

Project Commander

versus

Microsoft Excel



A COMPARISON

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Introduction

Have you been using Excel and want more?

Project Commander is recognised as a powerful entry level project planning/management tool. The popularity of Project Commander is based on two things:

- it is so easy to use
- the cost of licencing is relatively cheap when purchasing multiple copies

For these reasons people looking to replace Excel with a project planning package often choose Project Commander in preference to Microsoft Project.

Most planners who use Excel for planning either use the spreadsheet to hold raw data (task descriptions, start and end dates, budget, resources, etc) or the plan is displayed as a grid of coloured cells that represent task bars. Planning packages such as Project Commander allow data to be entered as values or drawn direct on the chart with a mouse.

Project Commander has a number of standard reports for plans, progress, resources and costs. It also has the ability to combine charts and graphs easily.

Note: For users that need to create files that can be read by Microsoft Project, Project Commander can save files in MPX format.

Construction

Project Commander has been adopted as a low cost standard tool for many major companies - such as Bowmer & Kirkland, McCarthy & Stone, E. Thomas, Midas, Connaught, John Lewis, Crispin & Borst, and used in extensively in parts of certain large groups such as Carillion, Kier, Mowlem, Bryant, Wallis, Amec, Taylor Woodrow.. It is used by over 100 local authorities.

Resource planning

The features for resource planning have been rapidly increased over the last few years. This has made Project Commander a more suitable product for organisations than Microsoft Project, with superior graphics for resource reporting.

Licences

PMSC has a very reasonable licensing policy.

Multiple stand-alone licences:

Multiple licences of Project Commander have large discounts (as high as 75% for orders of 20; 50% for 5 users) - unlike low discounts from Microsoft for purchasers of low volumes.

Network versions for a small number of users:

Project Commander has a network version that is priced on the number of concurrent users (simultaneous users) rather than on the number of workstations.

Example 1 - few users, several workstations

So if for example you have 5 users, but want to have the software loaded on 20 PCs, you would have to pay for:

- Project Commander 5-user licence
- Microsoft Project* 20 copies

*Standard version.

Example 2 - one user at a time on a network

Buy a one concurrent user licence of Project Commander @ just £350 plus VAT. Then anyone on the network can use it provided there is only one person using it at once.

Combined licences:

Project Commander has the flexibility to register and transfer licences between single and network users.

It costs nothing to look:

Project Commander's built-in **Project Viewer** is also available by itself, free of charge (on the install CD or from our web site). This is free to distribute internally or to clients so that they can view Project Commander files without having to purchase a licence. Paid licences are only needed for users that need to update.

Example - several people need to read your output

If you wanted to distribute plans and/or reports to 10 people, either internal or external personnel, you would need:

- Project Commander 10 copies of Project Viewer - free
- Microsoft Project* 10 copies – to be paid for

*Standard version

PMSC support

At the **Project Management Software Centre** (PMSC) we have a strong tradition of customer care, far superior to that of Microsoft.

We care greatly about our reputation for quality and about making our customers fully happy with the whole spectrum of our service level - a level which you would expect from an international company many times the size of ours.

We are of a size which enables us to care about all our customers, from the one man consultancy to the multi million pound turnover clients.

An excellent service record:

Here are some of the reasons for PMSC's enviable reputation for good prompt service:

- PMSC only has one main product, Project Commander, and therefore is focussed on project planning.
- We are based in the UK, 95% of our business is here, and we offer a high level of commitment to the UK market - where we have a first class reputation for support.
- Our help line is open 18 hours a day (and is answered by humans - not electronic messaging); 99% of all queries are resolved in 2 minutes.
- We have knowledgeable construction software experts on the PMSC help desk.
- Any bugs (few are found) are corrected immediately and the client's software updated.
- We offer high quality but relatively low cost training at your offices on a nation-wide basis using our own dedicated trainers.

Facility comparison - Summary

This list introduces you to things you can do with Project Commander which are more difficult, more tedious, or impossible with Excel. Graphical examples of some of them follow in later pages.

