



# The Business of Resource Management

Part One: Resource Management Is Not  
Scheduling. It Connects Strategy to Results.

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## ABOUT THE RMI

The Resource Management Institute (RMI) is dedicated to advancing the discipline of resource and workforce management. We provide actionable thought leadership, proven best practices, and global standards that shape how organizations manage their most valuable asset—their people. Through our globally recognized credentials, we certify expertise in resource management, helping professionals demonstrate their capabilities and grow their careers. We also equip organizations with the practical tools and resources needed to manage human capital with greater efficiency, consistency, and purpose.



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# **RESOURCE MANAGEMENT ISN'T ABOUT SCHEDULING.**

## **IT'S ABOUT CONNECTING STRATEGY TO RESULTS.**

In most services organizations, resource management exists, but in many, it is still not treated as a strategic capability. Instead, it shows up as scheduling or coordination, a necessary but largely administrative function somewhere between project management, delivery, and operations. Important, yes, but not mission critical. And there in lies the problem. Because while resource management may look operational, when designed and deployed correctly, its impact is anything but.

In reality, resource management sits directly on the path between strategy and results. It determines whether growth plans are achievable, whether margins hold, and whether delivery is predictable or chaotic. Yet in many organizations, it remains undervalued, under-supported, and misunderstood.

Survey data from the RMI's Q2 2026 study on the Economic Impact and Value of Effective Resource Management reinforces this disconnect. It showed that while most organizations recognize that resource management influences growth, margin, and delivery, the majority (62%) report that it is only partially aligned to enterprise strategy, leaving significant value unrealized.

This article starts with a simple premise: Resource management is not about managing people's time, but rather it's about ensuring the business can achieve its growth, profitability, and delivery objectives with the talent it has.

## THE GAP BETWEEN HOW IT'S SEEN AND WHAT IT DOES

Ask most leaders what resource management is, and you will hear variations of the same answer:

- Assigning people to projects
- Managing utilization
- Coordinating schedules
- Filling roles as needs arise

None of these are wrong, but they are incomplete. They describe activities, not outcomes. And the consequences of this framing are measurable. RMI survey data shows that while most organizations use resource management data to make staffing decisions, far fewer extend those insights into financial decision-making, such as setting delivery margin targets, driving portfolio or pricing decisions, or managing performance through real-time P&L. That separation—between staffing execution and business decision-making—is where the real impact of resource management is either realized or lost.

Every organization is constantly trying to answer a set of fundamental questions:

- Can we deliver the work we are selling?
- Do we have the right skills in the right places?
- Are we using our workforce efficiently?
- Can we predict what will happen next quarter?

Resource management is the mechanism that answers those questions in practice, but only when its insights are incorporated into the financial and strategic decision-making processes that shape demand in the first place. When it is limited to simply filling roles after those decisions have already been set, resource management is operating too late in the process to meaningfully influence outcomes.



## WHY THIS MATTERS TO LEADERSHIP

At the executive level, performance is measured in a different language: revenue growth, margin, forecast accuracy, customer satisfaction, and scalability.

Resource management doesn't appear in that list, but it directly shapes every one of those outcomes. Let's examine.

**Revenue Growth:** You cannot deliver what you cannot staff. Deals slowed, delayed, or lost due to lack of capacity are not just sales issues alone. They are deployment issues.

**Margin:** Margin is not only a function of pricing and resource cost. It's determined by who does the work, how efficiently they are deployed, and how often plans change. All of these are influenced by resource decisions.

**Predictability:** Executives rely on forecasts to make decisions, but forecasts that are not grounded in actual resource capacity are inherently unstable. This helps explain why forecast accuracy consistently ranks among the top improvement targets for services organizations. Without resource capacity embedded into forecasts, predictability remains aspirational rather than operational.

**Customer Outcomes:** Consistency in delivery depends on having the right people in the right roles at the right time. That's not luck. It is orchestration.

**Scalability:** As organizations grow, coordination becomes exponentially more complex. Without a system for managing that complexity, growth introduces friction instead of leverage.

