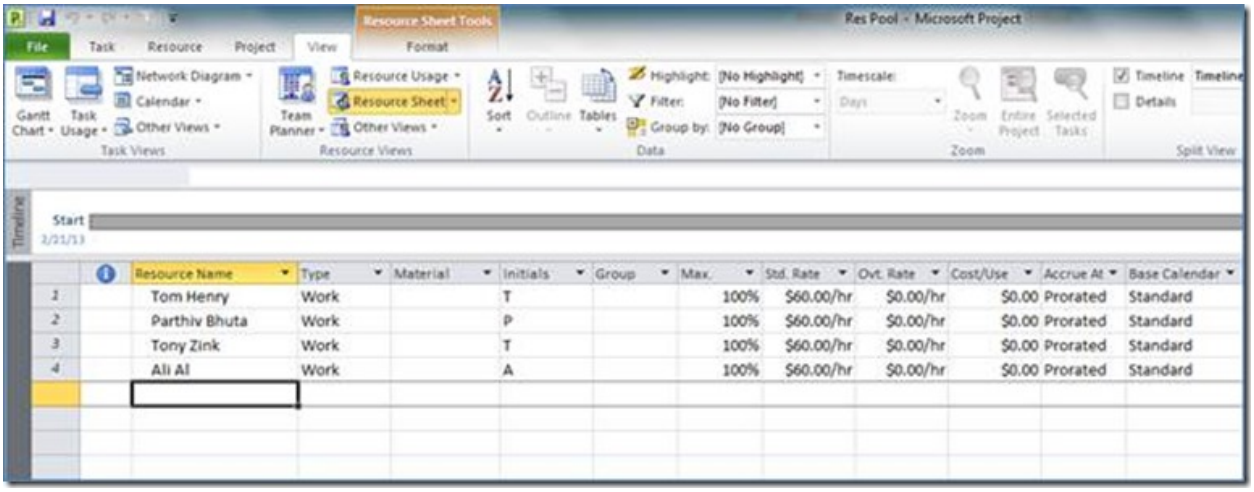
Share a Resource Pool Across Multiple Projects in Microsoft Project

One of the questions that I am commonly asked is, “Is it possible to share a resource pool across multiple projects or a program?” I state that the best way is to use a Project Server environment and make use of the ‘Enterprise Resource Pool’; however, it is possible to do this within Microsoft Project as a standalone product.

The first step: adding resources to your project team

From the ‘View’ ribbon click on the ‘Resource Sheet’ view, input your resources and fill out the relevant information:

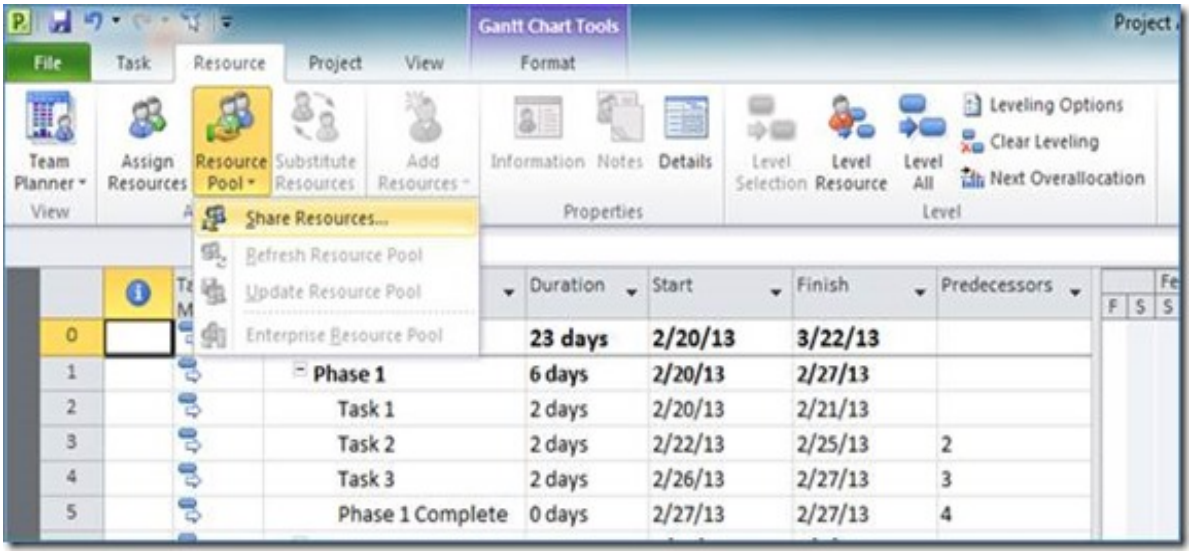


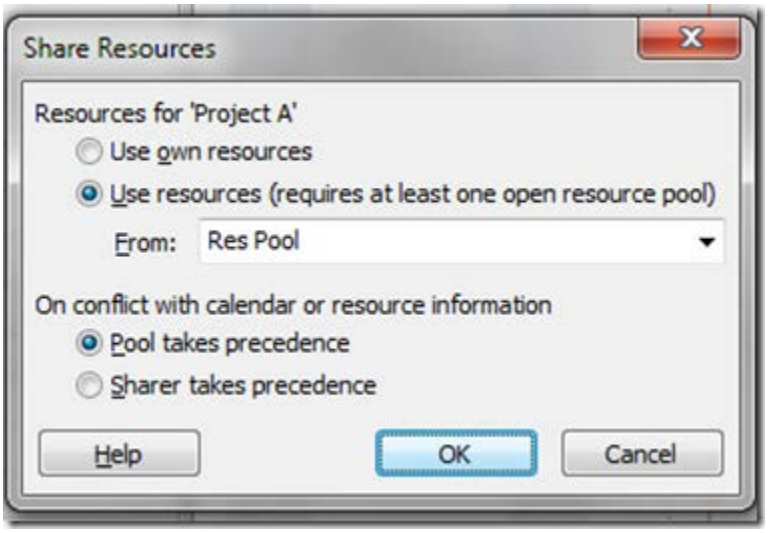
Once all the resources and their information has been input, save the file; I saved the file as ‘Res Pool’, but you can use any name you like.

Note: Do not close out the project schedule

Step two: Importing The Shared Resource pool into a project

Open the project in which you want to use the resource pool. Click on the ‘Resource Pool’ button in the ‘Assignments’ section of the ‘Resource’ ribbon and click ‘Share Resources’.

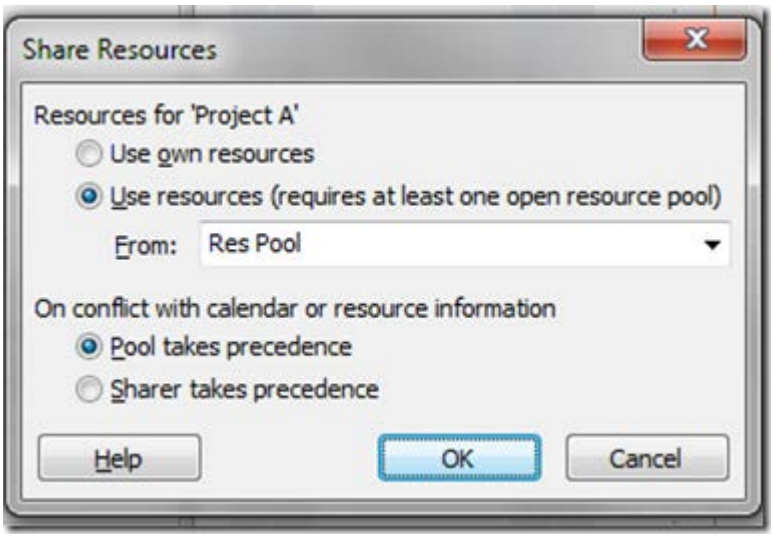




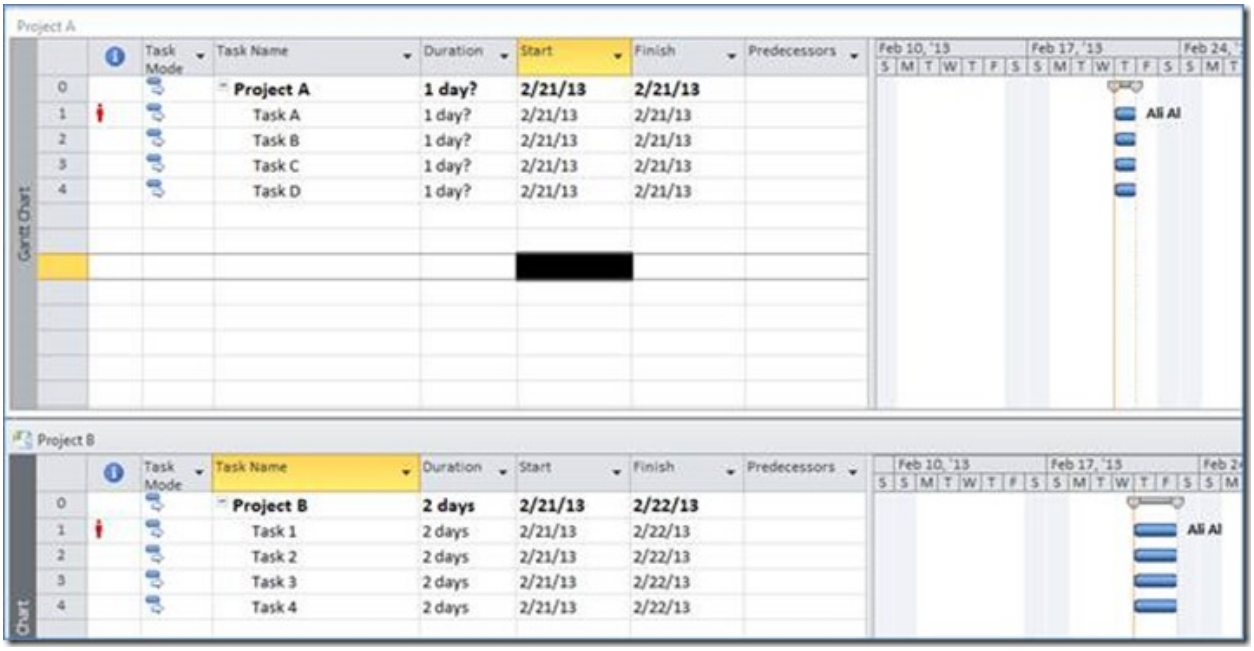
From the 'Share Resources' dialogue box select 'Use resources' then select the resource file you just saved, in my case it would be 'Res Pool', in the 'From' dropdown menu. In the 'On conflict with calendar or resource information', select 'Pool takes precedence' then press 'OK'. *By selecting 'Pool takes precedence' the project will honor the resource calendar and the resource's information in the 'Resource Pool' file over the individual project. So you need to ensure that all calendars are set up in the 'Resource Pool' file.*