Note: This list is not comprehensive and was compiled by PMSC to show clearly areas of superiority. We do not accept any responsibility for any inaccuracies or deficiencies.

General

Project Commander

WYSIWYG - what you see on screen is printed exactly

Quick shift project facility to move all or part of the project forwards or backwards in time

Automatic consolidation of projects

Combined reports of chart and cost/resource graph

Over 50 standard reports

A large selection of watermarks on printouts

Linking bars

Automatic gridlines for periods

Project and resource calendars

Export to Microsoft Project

Excel

You have to go to Print Preview to display output

Not possible

Not possible

Not possible

No standard reports

No watermarks

Not possible

Not possible

No calendars

Not possible

Presentation – Bars

Project Commander

Draw/edit bars with mouse

Colour automatically by resource

Large selection of symbols for milestones

Show bars as part of a period

Two bars per row for current target

Bar hatching

Critical path calculation

Excel

Not possible

Each bar must be coloured manually

No milestone symbols

No partial colouring of a cell

Not so easy

Not possible

Not possible

Presentation - Layout

Project Commander

Border facility

Automatic timescale and periodic numbering/labels

User-defined legends

Excel

Only the basic header/footer

Not automatic

Only the basic header/footer

Presentation - Non-working time

Project Commander

Show weekends and holidays on weekly charts
Show weekend and weekday working on weekly charts
On daily charts exclude non-working days
On hourly charts exclude non-working days

Excel

Not automatic
Not automatic
Not automatic
Not automatic

Progress task reporting

Project Commander

Compare actual % to scheduled % progress
Compare actual % to baseline % progress
Progress line
Task days ahead/behind

Excel

No facility
No facility
No progress line
Not automatic

Resource reporting

Project Commander

Assign resources to bars
Stacked histograms
Multiple histograms
Combined chart and resource data
View tasks by resource

Excel

Not possible
Not automatic
Not automatic
More effort required
Not possible

Cost reporting

Project Commander

Assign costs to bars
Automatic spreading of costs across bars
Combined chart and cost data
Cost totals at bottom of chart
Actual cost vs baseline graph
Resource costs on graph
Progress reporting

Excel

Not possible
Not possible
Not automatic
Not automatic
Not automatic
Not automatic
Not automatic

Distribution

Project Commander

Pdf file save intrinsic

Excel

Not part of Excel

Facility comparison – Examples

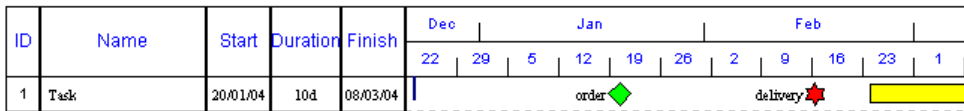
Presentation – Task bars

PROJECT COMMANDER

EXCEL

- **Symbols**

Project Commander lets you place symbols on specific dates



In Microsoft Excel, cell colouring is only available as standard.

- **Bar shading**

Project Commander allows cross-hatching



Excel only allows solid colours.

- **Critical path**

In Project Commander you can calculate the critical path and show float with a simple click on a toolbar icon.

Excel has no critical path facility

- **Two bars per row**

With Project Commander it is easy to show actual and target bars on the same row

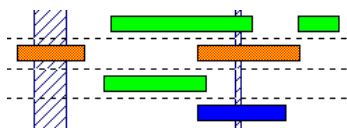
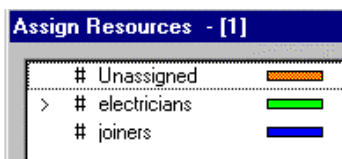


This is more complicated to achieve in Excel.

- **Automatic colouring of bars by resource**

When you assign a resource Project Commander can automatically colour relevant bars with the resource's unique colour.

Excel has no automatic colouring options – cells must be coloured manually.