When viewed this way, resource management is not adjacent to these outcomes, but rather it's embedded within how they are achieved.

## THE INVISIBLE SYSTEM DRIVING OUTCOMES

Professional services firms are built on a simple model. They sell expertise and deliver it through people. That sounds straightforward, but the execution is anything but.

Between winning work and delivering work lies a complex, constantly shifting system:

- Demand changes
- Skill needs vary
- Availability fluctuates
- Priorities compete

Managing that system effectively determines whether the business performs consistently and predictably or struggles to keep up with itself. This challenge compounds quickly at scale. Most RMI member organizations manage hundreds, often thousands, of resources. At that level, manual coordination doesn't just become inefficient; it becomes unreliable. This is where resource management lives. Not as a set of tasks, but as a system that converts demand into delivery, and delivery into results. When that system is designed well, it creates clarity, alignment, and confidence across the organization. But, when it's not, friction replaces flow, and performance becomes increasingly difficult to sustain. The impact is felt across the business:

- Projects start late or understaffed
- High-cost resources are used where they shouldn't be
- Critical skills are unavailable at the wrong moments
- Teams are either overworked or underutilized
- Forecasts are frequently wrong

Most organizations treat these as separate issues, attributing them to delivery problems, sales challenges, or hiring gaps. In reality, they're interconnected and point to a single underlying issue: how effectively the organization deploys its talent.

# WHY RESOURCE MANAGEMENT REMAINS UNDERVALUED

If resource management is so consequential to business performance, why is it still undervalued?

Several factors tend to show up consistently:

- Its impact is distributed across many outcomes, rather than concentrated in a single metric
- It operates behind the scenes, making it less visible
- It's often introduced in organizations tactically, and not designed strategically
- Leadership accountability for it is often unclear

Most importantly, it's often viewed through the lens of its lowest-level activities. When something is seen as scheduling, it's not designed as a strategic capability. This mindset is reinforced by how resource management is too often tooled. Fragmented systems, spreadsheets, and partial solutions limit its ability to produce strategic insight, further anchoring it in execution rather than decision-making.

## A QUESTION WORTH ASKING

Consider this: If resource management ceased to function effectively in your organization tomorrow, what would happen?

- Would revenue plans still hold?
- Would delivery timelines remain intact?
- Would margins remain stable?
- Would forecasts remain reliable?

For most organizations, the honest answer is no. Things might not fail immediately, but degradation would begin quickly and show up across multiple dimensions. That's the sign of a capability the organization cannot operate without, and it must be treated that way.

## RETHINKING RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

To truly move forward, leaders need a better way to think about resource management. Not as a function that just assigns people, but as one that enables performance.

A more accurate definition might be this: resource management is the capability that ensures the organization can align its talent with its priorities in a way that maximizes growth, profitability, and delivery effectiveness.

This definition does two important things:

- It elevates the conversation from activity to outcome
- It connects resource management directly to the objectives leaders already own

Once that connection is clear, it becomes much harder to treat it as optional.

## WHERE THIS SERIES IS GOING

This article sets the foundation. At its best, resource management is much more than an administrative function. It's a core system that determines whether a professional services organization can execute what it sells, deliver what it promises, and perform the way it plans.

However, if resource management is misunderstood, it cannot be designed effectively. And if it's not designed effectively, its value remains inconsistent and often invisible.

In the next article, we will make that value tangible by looking at the cost of getting it wrong. Because once the cost becomes clear, the conversation changes. The question is no longer "Do we need to invest in resource management?" It becomes "Can we really afford not to?"

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Ryan Childers is the Managing Director of the Resource Management Institute (RMI). With deep expertise in global resource management, Ryan was an early adopter and implementer of the Just-in-Time Resourcing® brand of human capital management solutions. His passion for resource management is central to his role leading this important industry institute.

Prior to leading the RMI, Ryan was a Partner at RTM Consulting, where he advised clients on accelerating growth, implementing operational best practices, and developing delivery methodologies. He has also held leadership roles in Professional Services and corporate strategy at Ontario Systems (now Finvi), and began his career in systems deployment at Accenture.

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