SALES PLANNING AND FORECASTING



PERFORMANCE BLUEPRINT

VERSION 2.0

A WEB-BASED PLANNING PROCESS
BY CUSTOMER AND PRODUCT

COGNOS | INNOVATION CENTER for Performance Management™



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This application brief demonstrates a Web-based process for managing sales forecasts using IBM Cognos 8 Planning. Creating an accurate and reliable revenue projection through the sales planning and forecasting process is critical for an organization. The Blueprint enables organizations to manage revenues, archive historical data and previous projections for reference and analysis, and integrate the sales planning process into supply chain forecasts (where applicable), headcount projections, sales compensation planning, and integrated financials. The *Blueprint* provides five revenue forecasting methods—Transaction, Opportunity, Subscription, Usage, and Services-to address a range of sales models that might be found across a variety of industries. The sales planning and forecasting process is supported by marketing strategies including campaign planning, price modeling, and analysis. The models and processes described in this document are generic for sales planning and forecasting in the United States, but can be configured to support alternative model requirements in any country.



OVERVIEW

The IBM Cognos Sales Planning and Forecasting Blueprint enables an organization to concentrate sales efforts on the most profitable customers and products through the Transaction, Opportunity, and Subscription forecasting methods. The Blueprint also enables an organization to analyze and manage the most effective products or plans through the Usage forecasting method. Finally, the Blueprint enables Services revenue calculations to perform Services revenue calculations by consultant and by customer. The IBM Cognos Sales Planning and Forecasting Blueprint supports an effective, intuitive, and integrated sales planning process and resolves the challenges of limited visibility into marketing programs, difficulty in managing potential short-falls in sales, and difficulty coordinating sales forecasts with supply-chain processes to ensure corporation-wide collaboration. Finally, the IBM Cognos Sales Planning and Forecasting Blueprint provides the structure for sales staff to ensure that their plans are in line with corporate targets.

BLUEPRINT OBJECTIVES

The IBM Cognos Sales Planning and Forecasting Blueprint achieves a number of planning objectives:

- Supports five different revenue forecasting models *Transaction*, *Opportunity*, *Subscription*, *Usage* and *Services* using IBM Cognos 8 Planning.
- Uses historical data to generate sales forecasts baselines.
- Produces immediate profitability information by customer and by product.
- Provides a more reliable picture of customer demand to supply-chain processes (where applicable).
- Validates sales plans against corporate targets.
- Supports sales compensation planning.
- Supports integrated financials.

COGNOS PLANNING KEY BENEFITS

- Flexible and powerful model development using Cognos Analyst to support any business planning model or customized *IBM Cognos Sales Planning and Forecasting Blueprint*.
- Web-based deployment of models for process workflow, data collection, and consolidation.
 - Real-time workflow.
 - Real-time consolidation.
 - Real-time calculations in the browser for immediate results.
 - Industry leading what-if features for the most accurate plans, budgets and forecasts.
- Scalable architecture with proven deployments to thousands of users.
- Easily linked financial and operational plans to ensure collaboration between all areas of the corporation.
- Ensured plan accuracy using form-based planning with selection boxes to drive application logic and calculations.

REPRESENTATIVE WORKFLOW

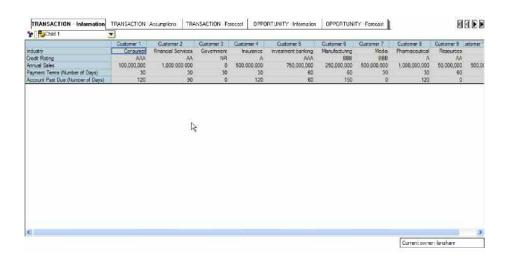
The *IBM Cognos Sales Planning and Forecasting Blueprint* is designed to be used by sales organizations – including sales representatives closest to the customer – and sales management.. Individuals in the marketing and operations organizations would use the Blueprint for review and alignment purposes.

The following sections of this application brief describe the basic workflows in which a sales representative might participate during the sales planning and forecasting process for each of the five models defined by the *Blueprint*.

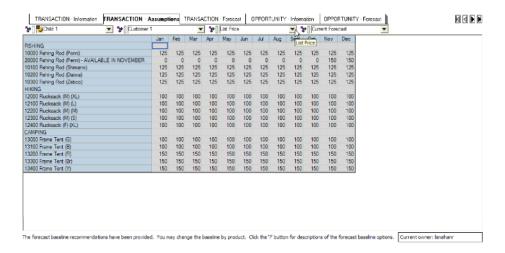
TRANSACTION METHOD

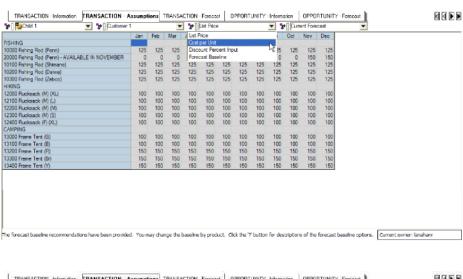
The *Transaction* method enables a sales representative to forecast sales by product and by customer account. A manufacturer that sells a broad line of finished products to distributors and retailers typically determines sales projections in this manner, as does a distributor that sells to retailers. In these examples, an individual sales representative manages a limited number of customer accounts. In the workflow below, a distributor of sporting goods needs to forecast to a large retailer, Customer 1, in the month of August.

