



SMARTSHEET QUICK REFERENCE

Stop rebuilding your schedule every time one date moves.

One task slips, and you spend the afternoon hand editing every date after it. Dependencies fix that at the source. Link the tasks once, and Smartsheet moves the rest of the schedule for you.

BEFORE

- ☐ A date moves, and you edit every task after it by hand.
- ☐ The schedule is out of date the day after you publish it.
- ☐ The finish date is a guess, because nothing shows what drives it.

AFTER

- ✓ A predecessor date changes, and the chain below it moves with it.
- ✓ The Gantt shows the real sequence, not a list of tasks that happen to have dates.
- ✓ Critical path names the exact sequence driving your finish date.

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SETUP

Turn dependencies on

Two columns do the work here: **Predecessor** and **Duration**. Turning dependencies on is what creates them.

- 1 Right click any column header, or click the gear icon in Gantt view, and open **Project Settings**.
- 2 Open **Dependency Settings** and check **Dependencies enabled**.
- 3 Select or auto create a **Predecessor** column and a **Duration** column.

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LINKING

Point each task at the one before it

A predecessor is the task that has to happen first. You reference it by row number, not by task name.

- 1 In the **Predecessors** cell, enter the row number of the task that must occur first.
- 2 Chain multiple predecessors by separating row numbers with commas, for example **3,5**.
- 3 Or drag and drop the bars directly in Gantt view to link them visually.

Set how the two dates connect

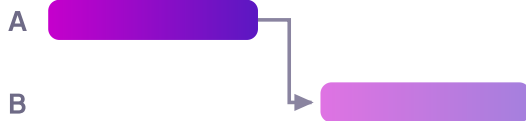
Finish to Start covers most work. Change the type when the two tasks connect at different ends, and use lag when you need a gap or an overlap between them. Both controls live in the same place: click the pencil icon on a Predecessors cell, then **Edit Predecessors**.

Dependency type

Which ends of the two tasks connect. Four options.

Finish to Start

DEFAULT



The finish of A connects to the start of B.

Finish to Finish



The finish of A connects to the finish of B.

Start to Start



The start of A connects to the start of B.

Start to Finish



The start of A connects to the finish of B.

Lag and lead

The gap or the overlap between the two linked dates.

Positive is a delay

1d



Enter **1d** to push the linked date one day later.

Negative is an overlap

-1d



Enter **-1d** to pull the linked date one day earlier.

SHORTHAND Type **2+3** in a Predecessors cell. That is Finish to Start from row 2, with a 3 day lag, in a single entry.

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BEHAVIOR IN PRACTICE

What happens when a date moves

This is the payoff. Once the tasks are linked, any date change to a predecessor automatically cascades to all successor tasks. Three rules are worth knowing before you rely on it.

- Lag and lead shifts are **fixed offsets**. They move by the same amount the predecessor moves. They do not scale.
- Lag time and elapsed duration **cannot be used together** on the same row.
- Task groups need one link, not one per row. See below.

THE RULE PEOPLE MISS

For task groups, set the predecessor **only on the first task of the next group**, referencing the **last task of the prior group**.

One link carries the whole group. Everything downstream of that first task is already chained, so it moves on its own.

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OPTIONAL

See what actually drives your finish date

Enable **Critical Path** in Project Settings to highlight the task sequence that directly drives your project finish date. Optional, and worth turning on: it is the difference between knowing a date slipped and knowing whether that slip costs you anything.



Bowen Liu · Wizard of Sheets
wizardofsheets.com

Not sure where your schedule breaks down?

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