Project Management with the HP3000

Nichols & Company

N5500 is easily the simplest, most convenient and most flexible Project Planning and Control System available for the HP3000 user community. N5500 offers three levels of planning and control: strategic for the construction industry and other large scale efforts, tactical for manufacturing and plant maintenance and dispatch for individual professional efforts in such fields as Engineering, Research and Development, and Management Information Science.

N5500 is the third fully implemented project planning and control system developed by Nichols and Co., Inc. The product has been in use for more than five years by over two hundred and fifty companies. Over the past ten years, Nichols & Company has alone invested more than fifty man years in N5500 and its related options. The Company's corporate office is located in Culver City, California just minutes north of the Los Angeles International Airport. It has branch offices in New Jersey, London, Manila, Mexico City and Stockholm.

N5500 was introduced after an intensive analysis of current industry needs. It is a highly versatile, yet extremely easy to use package. There are no redundant input formats or complex requirements. It is simple, direct and logical. But N5500's greatest strength is its versatility of application and overall usefulness. Nichols and Company has built and fully supported N5500 to make it a viable tool for all project oriented groups.

MANUALS. N5500 instruction materials are complete but not overwhelming. Our manual is clear, concise, easily understood and logically presented. It starts from the general and moves easily to the detailed, using frequent illustrations and meaningful examples. It contains a table of contents and a complete index. Terms and concepts of project management are defined and illustrated. Though five full days of training and assistance are provided with N5500, several clients have been able to implement the system and use it successfully with no vendor assistance, other than the information provided in the manual and installation guide.

EASY ENTRY OF DATA. Whether in interactive or batch mode, N5500 offers easy and simple entry. There are no redundant entries, complex codes or difficult manipulation. For planning, there are only two input formats, where other products range from eight to over thirty. Any number of standard projects can be preloaded and recalled at any time. This repetitive approach can save days of effort and prevent coding errors. All standard resource data can be preloaded and automatically allocated to incoming plans as needed. If the interactive entry option is used, data is validated and fully edited on input. Errors are identified and corrections are made easily.

EASY RETRIEVAL OF INFORMATION. Again, whether interactively or in batch, N5500 is superior to others. Accurate information is easily accessible via standard or custom formats. But even the standard reports have countless variations that support a wide variety of information needs. Individual reporting variations can be preloaded and called out at will. Support schedules can be established to suit an organization's recurring normal requirements based on any given variance such as weekly, monthly, quarterly or yearly cycles.

FULL PERT/CPM CAPABILITY. Precedent networking is standard. Node (I/J) processing is optional. N5500 produces late start, early start, expected start, late finish, early finish, expected finish, and negative float calculations. The system also enables the planner to specify varied task relationships such as start to start, start to finish, finish to start, finish to finish, start plus/minus days, finish plus/minus days and spacers. Tasks can be scheduled at any level of effort in numerous periodic variations such as once weekly or once monthly. Unlimited weekly cycle and holiday calendars can be applied. Critical path analysis is standard and is constantly recalculated to portray a changing environment.

GRAPHICS. It is usually easier to interpret an illustration. Graphic representation of digital data allows the interpreter to see ranges and variations in better perspective. Nichols' product produces graphic information on both line printers and graphics plotters. Printer information includes bar charts and trend analyses. Plotter displays report the intricacies of a network, especially over extended periods of time and highlight the critical path directly.

SIMULATION. Whenever a plan is entered into N5500, the system instantly identifies and highlights the conflicts and discontinuities of schedules, as well as providing an accurate cost analysis. The plan can be simulated as a stand alone element, or just as easily as a dynamic part of the inprocess load. In other words, N5500 can show the impact of adding one or more projects to the current schedule and workload without permanent modification of an inprocess load. It will display displacement and overload situations easily.

CAPACITY PLANNING. The awareness of what resources are needed to support and accomplish either a simple or complex workload is essential in today's ever changing environment. N5500 tells when work will be

accomplished if there is a limitation in available resources and suggests what resources are required to meet schedule demands. Mixed variation on both themes are easily established using selected force loading options or by force loading the critical path. When load leveling, N5500 uses the significant accuracy of a daily loading pattern without any additional demands on the planner.

PROGRESS REPORTING. Most systems fail completely when an easy and routine mechanism for periodic maintenance of project progress is not available. N5500, however, automatically provides a special turnaround document or video screen for the entry of project accomplishment. The hours or days worked may be entered as individual or group efforts in any increment from tenths of hours to man weeks. Money, materials or other units consumed may be reported also. This progress data automatically updates the network and produces a series of forecasts and an "earned value" calculation. N5500 even produces a detailed analysis of estimated versus actual performance on a project, dividing the work into classes or types and reporting it across projects by assignee.

ACCOUNTING. Once actuals are assimilated and validated, a wide assortment of reports can be generated. N5500 handles labor, materials, equipment and cost accounting easily and quickly. It provides both gross and net continuous expenditure reporting by responsibility area or by type of effort. Invoicing can be handled directly from the system. Cost data from other systems can be integrated easily into N5500. N5500 can feed general ledger or journal entries. Actual versus planned expenditures over days, weeks, months and years can be readily assessed.

EDUCATION. Nichols and Company believes well trained clients are the most successful users and successful users profit greatly from planning with N5500. Upon purchase of N5500, you receive five days on-site training at our expense. We want your N5500 system running smoothly. Many organizations find that ongoing education enhances the effectiveness of managers and planners alike. We therefore provide General Project Planning and Control Concept seminars. This continuous belief in education helps people live up to their true potential. They should never lack a basic understanding of the project management discipline. We also provide tutorial and general consulting services for those organizations who simply lack the appropriate manpower to monitor their projects. At each point, we are at your side, to provide whatever is needed to make your project management effort a success.

SERVICE. Closely allied to education, is Nichols and Company's overall service orientation. Our consulting and technical staff are readily available by phone in either our New Jersey or California offices. If needed, we provide immediate assistance to help in an emergency. We provide computer backup, plotter services and technical advice. For those organizations, not yet ready to install their own N5500 system, we have several outstanding time-sharing services with dial-up access to N5500. Finally, for those who want to assess N5500 fully and gain hands-on confidence, we conduct free monthly workshops. At these workshops, you bring your projects and load them into N5500 yourself to see how N5500 can work for you throughout the project management process.

FINALLY. N5500 is a full capability product. It can be used in any environment from Construction to Engineering, Manufacturing or MIS. The system provides Strategic (linear projecting), Tactical (group loading), and Dispatch (individual loading) planning in an easy to learn, easy to use format. The product is known for its simplicity, convenience and flexibility. It has more useful features than any other project management system in the HP3000 market today.