

THE FREELANCER KIT

MS Project Plan Pack — Quick-Start Guide

A Gantt-style project workbook that runs in Excel — and moves cleanly into Microsoft Project when you need it.

GANTT · MILESTONES · BUDGET

2026 Edition · For the buyer's personal use

Quick-Start Guide

What's inside the full pack

- **Gantt Plan** — every task with an owner, a start date, a duration and a % complete. End dates and the progress bar calculate themselves, and the week columns (W1–W6) light up in teal so you can see the whole project at a glance.
- **Milestones** — the handful of moments that actually matter: approvals, deliveries, payments.
- **Budget** — planned vs actual spending with a running variance column and totals, so a project never quietly eats your profit.

The one rule: update % Complete and Actual spending once a week — five minutes on the same day each week. A plan you update beats a perfect plan you abandon.

Your first 10 minutes

- Open **MS-Project-Plan-Pack.xlsx** in Excel (or Google Sheets / LibreOffice — it works there too).
- On the Gantt Plan sheet, replace the sample tasks with your project's tasks. Type a start date and a duration; the End column and Progress bar do the rest.
- Set % Complete honestly — 0% means not started, 100% means delivered and approved. Nothing in between is a feeling; it is a share of the work done.
- Add your big moments to Milestones, and your expected costs to Budget.

Bringing the plan into Microsoft Project

Already use MS Project? The workbook is shaped so the move is painless:

- In Excel, use **File** → **Save As** → **CSV** on a copy of the Gantt Plan sheet (keep the original safe).
- In MS Project, choose **File** → **Open**, pick the CSV, and run the Import Wizard.
- Map the fields: *Task* → *Name*, *Start* → *Start*, *Duration (days)* → *Duration*, *% Complete* → *% Complete*, *Owner* → *Resource Names*.
- Project draws the full Gantt chart from those columns — your owners become resources and your % Complete carries across.

Running the project week to week

- **Monday:** scan the week columns — what starts this week, what is late?
- **When a task slips:** change its Start or Duration, not the deadline. The plan shows the true new end date; tell the client early, with the new date in hand.
- **Money check:** if Variance on any Budget row goes negative, the project is spending more than planned — cut scope or agree extra budget in writing before continuing.
- **Lite version note:** the free Lite workbook includes the Gantt Plan sheet pre-formatted for up to 15 tasks. The full pack adds Milestones + Budget and a full worked example.

A plan is not paperwork. It is the difference between telling a client “soon” and telling them “Thursday, 4 pm” — and being right.