# How to…
# Manage resources

The project has been signed off and requirements gathered – now for the planning! To plan a project's resources, you'll need to have a really clear idea of the number and types of resources needed to spring the project into action. Without efficient resource planning things can start to fail rather quickly. Here are our top five tips to avoid that happening.

## 1 Define resources – who and what

So you've been informed of the project's requirements and potentially even been given a delivery date. The question now is 'who' and 'what' are required to implement the project? It is important that the right people and equipment are identified otherwise you could be in a position where you don't have the right tools for the job.

## 2 Schedule resources – when

Once you have clearly identified what resources are needed, it all comes down to time and availability. Determining how long a resource is required for is dependant upon two things: receiving accurate work effort estimates and taking into account the availability of that resource (consider planned absences, commitment to other projects and so on).

## 3 Be realistic

There's little point in trying to fit a square plug into a round hole; it simply won't fit. No matter how demanding the resource request is, you need to be realistic about what can be achieved in a given amount of time. It's always best to plan resources with some contingency to allow for those unexpected problems that seem to arise from nowhere.

## 4 Prioritise

Changes to your resource plan are inevitable so be prepared to prioritise and make quick decisions. This needn't have an impact on deliverables; if you take a step back and look at the bigger picture you might find that by moving something out elsewhere, things can stay on plan – it's a bit like a jigsaw puzzle; you just need to find the best fit.

## 5 Plan ahead

If you often find yourself in a position where you are struggling to fit everything into your resource plan then you need to start planning ahead. Advance notice of projects in the pipeline allows you to think ahead and direct resources to fit your needs. It's better to have things on the radar well in advance and move it out rather than not be able to fit it in at all.