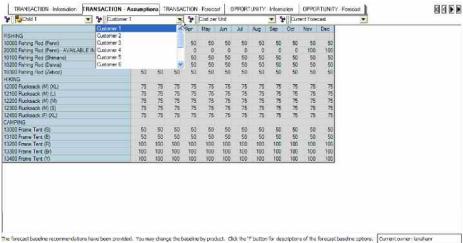
The first tab in the *IBM Cognos Sales Planning and Forecasting Blueprint*, **TRANSACTION – Information**, contains information uploaded from a customer management system. This tab is read-only, and there are no selections to be made, as it is solely for information purposes. A sales representative would use this information to review the latest payment activity by customer, which will have an impact on future allowable discounts.



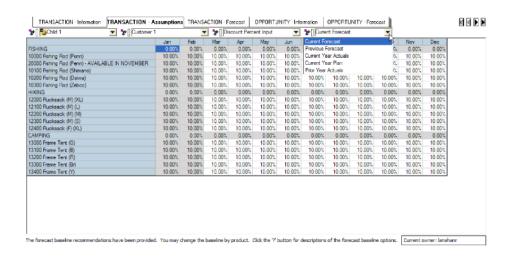
The tab called *TRANSACTION – Assumptions* is used to manage assumptions for the Transaction sales forecast. Gray cells are non-editable and are pre-loaded. The non-editable cells include information such as *List Price* and *Cost per Unit*, as well as historical *Discount Percent* information. White cells are editable, and the pre-loaded data can be modified. All of the assumption information is organized by specific customer accounts.

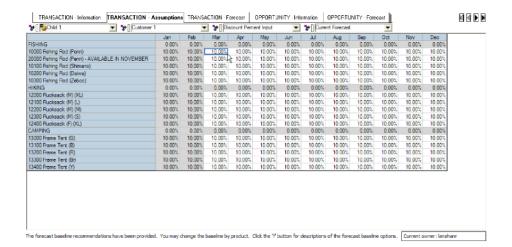


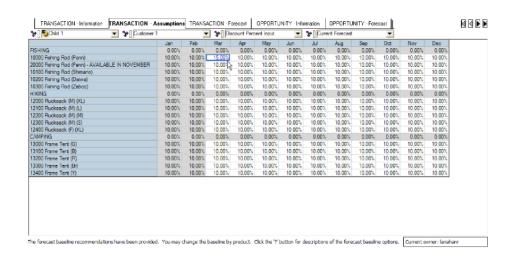




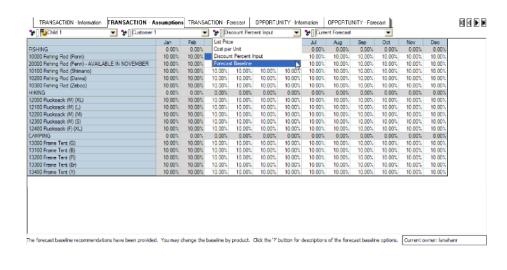
The sales representative or sales operations planner responsible for the forecast can modify the discount percent by customer and by product. Actual months (in this example, January and February) and additional versions are provided for informational purposes only. In the following screens, the discount value for Customer 1 and for the product 10000 Fishing Rod (Penn) is increasing from 10 percent to 15 percent in March of the current forecast. The discount information will be used for revenue calculations in the next tab.