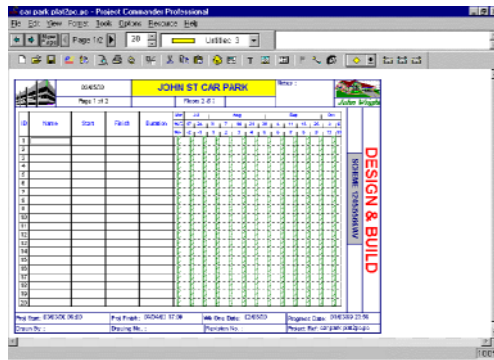


Presentation – Layout

PROJECT COMMANDER

- **Border**

Project Commander lets you create your own customised border, or use/edit one of its twelve standard borders. A border can then be used as a default for all charts. Borders can contain boxes in which you can place text or graphics



- **Timescale headings**

Project Commander allows automatic headings.

2004										
January			February			March				
26	2	9	16	23	1	8	15	22	29	
2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	

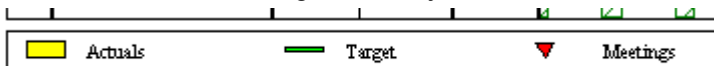
EXCEL

Excel has only basic headers and footers, which cannot be saved as defaults

Excel cannot do this automatically.

- **Legends**

You can customise the legend in Project Commander



Excel has a basic footer option, but this is not automatic

Presentation – Non-working time

PROJECT COMMANDER

EXCEL

- Weekends and public holidays**

You shade weekends and public holidays differently in Project Commander.

Excel has no calendar facility.

ID	Name	Start	Duration	Finish	Dec		Jan		
					22	29	5	12	19
					1	Task	29/12/03	15d	19/01/04

- Working weekends**

Project Commander distinguishes clearly between working and non-working weekends

Excel has no calendar facility.

ID	Name	Start	Duration	Finish	Dec		Jan		
					22	29	5	12	19
					1	Task	29/12/03	7d	04/01/04
2	Task	12/01/04	12d	23/01/04					

- Excluding non-working days**

In Project Commander daily charts you can exclude non-working days

Excel has no calendar facility.

ID	Name	Start	Duration	Finish	December						
					29	30	31	2	5	8	
					M	T	W	F	M	T	
					1	Task	30/12/03	2d	31/12/03		
2	Task	02/01/04	3d	06/01/04							

- Excluding non-working hours**

In Project Commander daily charts you can exclude non-working hours

Excel has no calendar facility.

ID	Name	Start	Duration	Finish	December									
					29									
					Monday									
					09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	09	10
1	Task	29/12/03 10:07	0.43d	29/12/03 13:59										
2	Task	30/12/03 09:03	0.16d	30/12/03 10:32										

Progress task reporting

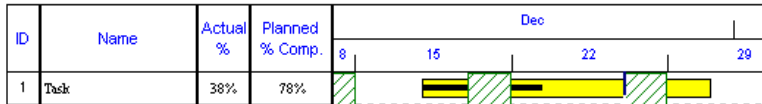
PROJECT COMMANDER

EXCEL

- **Comparison of actual and scheduled progress**

Project Commander will automatically calculate the % progress that should have been achieved.

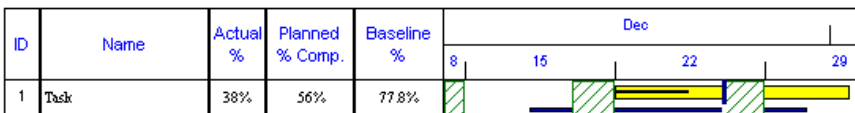
Excel has no facility for this.



- **Comparison of actual % progress and basci % progress**

Project Commander calculates this automatically.

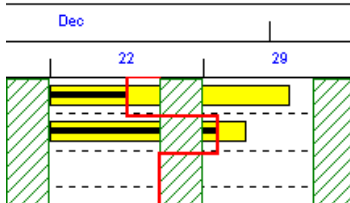
Excel has no facility for this.



- **Progress line**

Project Commander shows a clear progress line.

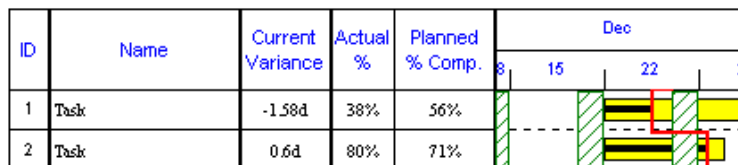
Excel has no facility for this.



