

# **S-Curve**

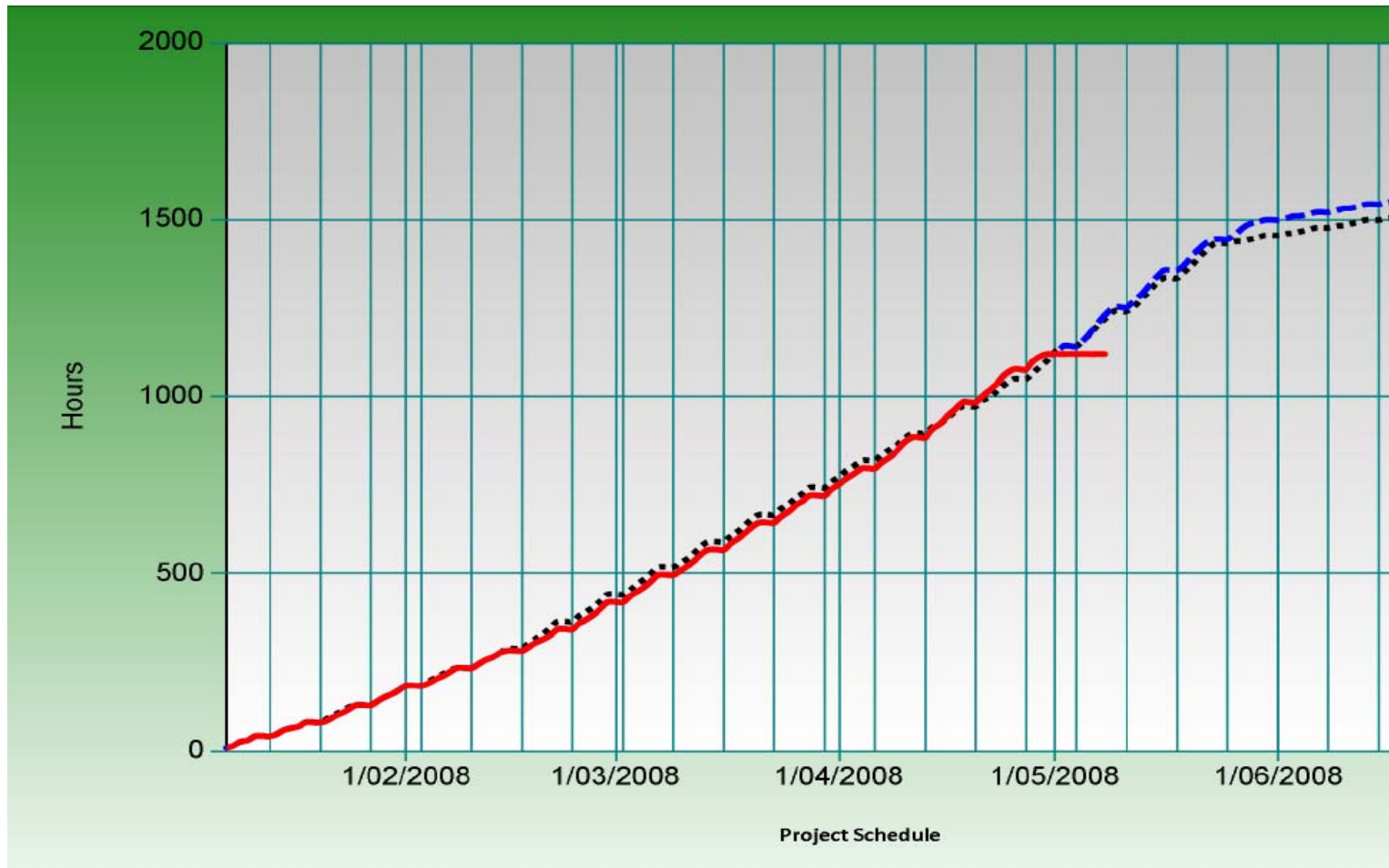
## **A Useful Tool for Project Planning and Progress Reporting**

