



## Project Assistants Newsletter

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2006 Edition

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## Microsoft Project Tip

### Deadlines vs. Inflexible Constraints

We all have projects that have mandated end dates, or mandated milestone dates. One way to show this in a schedule is to set a “finish no later than” or a “must finish on” constraint. The problem with setting this type of constraint, known as an “inflexible” or “hard” constraint, is that it can often cause a scheduling conflict. Consider the case where a task has one of these types of constraints and also is linked to a predecessor task. If the predecessor is delayed, this could push the start of your constrained task to the point where it could not finish by the constraint date. This scheduling conflict will give you a “planning wizard” message. Microsoft Project’s default behavior is to ignore the dependency in order to honor the constraint. This may give you a false impression that the milestone will be completed on time, when in fact a dependency will be ignored in order to do so.

A better way of showing a mandated end date is with a deadline. A deadline will give you a warning: a bright red exclamation point in the Indicators column, but will not cause Microsoft Project to ignore constraints or predecessors. Deadlines can be set through the “Advanced” tab on the “Task Information” dialog.

## Solution Spotlight

### *Innovative Website Supports Regional Teachers’ Certification Program*

The Mid-Atlantic Regional Teachers Project (MARTP) is a collaboration of five Mid-Atlantic states (Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Virginia) and the District of Columbia. MARTP was formed in 1998 to deal collectively with issues facing the entire region, including rural and urban challenges, retirement/pipeline projections, subject area needs, alternate route programs, teacher quality, mobility and equitable hiring practices.

The Meritorious New Teacher Candidate (MNTC) designation was created to address the issue of teacher quality, specifically by encouraging excellence in teaching and improving the quality of new teachers by identifying exceptionally well-prepared teacher candidates several months before graduation and then forwarding their certification and contact information to school district recruiters. In order for this program to succeed, MARTP needed to find a mechanism to facilitate the MNTC initiative. The organization was referred to Project Assistants, Inc. by a previous client, and Project Assistants consultants immediately began working on a website to support the MNTC designation process.

To learn more about how Project Assistants built this innovative website and how it is successfully being used

## Project Assistants News

### *Project Assistants and Fujitsu Consulting Announce Partnership*

Project Assistants and Fujitsu Consulting have entered into a formal partnership aimed at delivering a unified solution incorporating Fujitsu’s industry-renowned Macroscopic methodology within Project Assistants’ KnowledgeCentral enterprise project management knowledge management tool. The solution will be jointly brought to market under the brand of Macroscopic EPMSuite.

Macroscopic EPMSuite, which leverages Microsoft’s EPM technology platform combined with Fujitsu’s Macroscopic methodology and Project Assistants’ KnowledgeCentral portal, delivers to organizations the unique ability to transform their business and deliver business value faster and at less cost by providing proven best-in-class business and IT methodology fully integrated within a leading edge IT solution development environment.

For more information about Macroscopic EPMSuite please go to <http://www.projectassistants.com/content/macroscopic.pdf> or contact Project Assistants at (800) 642-9259.

### *Project Assistants Selected to Participate in Microsoft’s Knowledge Driven Health Initiative*

Project Assistants is proud to announce that they have been selected to participate in Microsoft’s new Knowledge Driven Health initiative, Microsoft’s vision of affordable personal and population health through informed decisions and coordinated, evidence-based care.

According to Project Assistants CEO Gus Cicala, “Our Macroscopic EPMSuite solution meets the challenge of helping healthcare companies efficiently transform themselves into collaborative organizations that are able to institutionalize project and program management best practices and decision-making processes. Through an innovative integration of Fujitsu’s Macroscopic methodology content within Project Assistants’ intuitive KnowledgeCentral portal, Macroscopic EPMSuite effectively extends Microsoft’s EPM platform to deliver real business value to healthcare organizations as they focus on improving consumer health.”

## Why Choose Project Assistants?

- Our business is based on the Microsoft Project 2003 platform as our core technical solution. We're committed to this technology because the Microsoft platform is the definitive industry standard upon which to build a sound project management infrastructure.
- Project Assistants is a Microsoft Gold Certified Partner and is considered by Microsoft to be the project management experts.

to support the MNTC program, contact us at [info@projectassistants.com](mailto:info@projectassistants.com).

## Recent Articles of Interest to Project Management-Driven Organizations

Project Assistants is pleased to announce that CEO Gus Cicala has contributed a comprehensive chapter on project management to the recently published *Expediting Drug and Biologics Development: A Strategic Approach 2006* (edited by Steven E. Linberg, Ph.D).

This book, a “real-world ‘doer’s’ guide to drug and biologics development”, is intended to provide the reader with direct access to the expertise and recommendations of dozens of the most experienced and forward-thinking experts in the pharmaceutical and biotechnology industries today.

- Our custom development solutions and software products are integrated with Microsoft's and our clients existing technology architecture.
- Training and support are tailored to meet the needs of different project management constituencies resulting in users who intuitively and effectively utilize the technology.
- We are the experts in Microsoft Project 2003, Project Management best practices and the design, development, implementation and support of corporate project management infrastructure solutions.

Project Assistants is a leading provider of consulting services, custom development, education and products for enterprise project management solutions. Our primary clients include organizations in diverse industries that base their businesses on mission critical projects that require enterprise-wide project management methodologies, processes and tools and an organization to support them.

Founded in 1996, Project Assistants is headquartered in Wilmington, Delaware with international delivery capability. A leading Microsoft Gold Certified Partner and Microsoft Office Project Premier Partner, Project Assistants was recently recognized in Inc 500 as one of “America’s Fastest Growing Private Companies.” On average, each member of our consulting team has over 20 years of project management and related business experience. The team also includes a significant number of published authors of the best-selling Microsoft Project publications and other leading Project Management publications. For more information about Project Assistants, Inc., please go to [www.projectassistants.com](http://www.projectassistants.com) or call us at 1-800-642-9259.



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