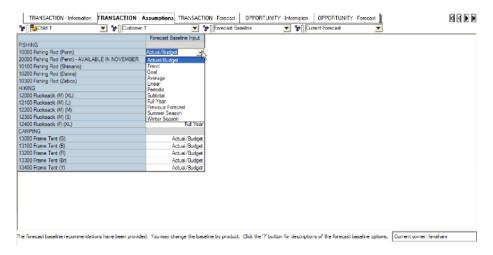


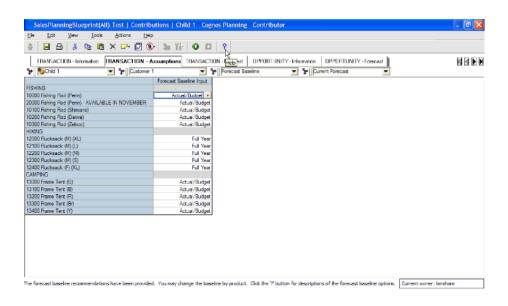


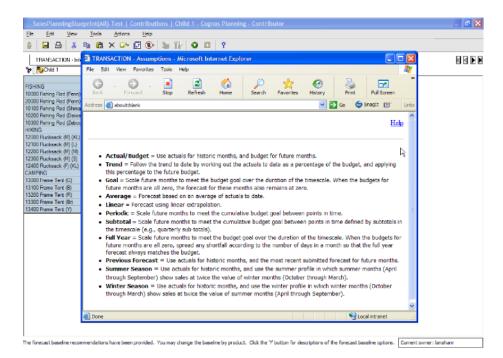


The assumption option called *Forecast Baseline* is where the forecasting methodologies by customer and by product are managed. The planner responsible for the forecast can indicate which combination of actual, plan, and forecast data to use to generate a product forecast. Recommendations are pre-loaded, and users can make the necessary modifications. Descriptions of each forecast baseline methodology are provided and can be accessed by clicking the '?' button.

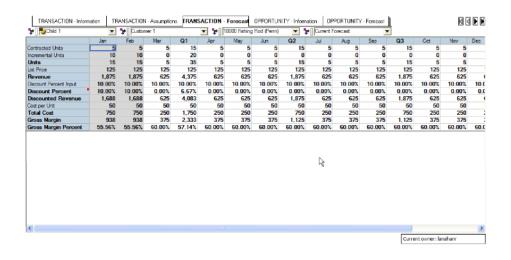


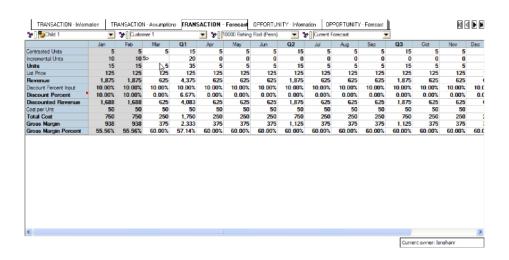


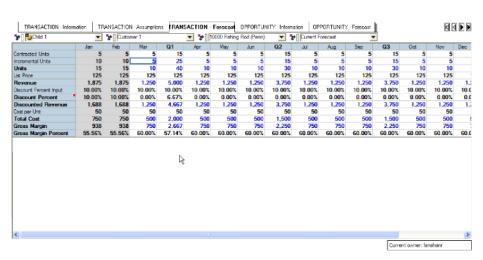


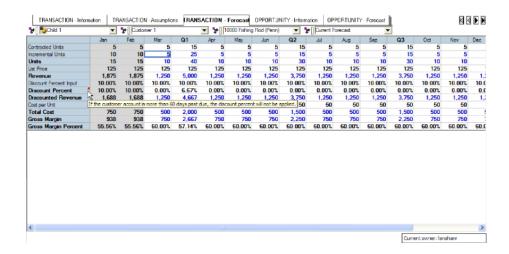


The tab called *TRANSACTION – Forecast* is where the product forecast is managed. In the view of the *Current Forecast*, actuals are loaded for closed months, and the forecast baseline methodology chosen on the previous tab is used to generate a forecast for future months. The assumptions for *List Price*, *Cost per Unit*, and *Discount Percent* are linked in from the previous tab. This information drives the *Gross Margin* calculation. Sales representatives can then modify the current forecast.