Enterprise Project Management Services

Gar Houston

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# S-Curve



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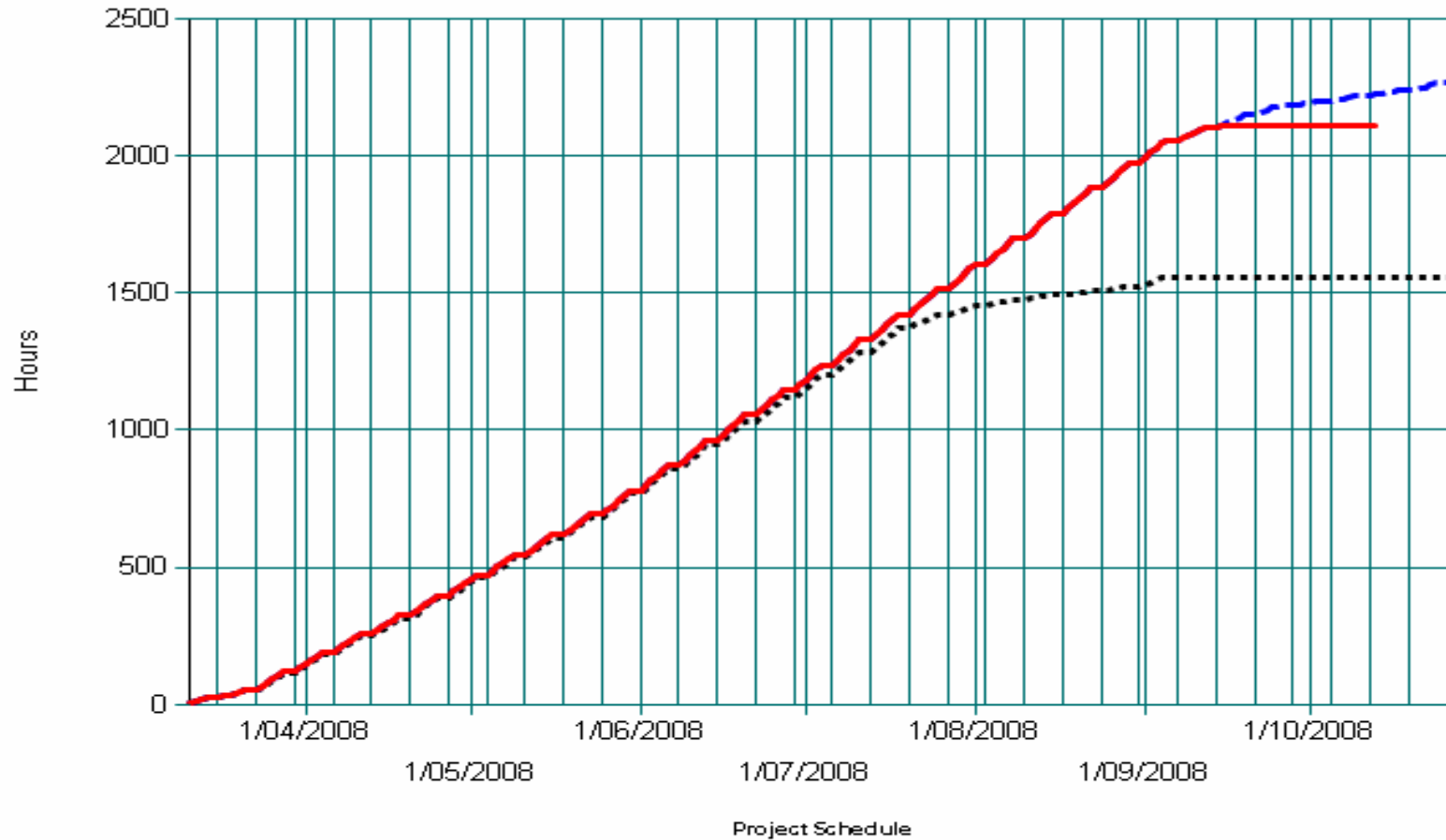
- A **display** of cumulative **costs**, **labor** hours or other quantities plotted against **time**.
- The name derives from the S-like shape of the curve, flatter at the beginning and end and steeper in the middle, which is typical of most activities. The beginning represents a slow, deliberate but accelerating start, while the end represents a deceleration as the **work** runs out.
- A plot of cumulative **progress** against **time**, which, in **practice**, typically follows the shape of the letter "S".

