

Project 2007: How to Define A Project Baseline

written by: Misty Faucheux • edited by: Michele McDonough • updated: 6/29/2011

Before you start a project, it is important to have a reference point to look back to to make sure that your project is progressing smoothly. Project baselines give you this reference point. Learn what project baselines are and how they can help you.

Baselines in Project 2007

When getting ready to create and start on a project there are many things that you need to consider. For example, you need to plan out your budget and take into account the schedule for the project. This includes figuring out the initial task, resources, beginning and ending date, the length of the project and the overall cost of the project. These figures will also constitute your project baseline in a program like [Microsoft Project 2007](#).

Before you begin creating your baseline, you must, however, create your Work Breakdown Structure. The project baseline should always come in-between the planning phase and the start of the project. The baseline becomes a fixed point against which you can compare how your project is progressing. If your actual cost or actual work is way off your baseline estimates, your project is either behind schedule or over budget. If you are new to project management, Ann Gordon has written an informative [series of articles about a project's work breakdown structure, or WBS](#).

Your baseline creates a snapshot of your project at a specific place in the timeline. You can have multiple baselines. For example, if you significantly go over your budget, you need to create another baseline to record this event. You can have more than one baselines in Microsoft Project. In fact, you can have up to 11 in Microsoft Project 2007. You should just name them Baseline 1 to Baseline 11 to distinguish them from each other.



To setup a baseline in Microsoft Project 2007, follow the below commands:

1. Name and create your project.
2. Go to the **Tools** drop down menu, and select **Tracking: Set Baseline**.
3. From here, you should open the Baseline Menu, and click on your baseline number (Baseline 1 to Baseline 11).
4. Click **OK**.

Your baseline needs to be realistic. You can't create goals that are way out of reach. If your baseline is not realistic, there is a good chance that your project will fail. You need to have a good point of reference to which to compare the actual work. If the baseline was off-track to begin with, you won't have a good enough static reference point to which to refer back.

