## Back to the Future

By Michael Steinberg, PMP, MCTS

You have been diligently tracking progress against your project schedule. Your team members have diligently reported their hours worked each week, and have estimated the remaining work on each task. Everything is right with the world until a team member comes up to you and says, *"I can't start working on 'Locate New Site' because its predecessor has not been completed!"* And you wonder what went wrong.

What happened was that there was work scheduled to be completed in the past, which was neither completed nor rescheduled into the future. The result, as shown below, was that unfinished work got "stuck" in the past.
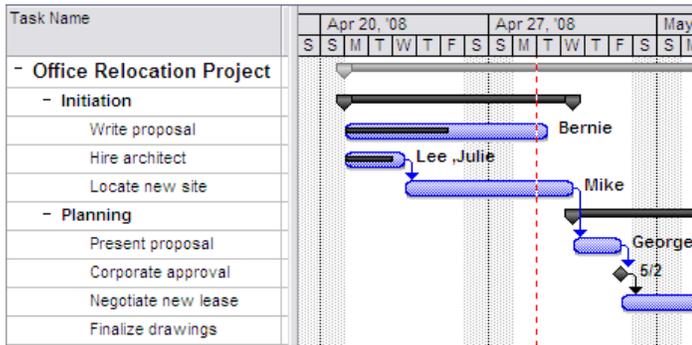

This is a problem for several reasons:
o   Your team members have an inaccurate picture of when they can work on their tasks.
o   Your stakeholders have an inaccurate picture of your estimated project completion date.
o   Resource planners have an inaccurate picture of future resource demand.

What is needed is for you to bring your estimates of uncompleted work "back to the future". (Ugh!) This is actually a very easy task in Microsoft Project (all versions):

o   From the menu, select
        Tools ➢ Tracking ➢ Update Project
o   On the Update Project dialog, select **"Reschedule uncompleted work to start after"**, and enter either the current date or the status date.
o   Click **OK**
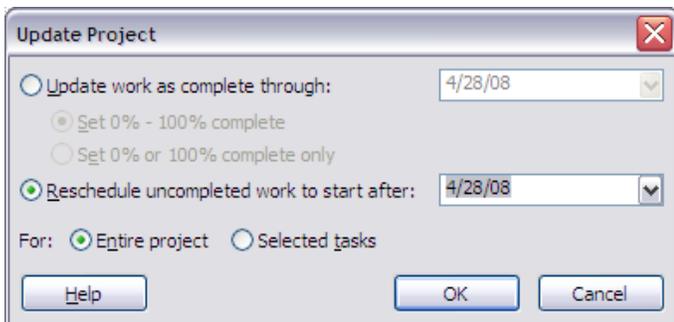
As shown below, all uncompleted work will be rescheduled into the future. The bad news is that it might push your schedule back, but the good news is that it now reflects reality.
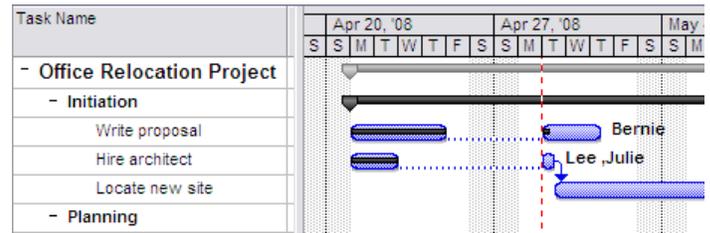
A best practice is to get into the habit of doing this as part of your weekly schedule update process.

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