

Last Planner – Short Term Scheduling System

The Last Planner is a management technique for production planning of construction work. Its consistent application has (1) led to dramatic labor productivity gains, (2) aided in making the flow of work downstream more reliable, (3) increased throughput by reducing the need for buffers and for rehandling and tracking of materials on site, and (4) increased worker time and energy to improve work methods.

Last Planner is based on the premise that a planner should create reliable weekly work plans to derive maximum project benefits. Such plans should include only work for which it previously has been determined that it can be done during the planning period. The Last Planner is expected to make commitments (WILL) to doing what SHOULD be done, only to the extent that it CAN be done. To achieve this, The Last Planner must select assignments from a workable backlog comprising activities that meet three quality criteria: (1) work must be assigned in the right sequence, (2) work must be assigned in an amount that matches labor and equipment capacity, and (3) the work must be possible, i.e., design documents and materials must be on hand or in control, prerequisite work must be finished in time for the assignment to be carried out, and necessary coordination must be identified and arranged.

The Last Planner approach provides forward information for control because it forces problems to the surface at the planning stage, and it makes it possible to measure planning system performance. The Last Planner production philosophy is one of the principles of Lean Construction that Glenn Ballard of the Lean Construction Institute has been advocating.

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