

Project Estimating Laws

Everything takes longer than you think (sometimes a lot longer).

Thinking about everything takes longer than you think.

Project Managing and leading a project team is a FULL TIME job, and then some.

Software Engineers are always optimistic (generally REALLY optimistic).

Schedules are (almost) always wrong.

Be wary of anyone who wants 100% confidence in an estimate. 90% confidence is an exceptional human achievement for any complex task, even with extremely good data.

Business types (upper management) REALLY do use your estimates for planning. Be able to express your level of confidence on estimates when you provide them to others.

Initially, a good schedule estimate is 80% confidence for near term deliverables, 60-80% for long-term deliverables. Revisit the schedule regularly and revise your estimates.

Notify "Need To Know" people AS SOON AS POSSIBLE if there is a significant problem or potential problem in meeting the schedule. Remember that there was a certain degree of optimism in the schedule originally.

Most people's estimating skills improve with experience; some don't.

Look up the word "estimate" in the dictionary. You may find it useful in a meeting.

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RETAIL