Note: you must have the resource file you saved earlier, open in Microsoft Project.

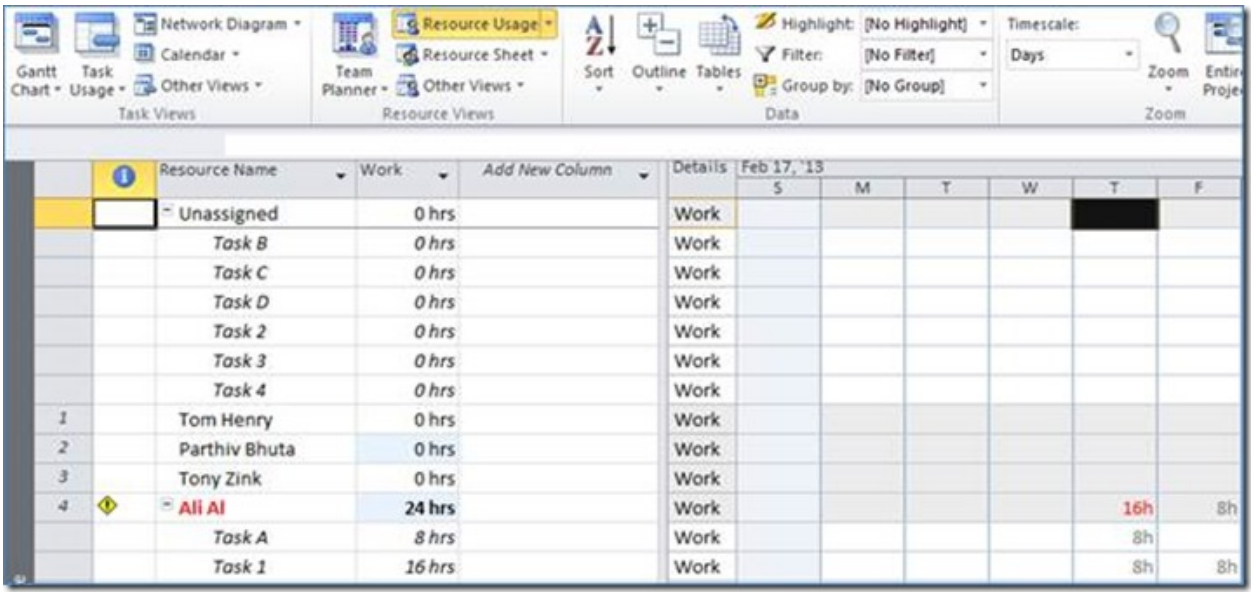
You should now be able to access the shared resource pool and assign resources to the tasks within your project.



In the example below: I created two Projects with the same start date and connected them both to the same resource pool; 'Res Pool'. You can see that 'Task A' within 'Project A' has Ali Al scheduled to work at the same time that 'Task 1' within 'Project B' is scheduled . He is therefore over allocated; this is indicated by the 'red man' icon in the indicators column. We can see immediately that sharing a resource pool will improve resource management across multiple projects.



If you were working in Project A and wanted to analyze further, the 'Resource Usage' view will show the external task that Ali is working on and the number of hours that he is over allocated by. You can select the Resource Usage view from the 'Resource Views' section of the 'View' ribbon.



You can see that Ali is scheduled to work 16 hours on the Thursday, Task A for 8 Hours and Task 1 for 8 hours as his calendar states that he can only work 8 hours per day he is over allocated.

I have been told that a limitation to this would be that if you are linking more than 50 projects to a shared resource pool or if you have more than 40 resources in the resource pool; the files can become unstable. If you find yourself in this situation Project Server would be the way to go.