

Are Fixed Duration tasks flawed?

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I believe that there is a flaw in how Microsoft Project Fixed Duration tasks behave!

The main problem occurs when resources of type Work are assigned to a Fixed Duration tasks. After such an assignment is in place, if a change is made on the resource working calendar which conflict with the assignment dates, MS Project leaves you no choice and adjusts the duration for those FIXED duration and thus forces it to behave like a FIXED Work task. In addition,

If there is more than one task that is impacted by an assigned resource that has had its resource calendar changed in this way, the warning MS Project supplies you will only be for one task and not all affected tasks, nor does it tell you which resource has caused the change! As such, you are not even advised that this has occurred beyond one task.

Other anomalies with how Microsoft Project Fixed Duration tasks behave has to do with how one goes about assigning resource to such tasks. If you were to use a Task Form like Resource Work or Resource Schedule to assign resources, MS Project will go quietly along its way and enter the Work the resource could provide given their availability. On the other hand, if you assign resources using the Assign Resource dialog window (Alt-F10), MS Project responds immediately and informs you that due to the non availability of a resource the Fixed Duration task will adjust to accommodate the resource. If you are assigning resources to multiple tasks, again, MS Project will only one tell you about one of them, so you ll have to check if there are others. At this point you may as well undo the operation and try assigning the resource(s) task by task to find the problem, or better yet use the Available to Work field to proactively assign the resources! This is the preferred approach since over-allocations can be avoided. However, it doesn t address the main problem where there change is made on the resource working calendar which conflict with existing assignment dates!

What one would expect from a Fixed Duration task is that it behave like one and not like a fixed Work task which is driven by effort, (e.g., a meeting is typical of a non-effort driven type of event) it doesn t matter how many people participate (in theory), there should be a finite start and Finite end that s what is expected of a fixed duration task! If you can t make it to the meeting, well then let me know but give me the option of going on with the meeting without