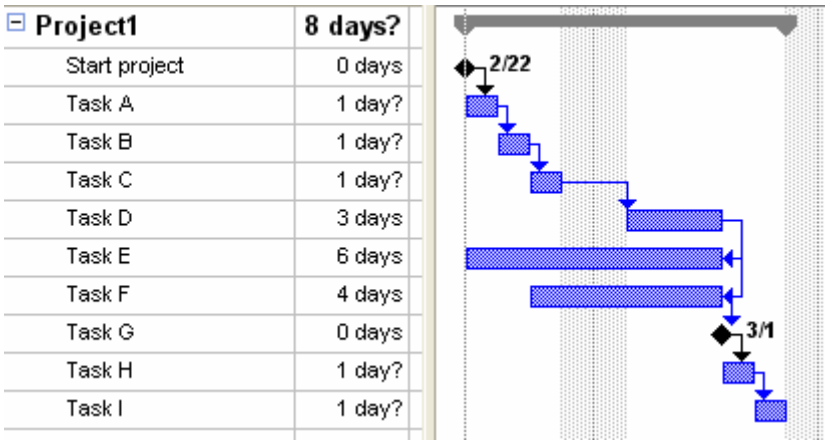
Lehnert Computer Services

1482 Gone Away Ct.
Wheaton, IL 60187
(630)260-4770
E-Mail: ellen@lehnertcs.com

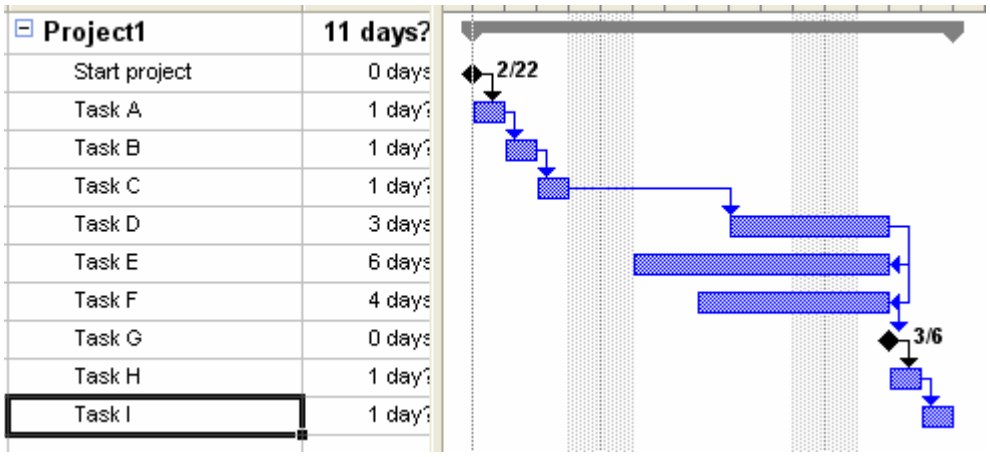
Ask the Teacher – March, 2006
By Ellen Lehnert, PMP
Lehnert Computer Services

Question: I have a situation where I have 3 tasks that should conclude at the same time. They are of different lengths. When I link them together in a finish-to-finish relationship, they don't seem to look right. How can I fix this problem?

Answer: Many people have trouble with this situation. Below is a picture of the situation that you are describing:

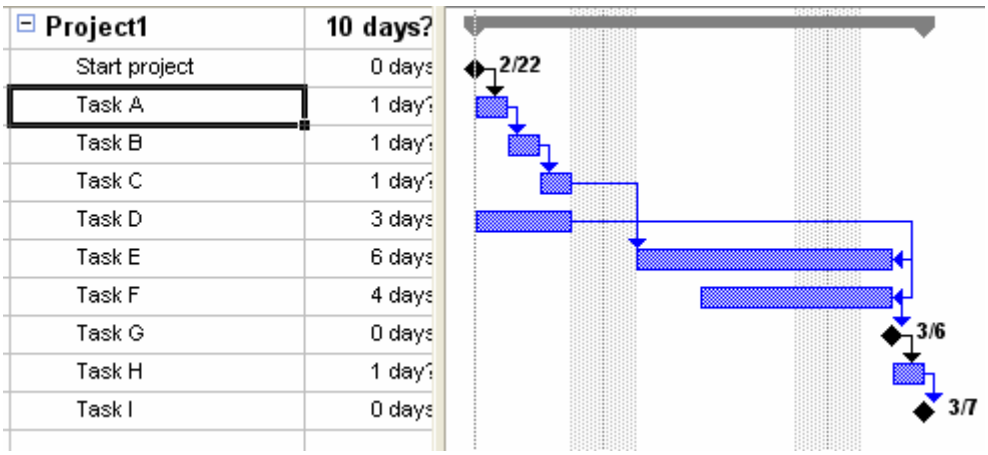


In this case the driving task should be Task E but the relationship of Finish-to-Finish with a Finish-to-Start relationship to the first task of the series is disrupting the critical path calculation. Note that the above diagram is showing 8 days of duration. Please see the example below:

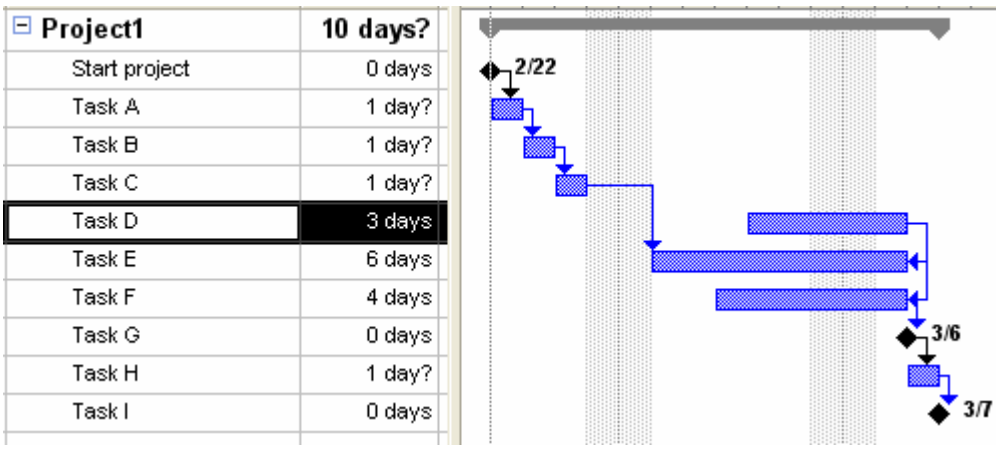


1482 Gone Away Ct.
Wheaton, IL 60187
(630)260-4770
E-Mail: ellen@lehnertcs.com

Now the duration of the project is 11 days which accurately reflects the critical path of the project. The change that was made was adding 3 days of lag time to the relationship between Task C and Task D. To add the lag time: Double-click on the relationship line between the 2 tasks, increase the lag time, click OK. Problems will continue during tracking if the tasks take longer than expected to be performed. If adding lag is not the option that will work for your project, another option is to try to adjust the relationships on the tasks. Below I have connected Task C with the longest task of the series, Task E.



Task D is now not scheduled incorrectly. It should be a task that contains slack and should be starting after Task C is completed. The remedy for this situation is to adjust the constraint type on Task D to As Late As Possible. See below:



Task D is now scheduled to occur within the correct timeframe. Task E is the driving task for the series and Task D and Task F both contains slack. To change the constraint type: Double-click on the task, advanced tab, adjust constraint type, OK.