*Wideman Comparative Glossary of Common Project Management Terms v3.1 is copyright by R. Max Wideman, March 2002.*

# S-Curve

- **Easy to Understand**
- **Very Effective Visual Reporting Medium**
- **Great for planned Effort against Time**
- **Great for Actual vs Plan vs Baseline**
- **Generated from the schedule**
- **Can tell you a lot about resource and schedule planning**
- **Shape of the Curve is very informative**

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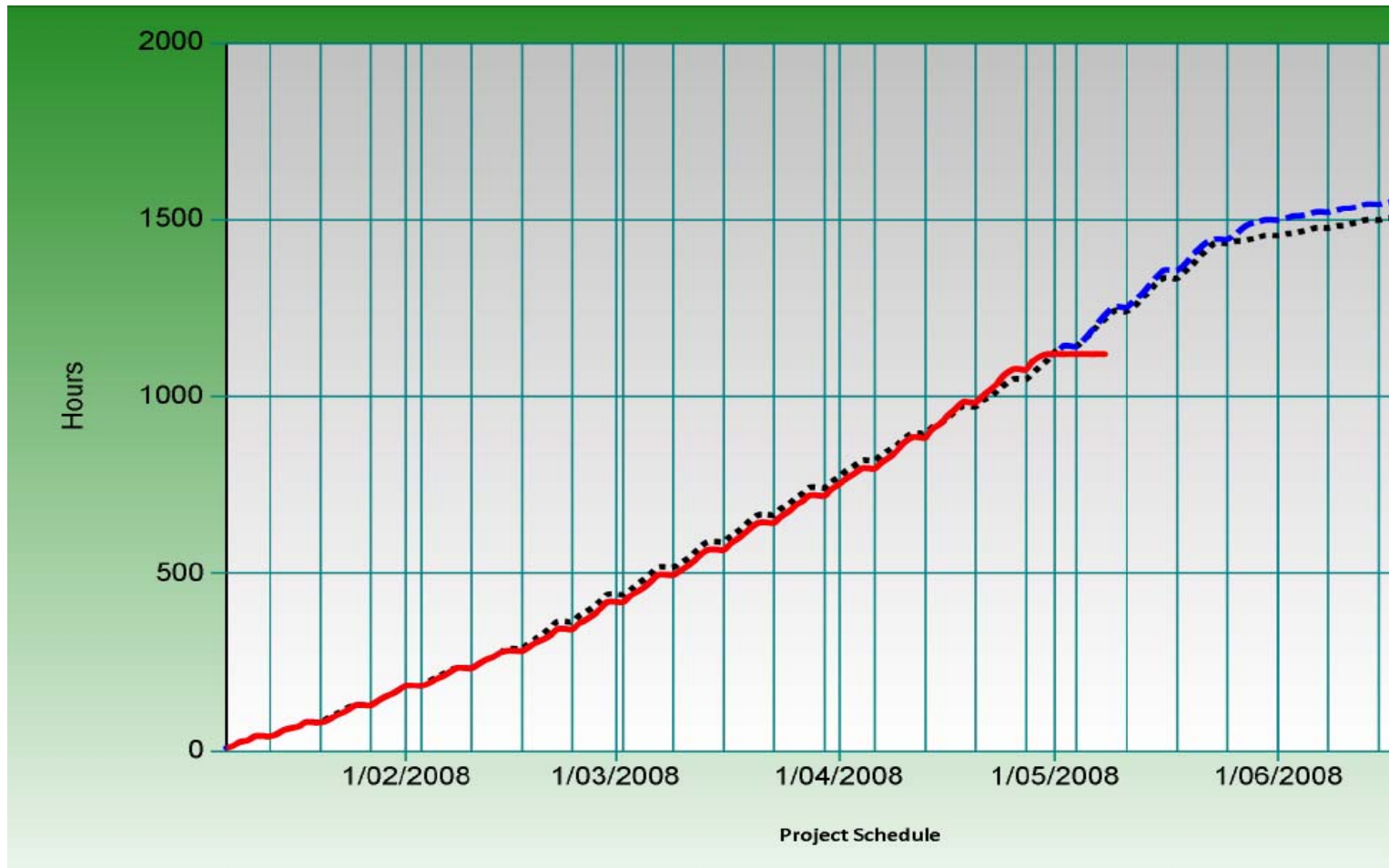