- **Ahead/behind calculation**

Project Commander will calculate how far progress is ahead or behind plan in task days.

Microsoft Excel has no facility to do this automatically.

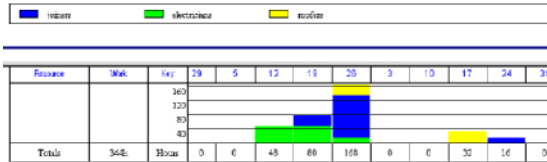


Resource reporting

PROJECT COMMANDER

- Stacked histograms**

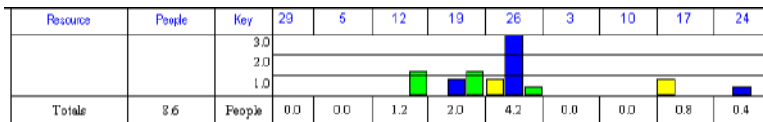
In Project Commander you can create stacked histograms on a separate page or with a barchart on the same page.



Project Commander automatically colours each resource and shows a legend.

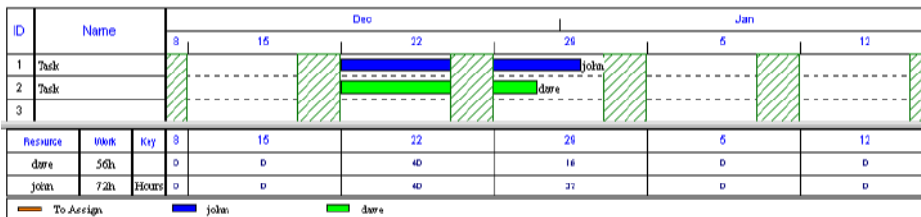
- Multiple histograms**

Project Commander lets you select any range of resources to graph on a separate page, or with a barchart on the same page



- Combined reporting of chart and resource data**

In Project Commander you can have a resource usage report at the bottom of a chart page.



EXCEL

Excel has no facility for this

In Excel this cannot be done automatically.

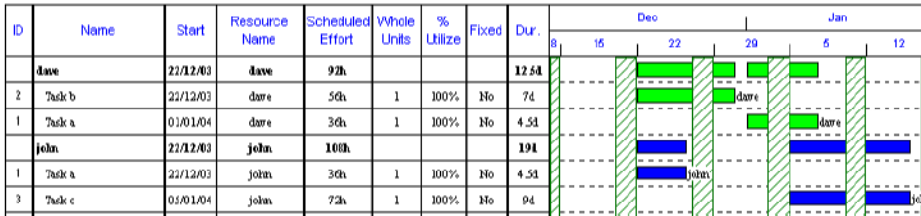
In Excel this cannot be done automatically.

PROJECT COMMANDER

EXCEL

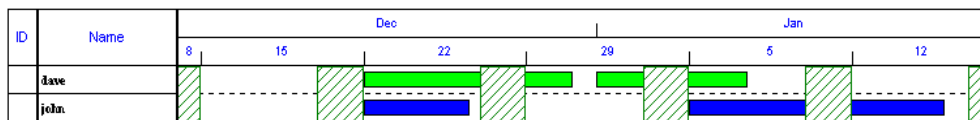
- **Viewing of tasks by resource**

In Project Commander you can view a barchart sorted by resource.



Excel has no facility for this.

In fact, you can summarise all the assignments into one summary bar for each resource – to identify easily any spaces of non work.



- **Progress reporting**

Project Commander calculates the baseline work that should have been achieved up to the reporting date and calculates the variance between the actual and baseline.

Excel has no facility for this.