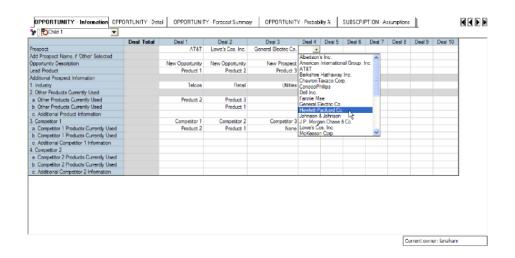


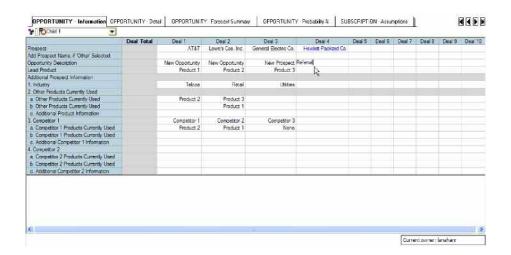


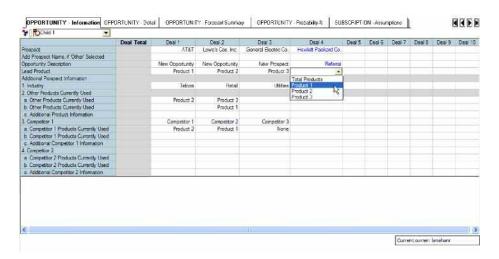
OPPORTUNITY METHOD

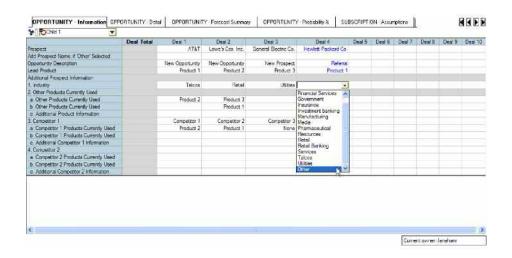
The Opportunity method enables a sales representative to forecast revenue by sales opportunity throughout a phased sales cycle from initial qualification, evaluation, selection, and through to contract negotiation. This sales model is typical in companies with large complex products and service offerings where sales cycles are measured in months rather than days. Telecommunications and enterprise software are good examples of industries with this type of sales model. The customer for these products and services typically manages a Request for Proposal evaluation and selection process. In these examples, an individual sales representative manages a limited number of sales opportunities (deals) through a defined multi-phased sales process. In the workflow below, a sales representative is managing four sales opportunities in a four-step sales process from initial contact to contract signing.

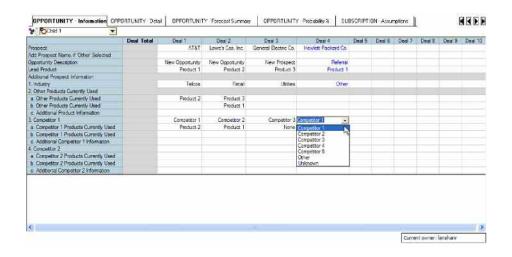
The tab called **OPPORTUNITY** – **Information** is used to collect information about the opportunity, and could be pre-loaded from a customer management system. The key fields used to populate the opportunity forecast are prospect name and lead product; the remaining fields could be used to collect key information about competitors or prospect experiences with other products to be shared with sales management.

