

Essay

200-400 word essay related to the Mythical Man Month reading (chapters 2-6 most recently, but feel free to tie back to earlier reading). Share a relevant example from your own experience, compare this reading with some other reading you've done, explain why you disagree with some point, etc.

The section of the second chapter of the “The Mythical Man-Month” reading pertaining to the futility of adding members to a project reminded me of an interview question I was given at Microsoft before my summer internship last year. The interviewer gave me a scenario: I am a program manager and am overseeing a software development project. The project, like most at Microsoft, are the creation of program managers, developers and testers working in tandem to ship it out the door on schedule. Given a detailed functional specification for this product, the head developer notifies me that the project can be completed in six months. The program managers under me disagree, insisting that the project cannot be completed in that amount of time. However, I absolutely must ship this product in six months.

I immediately knew that assigning other workers to the project was a bad idea for generally the same reasons outlined in the second chapter. I told the interviewer that (apart from assigning priorities levels to the requirements and axing off those that were not absolutely needed and could wait until the next release) I could reassess the roles of my workers by assigning them to fulfill specific roles in a team to maximize productivity and efficiency.

While I did not outline exactly the strategies set forth in “The Surgical Team” chapter of the Mythical Man Month reading in my response to the interviewer’s scenario, reading this chapter now validates the response I had given.