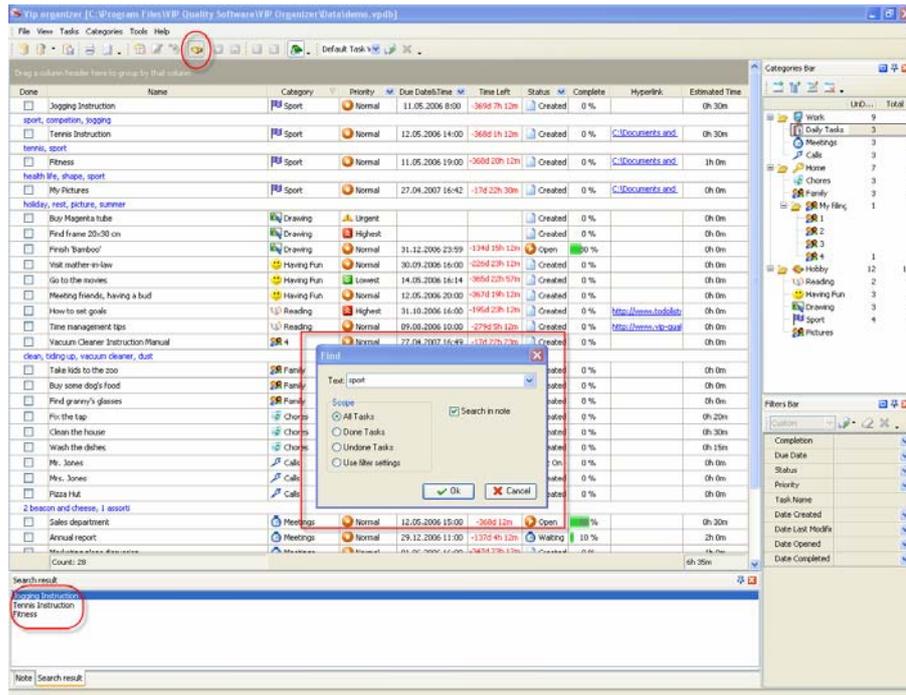
Keep frequently used information in cheat sheets

How much the cheat sheets are useful in your work

It's a common situation that you look for the same information again and again. Whether this information is in the reference book, textbook, newspaper or magazine, it takes much time to find the source and look through it each time you need something. It would be much convenient if you use cheat sheets that will help you remember required information any time you need it. If you keep your records in cheat sheets and store them somewhere near at hand, you will free your memory and save your time for more useful things.

"Use a cheat sheet" To Do List

- If there is an information that you regularly use and look up it or try to keep it in your memory again and again, stop wasting your time and energy in such way
- Gather this information thematically if required and place it to a cheat sheet
- Keep your cheat sheets on hand in order you can use them any time
- Use software to keep your cheat sheets and quickly find required information



Action plan

1. Start your [Organizer software](#)
2. Create a new task group "Cheat Sheets"
3. Create a new task, for example "Important dates" and assign it to task group "Cheat Sheets"
4. In task notes section enter the description to the information of this task, in order you will be able to quickly find it
5. Use the search function to find required information by keywords



Avoid meetings that are useless for you

"To meet or not to meet"

Meetings are the important part of business life but they can be great time wasters. It may seem strange but it's true. If you attend the meeting only because you are a member of a team and everyone has to assist at it but you don't contribute anything rational to the meeting you just spend your own time ineffectively. Instead of watching how the members of the meeting are exchanging the information that is useful and important only for them but doesn't have any value for you, you would better continue your own work.

"Avoid useless meetings" To Do List

- Ask yourself if you can contribute anything to the meeting that you are invited to
- Look through the meeting agenda and realize if there are any questions associated with your job

- If the answer to both questions is “No” explain it to your manager and keep doing your own work

Action plan

1. Start your [company task management software](#)
2. Track your tasks for today
3. If there are any meetings and you are assigned to be there look at the Notes section and decide whether your presence is important or not
4. If not, let the manager know that you won't come to the meeting and describe the reasons of your absence via the task Comments section
5. Keep doing your tasks

The screenshot displays the VP Task Manager Professional interface. The main window shows a task list with columns for ID, Info, Name, Status, Complete, Priority, Due Date, Estimated Time, Owner, Assigned, Date Last Modified, and Task Group. A task titled 'Appoint a team member to manage each risk' is highlighted. Below the task list, there are sections for 'Resource Assignment' and 'Comments'. The 'Comments' section shows a message from 'John Doe' at 20/06/2007 12:12.

Keep your staff aware of what is going on in the company

When the company is growing it is more difficult to keep all concerned well-informed

It is good when everybody in the company knows what is going on. Everyone should know his tasks, his colleagues' tasks which are closely connected with his own tasks, the events he involved in, meetings he should take part in, etc. When the company is not big it is not the problem: all the people are at hand, but when the company is growing it is more difficult to keep all concerned well informed. The solution is task collaboration software that allows to keep the tasks updated in real time so everyone who has the right to log in could see what is happening within his department or the whole company if it is needed. This will not only keep the staff well informed but also let each of them feel himself as the integral part of a great company and realize common goals.