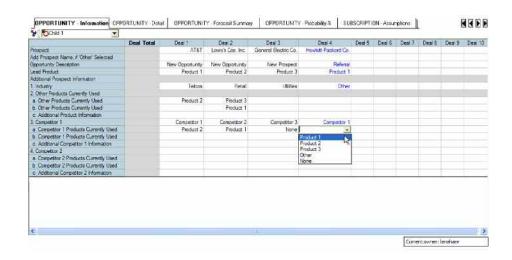




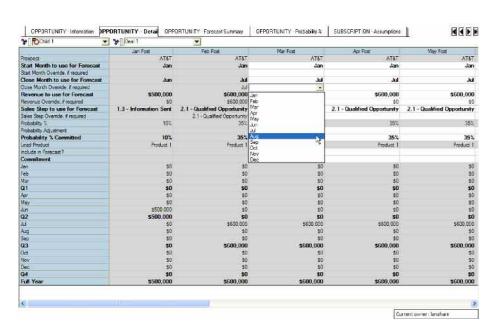


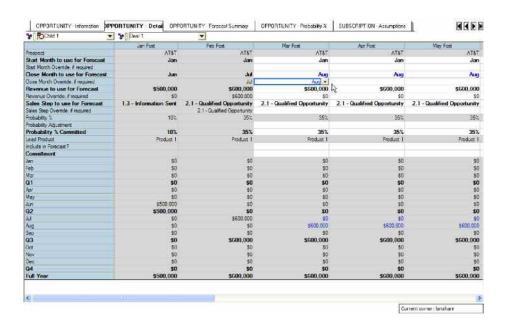


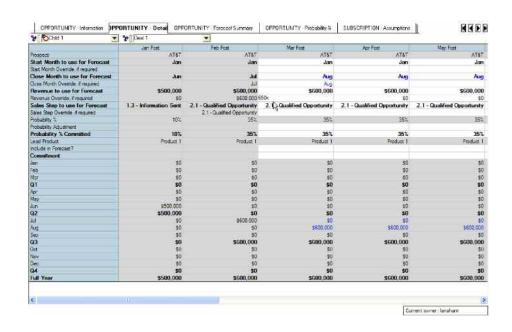


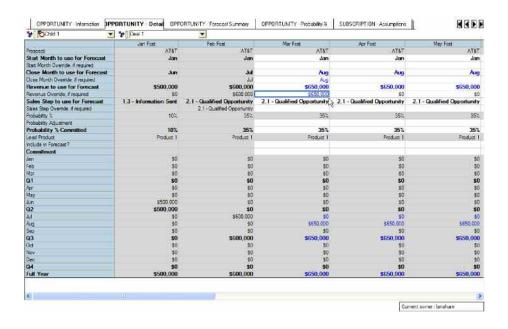


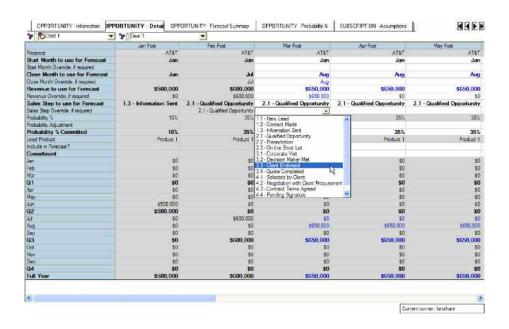
The tab called *OPPORTUNITY – Forecast* is used to manage the progress of the deals entered on the previous tab through a defined multi-phased sales process (refer to the *Sales Step* line item). The override fields for *Start Month*, *Close Month*, *Revenue*, *and Sales Step* can be used to manage the deal changes and will link forward into future forecasts to minimize end user input requirements.



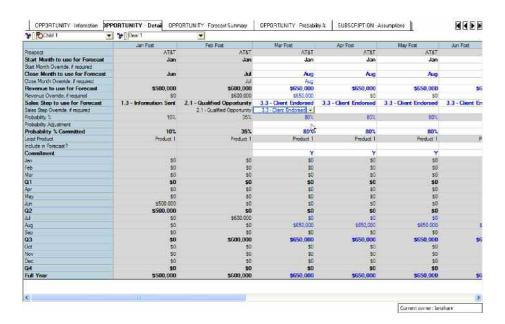


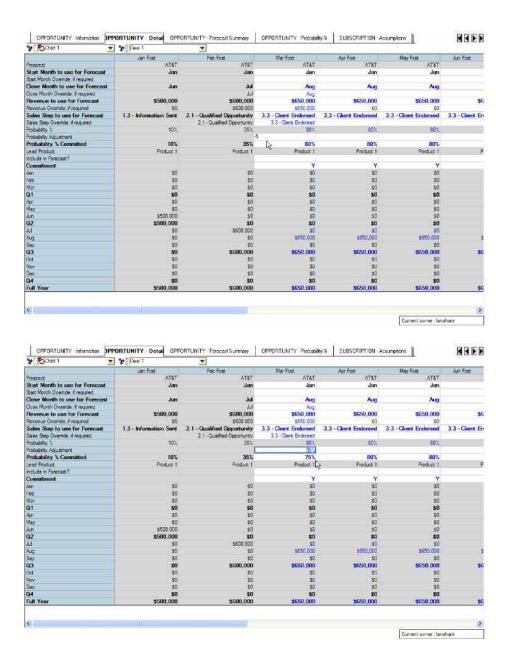






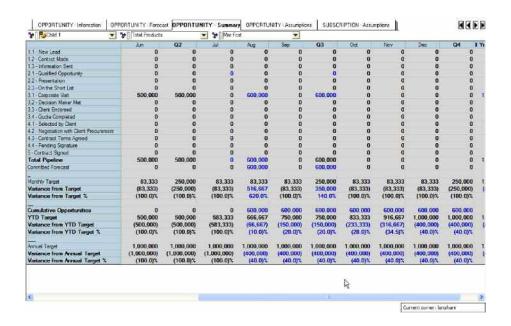
As the sales process ("step") information is updated, the probability (of deal closure) information is linked into this detail screen. The user can modify the probability percentage.



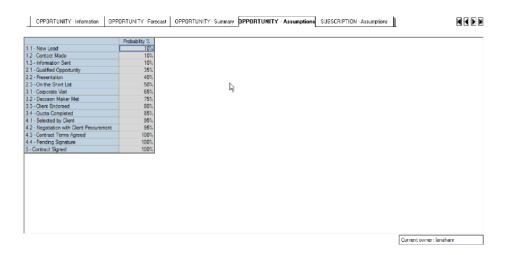


A user can determine whether to include a deal in the committed forecast. However, once a deal surpasses 75 percent probability, it is automatically included in the committed forecast.

The deal information is linked into the tab called **OPPORTUNITY – Summary**. The user can then quickly view his or her forecast pipeline and committed forecast. Information about the forecast relative to monthly and annual targets is also provided.



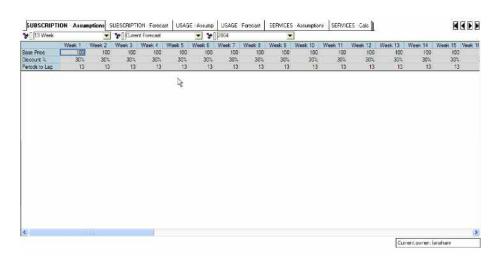
The tab called *OPPORTUNITY – Assumptions* provides the probability assumption information by sales process step, and is linked to the *OPPORTUNITY – Forecast* tab. This tab could be hidden from the user, but is displayed here for informational purposes.