ID	Name	Duration	Actual %	Baseline %	Work Complete	Baseline Scheduled Hours	Variance Scheduled Hours
1	Task a	10.5d	50%	40%	36h	28.8h	7.2h
2	Task b	7d	100%	71.4%	56h	40h	16h

Cost reporting

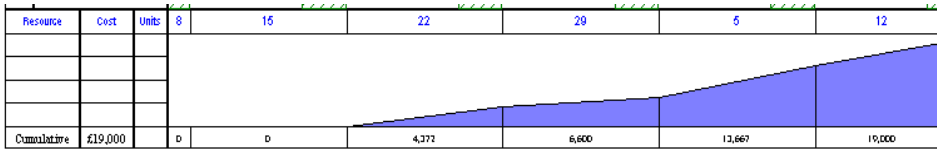
PROJECT COMMANDER

EXCEL

- **Combined cost graphs and charts**

Project Commander can create cost graphs on a separate page or with a barchart on the same page.

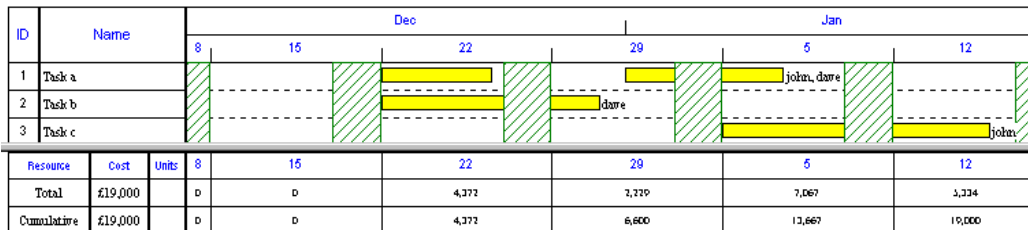
Excel cannot do this automatically.



- **Cost totals below chart**

In Project Commander you can show cost totals and cumulative totals at the bottom of the barchart.

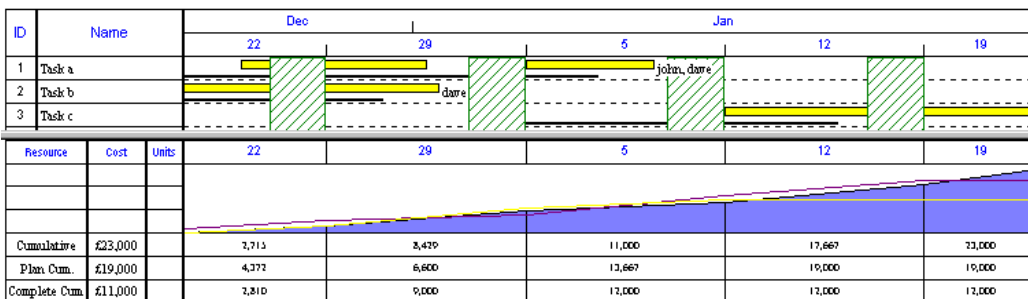
Excel cannot do this automatically.



- **Actual versus baseline cost graph**

In Project Commander you can display cost forecast, target baseline cost and even the cost complete to date (from the % complete).

Excel cannot do this automatically.



PROJECT COMMANDER

EXCEL

- Resource costs**

In Project Commander, where you have costed resources, you can display the cost analysis of all the resources as part of the cost graph or detailed in a table.

Excel cannot do this automatically

Resource	Cost	Units	22	20	6	12	10
Dave	£2,200						
John	£2,160						
Other	£23,000						
Cumulative	£27,460		3,473	10,149	14,070	21,487	27,460

Resource	Cost	Units	22	20	6	12	10
Dave	£2,200		600	200	900	0	0
John	£2,160		160	360	0	200	640
Other	£23,000		2,713	2,713	2,171	6,667	3,334
Total	£27,460		3,473	7,073	3,471	7,467	3,974

- Progress reporting**

Project Commander calculates the baseline cost that should have been achieved up to the reporting date, and calculates the variance between the actual and baseline.

Excel cannot do this automatically

ID	Name	Duration	Actual %	Actual Cost	Budgeted Cost	Baseline %	Baseline Scheduled Cost
1	Task a	10.5d	50%	£4,000	£1,000	40%	£800
2	Task b	7d	100%	£6,400	£5,000	71.4%	£3,572

Distribution of plans and reports

PROJECT COMMANDER

- **Pdf files**

Project Commander has built-in PDF creator software

EXCEL

Excel has no PDF save option.