..... Baseline Work    - - - - Planned Work    - - - - Actual Work

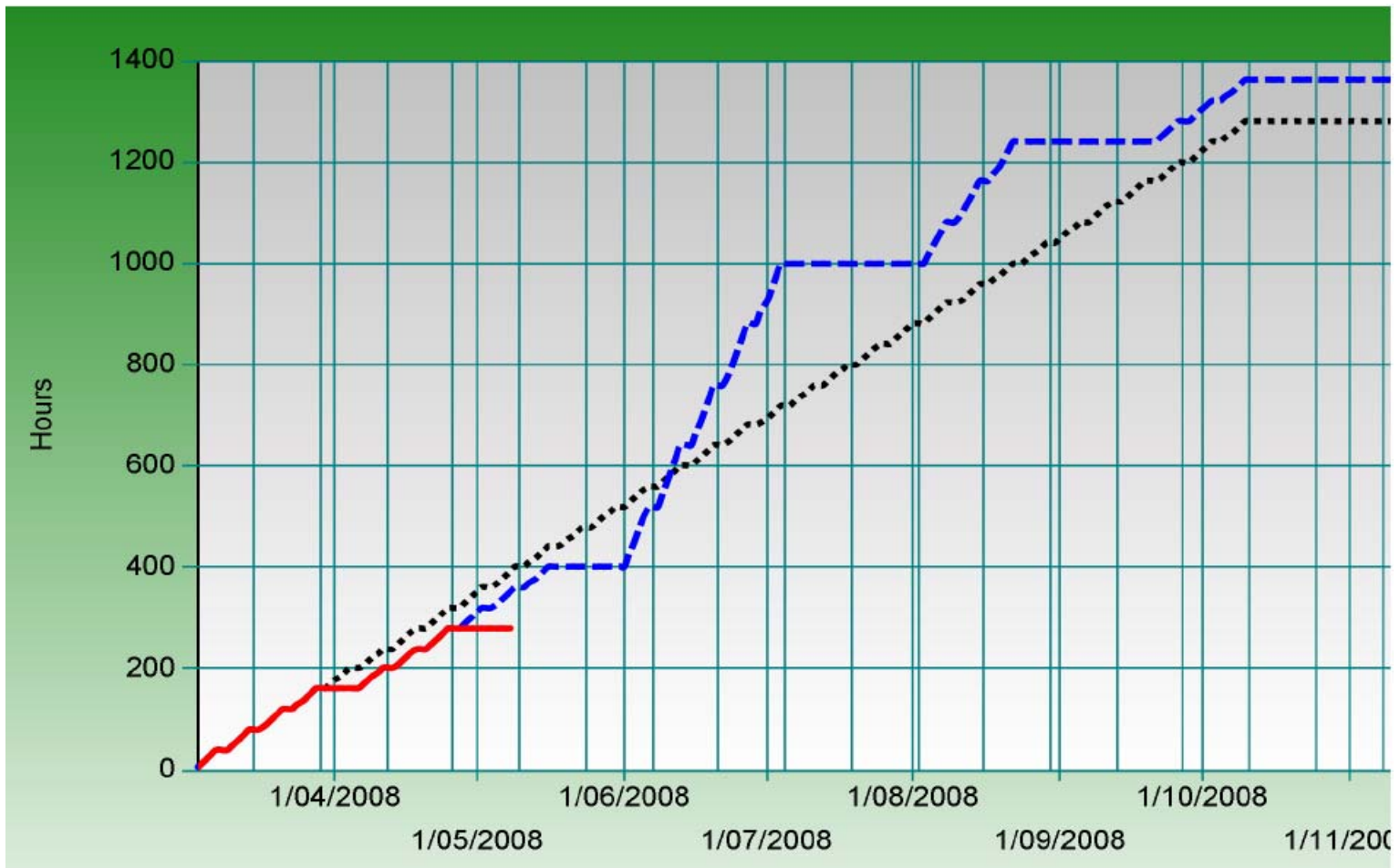
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- Correctly constructing and analysing the curve can tell a lot about the project situation
- The Shape is very important