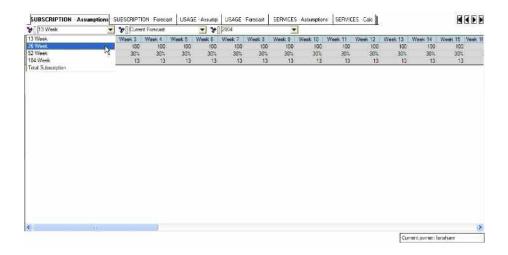


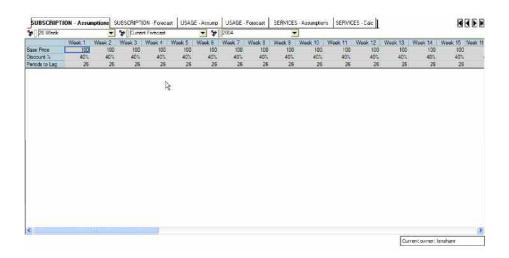
SUBSCRIPTION METHOD

The *Subscription* method provides a sales representative or marketing manager with the ability to forecast revenue by the rate of subscription renewal. This sales model is typical in the media industry where magazine, cable, or other services are sold to consumers on a renewal subscription basis. Many insurance and financial services products are also offered this way. In the workflow below, a marketing manager is managing revenue forecasts for media products.

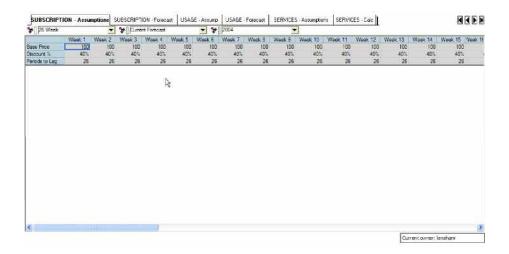
The *SUBSCRIPTION – Assumptions* tab provides pre-loaded information about different subscription lengths, and cannot be modified by the end user. Each subscription length starts with the same base price, but has a different discount percent with the longer subscriptions receiving larger discounts. Additionally, an item called *Periods to Lag* is provided for each subscription, and is used in the forecast to determine when subscriptions will be eligible for renewal.

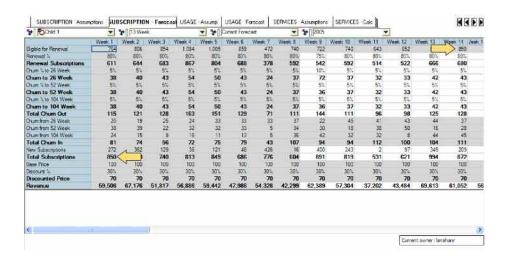




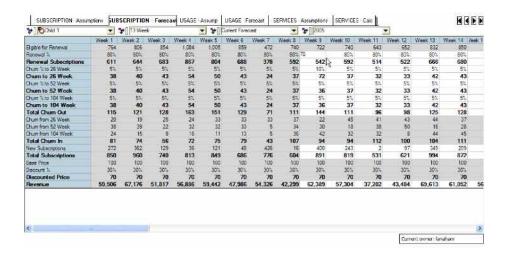


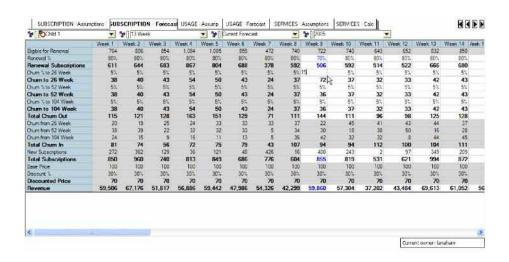
The *SUBSCRIPTION – Forecast* tab allows the user to generate a revenue forecast by subscription length (in effect each length is a product offering). The subscriptions eligible for renewal are populated from a previous week's entries – for example, the 13-week subscriptions eligible for renewal in Week 14 are fed from the *Total Subscriptions* line from Week 1.