"Collaboration" To Do List

- Have all the goals, plans, tasks, events, appointments in one place, in other words, use a task management system
- Explain the benefits of such a tool to your staff
- Remember to entering new tasks, updating the status of the existing tasks, etc.

Action plan

1. Find [task management software](#) that will fit your business needs
2. Install it within your Local Network
3. Create Task Groups for your business processes or projects

The screenshot displays the VP Task Manager Professional interface. The main window shows a task list with columns for ID, Info, Name, Status, Complete, Priority, Due Date, Actual Time, Owner, Fresh Date, Assigned, Date Last Modified, and Task Group. A task titled 'Appoint a team member to manage each risk' is highlighted. Below the task list, there are sections for 'Resource Assignment' and 'Notifications'. The 'Notifications' section shows a message from 'Administrator' at 17/05/2007 11:34.

4. Create user accounts for all your staff
5. Assign each employee to receive notifications of all changes

Organize your paper and electronic documents

Documents disorder and how to avoid it

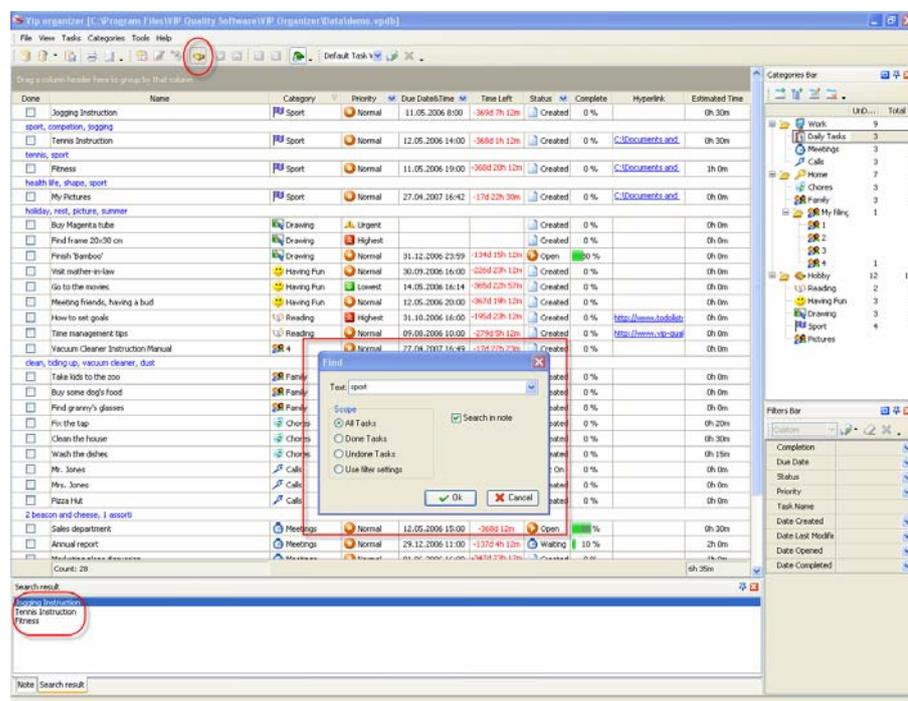
How often do you search for an important document you need immediately among great number of different papers on your desk or in your file cabinets? Do you have a lot of folders with document files on your computer? How much time do you spend on looking through each of them looking for particular one? Documents disorder leads to wasting time. The time you will never get back, the time you could spend more wisely. Organizer software can help you use the power of your computer to organize documents stored in file cabinets or on its hard drive.

How to manage paper and electronic documents

You can save lots of time by using search feature of organizer software to find required document as easier and faster as possible. All you need to do is to create a record for each new document you have and add a couple of key words that describe this document. When it's time to quickly find the document you simply enter a key word into search option and in a second you will know where the document is.

Action plan

1. Start your [Organizer software](#)
2. Label all your file folders with numbers or names arranged in numerical or alphabetical order
3. Create a task with the name of paper document you want to file away and add keywords associated with it in the notes section. Assign it to the category with the name of corresponding file folder.
4. Create a task with the name of electronic document you want to file away and record keywords associated with it in the notes section, then attach this file or link to it in Attachment tab.
5. Use the search function and search for keywords that describe the required document to find it.



Clear and tidy your desk before you go home

Clear your workplace

If you sorted out tasks you completed today or reassigned to tomorrow, you should bring order to your workplace as well. There should be some papers to be thrown in the bin and some documents to be sorted. All these piles of paper on your desk will make you think that you still have a lot of work to do, you are not efficient, you procrastinate, etc.

Clear your mind

Leaving your desk clean you not only clear your workplace but also clear your mind. It helps you forget about your daily routine and come to work tomorrow full of energy. When you sit at an organized desk in the morning you will not spend half an hour on getting ready to work, trying to find a necessary document, or looking through papers again to remember what they are about.

Action plan

1. Start your [Organizer Software](#)
2. Create task "Clean the desk"
3. Set it to repeat daily at a certain time in the end of the day
4. Set reminder for that time