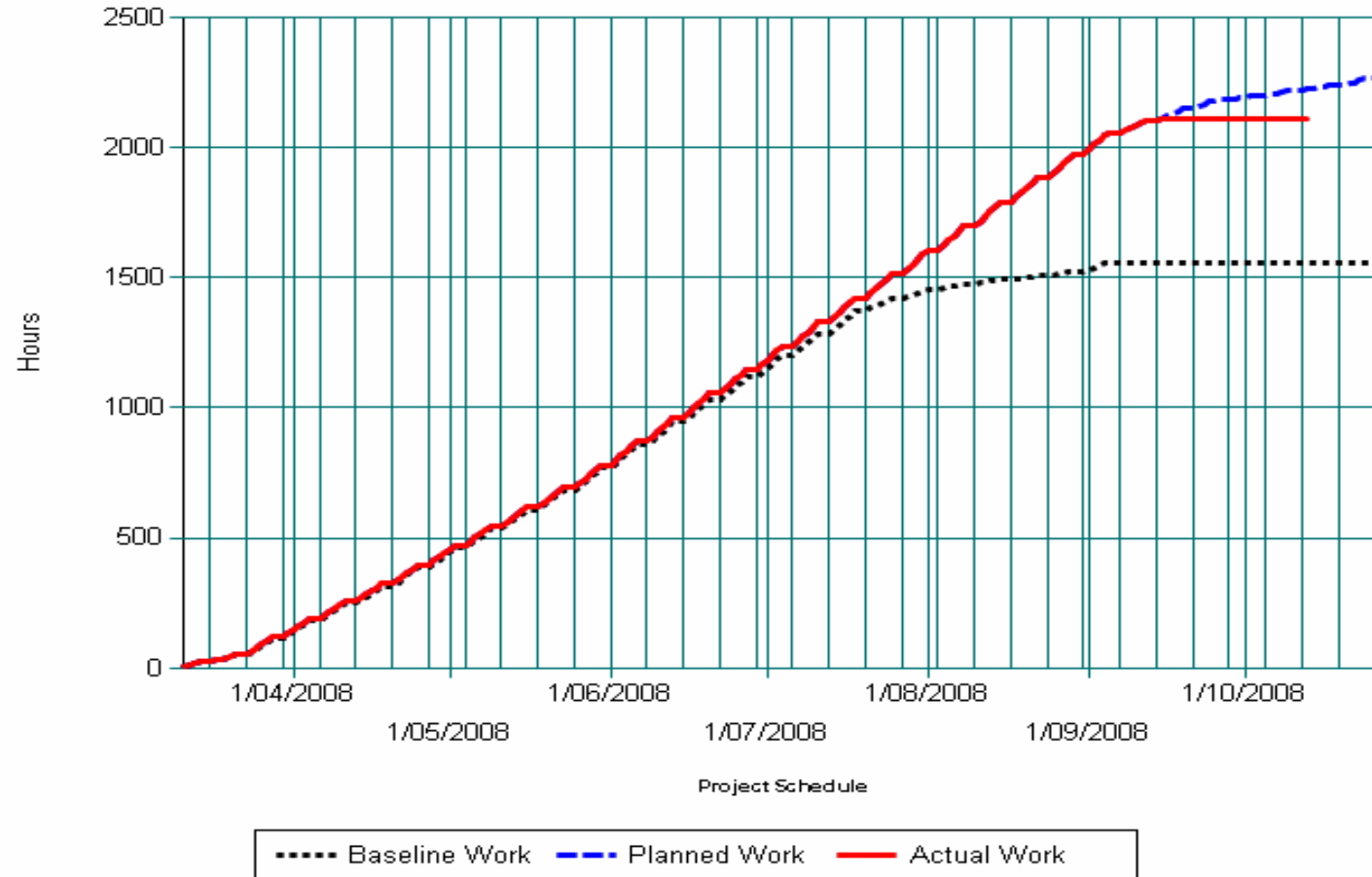
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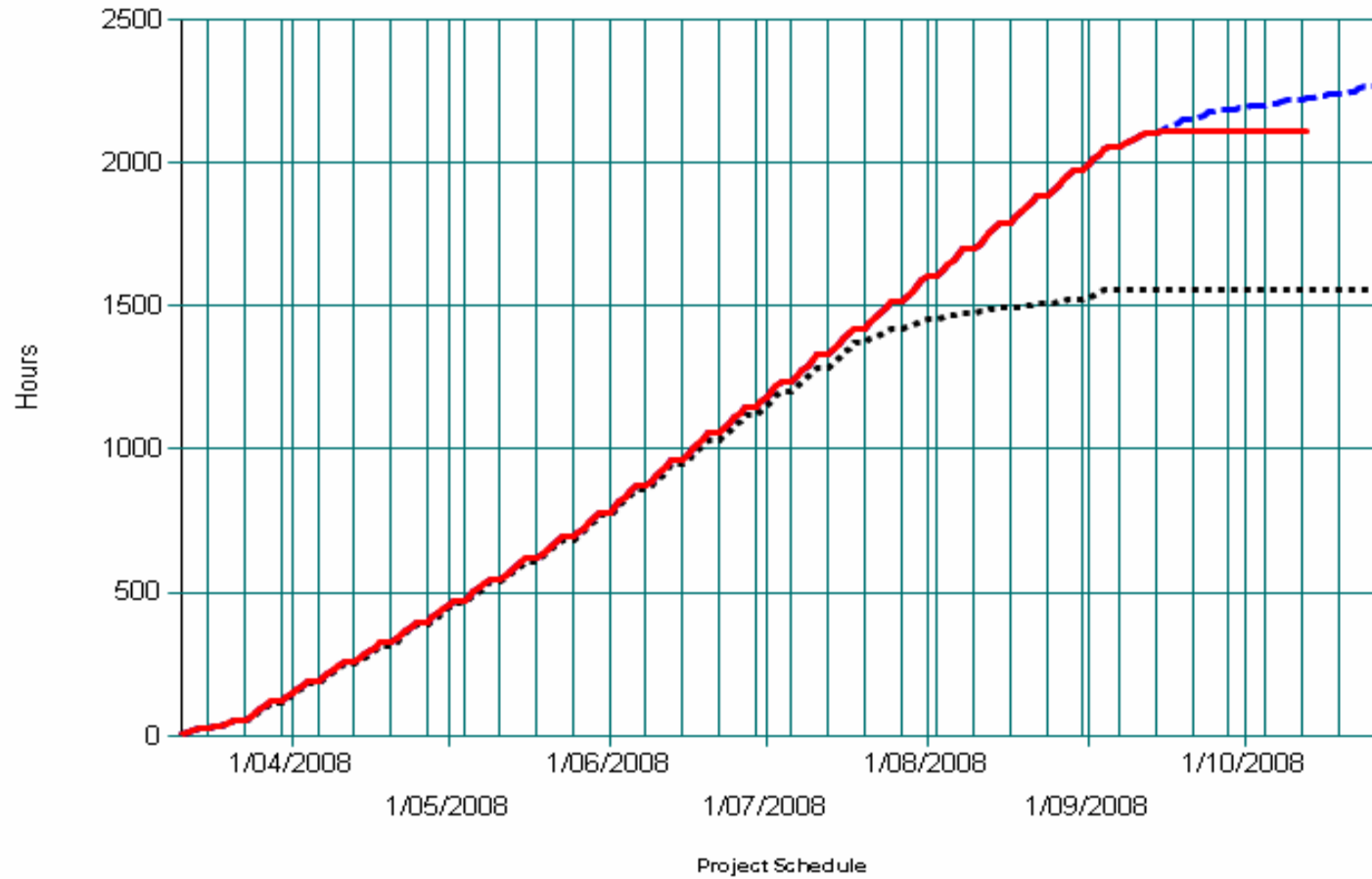


# S-Curve

## Using S-Curves to review different project options:

- If one option is much steeper than another then that means that option is completing more work in a shorter time. This is almost certainly more risky and definitely needs to be taken into account when deciding between the 2 options.
- Similarly, if one option has a flatter curve it may indicate that it is not as efficient in terms of the work performed in the time available.
- The best option may be the one which has a consistent slope with no flat spots and with no sharply contrasting changes in the gradient.

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## Summary:

- **S-Curves are a great tool for conveying information on the planning and the progress of the project**
- **They are easily understood and are a useful communication tool at all levels of Project management**
  - **Project Team**
  - **Program, Project Office**
  - **Stakeholder**
  - **Management**