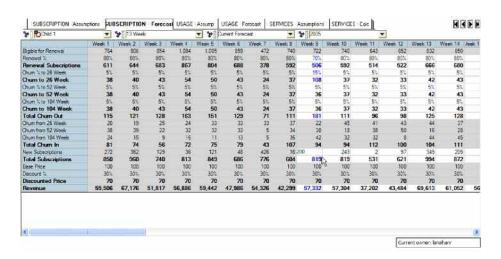


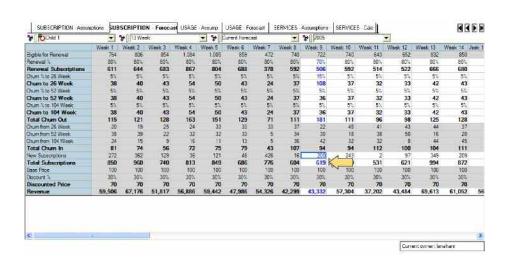


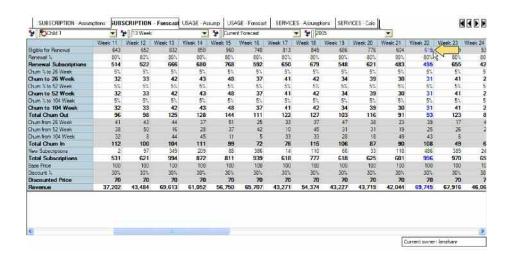
The user can create subscription forecasts by modifying the percentage of subscriptions that will renew (Renewal %), the percentage or the number of subscriptions that will renew to a different subscription length (Renewal Subscriptions), and how many new subscriptions will be added (New Subscriptions). The Total Subscriptions are then recalculated and fed forward to the appropriate period. The subscription price and discount information are fed from the previous tab to calculate the revenue forecast values.



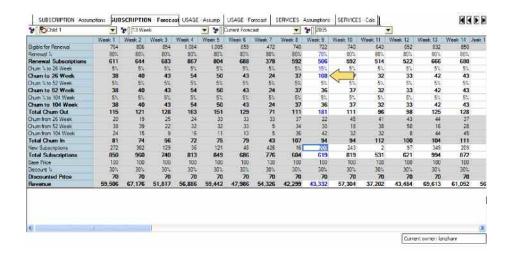


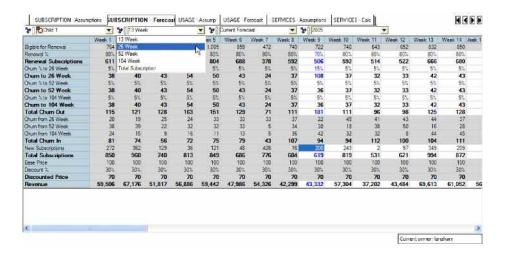


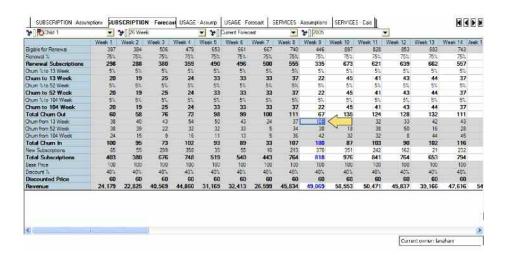




In addition, subscriptions that are renewed into different subscription lengths are dynamically linked into the appropriate forecast views.



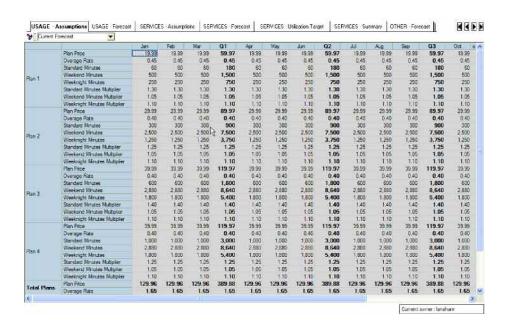




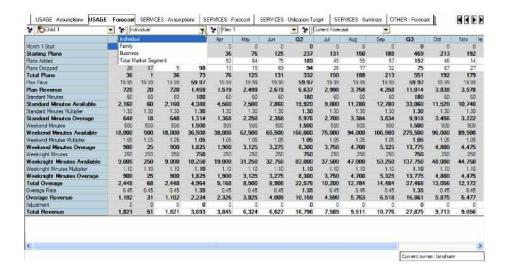
USAGE METHOD

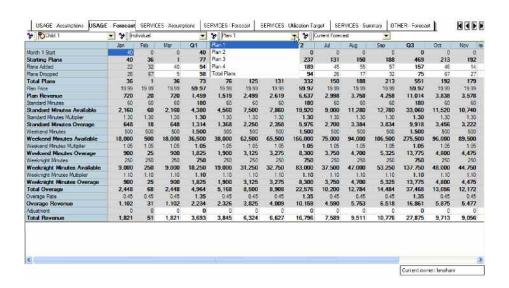
The *Usage* method enables a sales representative or marketing manager to forecast revenue by product usage or service offering. This sales model is typical in the cellular phone industry where service offerings are purchased by the consumer based on the minutes used. In the workflow below, a marketing manager forecasts revenue for cellular phone service offerings (four plans) across three market segments (individual, family, and business).

The tab called *USAGE – Assumptions* provides assumption information about various cellular phone plans within the usage forecast. This information is pre-loaded and is not available for modification by the user. These assumptions will be linked into the forecast tab for revenue calculations.

