



## Business Is Simple—Until It's Not: Why Resource Planning Is the Missing Link for PMO Success

by Jerry Manas

Business is simple: you sell *value* and receive money. Value can come in the form of products, services, or both. And to create it, whether you're making something or buying it, it's going to cost you money. And if you have a service company, then you're buying “people's time.”

You'll spend on:

- **Labor** (the people who work for you)
- **Operating expenses** (OpEx: sales, marketing, administration)
- **Capital expenditures** (CapEx: property, equipment, software, patents, etc.)

So that more money comes in than goes out, you need to ensure you're delivering exceptional value to the right customers at the right price. Just as important, you must be sure your people are working on activities that create value.

Of course, every organization has moving parts beyond frontline value creation:

- **Revenue functions** like Sales, Marketing, and Accounts Receivable
- **Cost functions** like Procurement and Accounts Payable
- **Operational functions** like Manufacturing, Distribution, and Logistics
- **Enabling functions** like HR, IT, Legal, Facilities, and the PMO
- **Innovation and customer support functions** like R&D and Call Centers

Every one of these areas runs ongoing operations (the engine) while also delivering projects (which deliver improvements or new products or services). And behind all of it is the most vital factor of all—people.

I've said it before and I'll say it again: *people are the fuel on which an organization runs*. But unlike machines, people have good days and bad, unique motivations, distinct personalities, and individual skills. What makes one person highly productive may not work for another.

Projects often “borrow” staff from operational roles, creating tension between running the business and changing the business.

So: how do you get a clear picture of who's doing what, and whether it's producing value? How do you ensure you have the right people, with the right skills, on the right projects at the right time?

This is where *Resource Planning* becomes essential. While project management focuses on “doing the work right” and portfolio management focuses on “doing the right work,” resource planning focuses on “aligning the right people with the right work at the right time.”

Think about it. You could have a perfectly planned project of high strategic value, but if the right people aren't available with the right skills when you need them, it'll all get derailed. On the flip side, if you have a poorly planned project, but get the right people on board, they'll usually figure it out.

Resource planning works hand-in-hand with resource allocation. While resource planning aligns roles and skills with "line of sight work" (often 3 to 6 months out), resource allocation assigns specific people to near-term work (typically a few weeks out).

PMO leaders consistently cite resource planning and allocation among their top two or three challenges, right up there with gaining respect as a driver of business value. In reality, the two challenges are connected. **Resource planning isn't just an administrative task; it's a core driver of project success and organizational strategy.**

While HR teams focus on workforce planning at an enterprise level, PMO leaders are in a unique position to ensure projects are staffed for success, and that strategic prioritization is based on data, not guesswork. To this end, PMOs partner with HR and other enabling functions but own the tactical and strategic resource planning for initiatives.

To make this often-complex discipline more practical, I created a framework called *The Capacity Quadrant*. It helps bridge project execution and people strategy and breaks resource planning into four core elements:

- **Visibility:** seeing demand versus capacity clearly
- **Prioritization:** defining and agreeing on what matters most
- **Optimization:** improving efficiency and inspiring performance
- **Alignment:** coordinating across the organization for greater cohesiveness and agility

This framework provides a practical, actionable approach to address the complexity of resource planning. By focusing on these core elements, organizations can move toward greater clarity, efficiency, and organizational agility.

## Next Steps

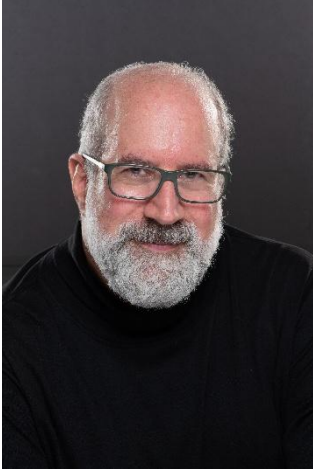
The Capacity Quadrant is a simple, accessible framework that works with any PPM or resource planning software—no special tools or complex methodologies needed.

To explore how the Capacity Quadrant can be applied to your organization, you can learn more about Jerry's **Strategic Advisory for COOs, RMOs, and PMO leaders** at [jerrymanas.com](http://jerrymanas.com), or [contact him](#) for a one-on-one discussion tailored to your challenges.

For a deeper dive into the Capacity Quadrant, see Jerry Manas's book, *The Resource Management and Capacity Planning Handbook*.

Question for you: How does your organization keep visibility into who's doing what—and whether it's truly producing value?

## About the Author



Jerry Manas is an internationally bestselling author, speaker, and consultant specializing in workforce planning and resource management. He helps organizations maximize the potential of their people to achieve breakthrough results. His books include *The Resource Management and Capacity Planning Handbook* (McGraw-Hill), which Judith E. Glaser, noted author of *Conversational Intelligence*, touted as “the first book dedicated to what is essentially the drivetrain of organizations—the effective use of its people toward its most important activities.”

Jerry is frequently cited by leading voices in the world of business, including Tom Peters (*In Search of Excellence*), who often references Jerry’s bestselling work, *Napoleon on Project Management*, for its insights on simplicity and character, and Pat Williams, Senior VP of the Orlando Magic, who called Jerry’s book, *Managing the Gray Areas*, “a new path for leaders.”

Jerry played a pivotal role on the leadership team for the first editions of the Project Management Institute’s international standards for portfolio and program management. He later served as a U.S. Registered Expert with ANSI/ISO, representing the United States in the creation of global standards for Workforce Allocation, Employee Engagement, and Knowledge Management, and as a voting member of the ISO Global Standards ANSI Technical Advisory Committee on HR Management (TC 260).

Jerry’s work has been highlighted in a variety of publications, including the *Houston Chronicle*, *Chicago Sun Times*, *National Post*, *Globe and Mail*, *Huffington Post*, and others. He has appeared on TV and radio internationally, including a notable appearance on Icelandic National TV, where he applied lessons from his books to the country’s economic recovery.

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