

Understanding Organizational Breakdown Structure

The following is extracted from the @schedule Users Guide.

An Organizational Breakdown Structure (OBS) is used to group tasks by responsible organization. An OBS provides a way of organizing project tasks by those responsible for executing the work.

An OBS is a hierarchical coding structure with each succeeding level providing a lower level of detail. @schedule allows you to create a hierarchical OBS Area structure with no limit to the depth of the hierarchy (organization, sub-org, sub-sub-org, etc.).

The figure below is an example of an OBS for a City Hall Renovation Project. We show the structure as a horizontal tree so that you can easily understand the hierarchical nature of the structure. Notice that the top levels of our structure (01, 02, 03 etc.) are disciplines. The exception is OBS 99 Contractors. Notice that the next levels are crafts for these disciplines.

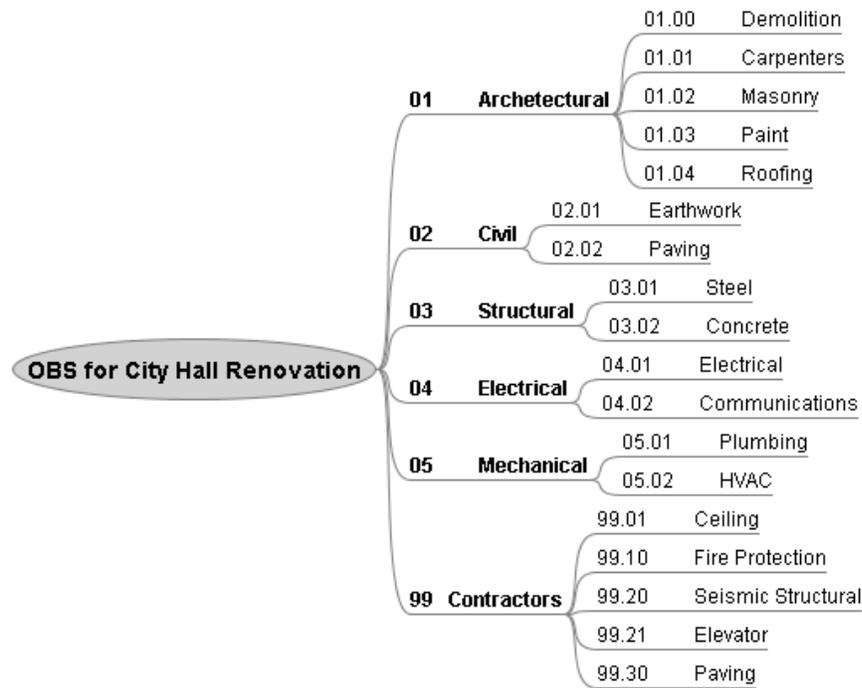
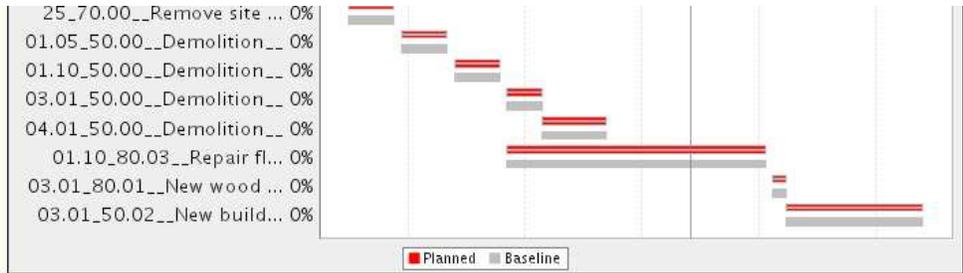


Figure: OBS Structure

Next we will look at an example of how OBS helps you when you are creating or reviewing schedules.

How Can a WBS Help You?

To help you understand some of the uses for OBS we provide an example using the figure below. It shows a portion of a page of @schedule's Create/Edit Task Form. Notice that the tasks are sorted by OBS and then by Plan Start Date. The table below the Gantt chart are grouped by OBS indicated by the blue-gray heading across the width of the table and indicating the start of a new OBS.



BASELINE TASK BARS ARE GRAY.

Last Attempted Action: Change Sort, At: Wed Jul 05 15:14:49 CST 2006

Select from the list, then select an action to perform.

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No.	WBS Area	WBS Task	OBS	Critical Path?	Aprvd. Labor Hrs	Dur. Cal. Wks.	Task Description	Resource Assignments	Predessors WBS_TaskID (Link+Lag Hrs)	Task Successors (WBS_TaskID)	Cal. Days Slack	Plan Start Date
OBS: 01.00 --- Demolition												
1	25	70.00	01.00	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	40h	0.61w	Remove site fencing	8 Man Labor Crew @1.0	*	01.05_50.00	0d	05/22/2006 Mon 08:00
2	01.05	50.00	01.00	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	320h	0.61w	Demolition	8 Man Labor Crew @8.0	25_70.00(FS+0)	01.05_20.01, 01.10_50.00, 30_80.02c	0d	05/29/2006 Mon 08:00
3	01.10	50.00	01.00	<input type="checkbox"/>	320h	0.61w	Demolition	8 Man Labor Crew @8.0	01.05_50.00(FS+0)	01.10_80.03, 03.01_50.00	59d	06/05/2006 Mon 08:00
4	03.01	50.00	01.00	<input type="checkbox"/>	240h	0.46w	Demolition	8 Man Labor Crew @8.0	01.10_50.00(FS+0)	03.01_41.01c, 04.01_50.00	109d	06/12/2006 Mon 08:00
5	04.01	50.00	01.00	<input type="checkbox"/>	400h	1.15w	Demolition	8 Man Labor Crew @8.0	03.01_50.00(FS+0)	*	145d	06/15/2006 Thu 14:00
OBS: 01.01 --- Carpenters												
6	01.10	80.03	01.01	<input type="checkbox"/>	200h	4.61w	Repair floor and roof structural members	8 Man Carpenter Crew @1.0	01.10_50.00(FS+0)	01.10_63a.01, 03.01_80.01	59d	06/12/2006 Mon 08:00
7	03.01	80.01	01.01	<input type="checkbox"/>	120h	0.18w	New wood roof trusses and roof decking	8 Man Carpenter Crew @8.0	01.10_80.03(FS+0)	03.01_50.02, 03.01_63.01	59d	07/17/2006 Mon 08:00
8	03.01	50.02	01.01	<input type="checkbox"/>	800h	2.4w	New buildout (minimal)	8 Man	03.01_80.01(FS+0)	03.01_63.02	61d	07/18/2006

Figure: Tasks sorted by OBS and date

Sorting by OBS and date can provide you with the information you need to understand how well your resources are being used. It will help you to answer these questions:

- Is the work for the resource sequential and without breaks in continuity? If not the resource will be under utilized because there are dead periods for the resource.
- Are the resources being over utilized? If the tasks over-lap and

Sorting by OBS means we are sorting by the disciplines responsible for performing the task. OBS 01.00 is the Demolition stem of the Architectural (OBS 01) discipline in our OBS structure (see figure OBS Structure above).

Notice that the resource assignment for each task in this OBS is the same (8-man labor crew) so sorting by OBS and date has grouped all of this resource together for us and in the order of execution. Now look at the Gantt chart above the table. The Gantt chart shows the same tasks in the same order as the table below it. Notice that each task for this OBS is contiguous (end to end). So we conclude that work for the labor crew will be sequential with no no-work voids in between tasks.

This isn't by lucky chance of course. We used this same screen and the same sort when we assigned predecessors to these tasks. We used other sorts when assigning other predecessors. For example the sort by WBS view helps to insure that work we do in different areas is also logical and that logic of the project as a whole makes sense.

@schedule provides ten different sorts to help you create schedules and to monitor and report progress.

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