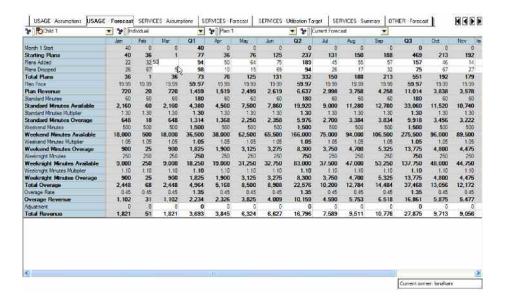


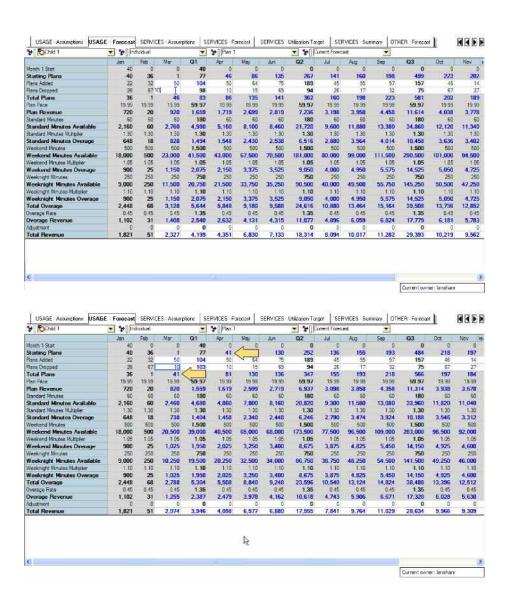
The *USAGE – Forecast* tab generates a revenue forecast based on the number of plans and minutes used by market segment.





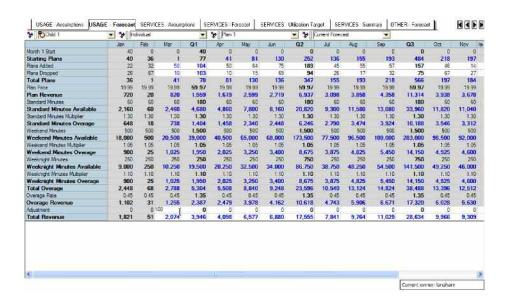
The number of plans by market segment are forecast by modifying the fields called *Plans Added* and *Plans Dropped* on a monthly basis. *Total Plans* are then calculated and become the starting point for the next forecast month.

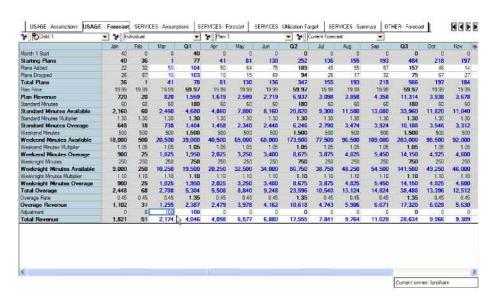




Plan Revenue is calculated by multiplying the number of plans by the monthly plan price, linked in from the previous tab. The minutes available for each plan are linked from the previous tab and multiplied by the number of plans to generate a minutes available value (Standard Minutes Available). Each type of minute calculation has a multiplier—linked in from the previous tab—to calculate the amount of overage (Standard Minutes Overage). For example, in the month of March there are 41 Total Plans for the Individual market segment in Plan 1. Each of those plans is eligible for 60 Standard Minutes, making the total Standard Minutes available equal to 2,460.

The multiplier of 1.30—linked in from the previous tab—is then multiplied by the total *Standard Minutes* available. In this example, it is assumed that the *Individual* market segment has a 30 percent overage on their standard minutes. Therefore, the *Standard Minutes* overage is 738. Similarly, this calculation is performed on *Weekend* and *Weeknight* minutes to generate a *Total Overage* value measured in minutes, which is multiplied by *Overage Rate* to generate *Overage Revenue*. Finally, an adjustment line is available to make manual adjustments to the *Total Revenue* line.

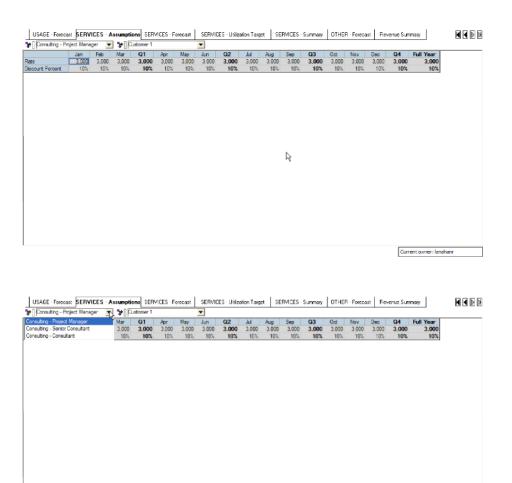




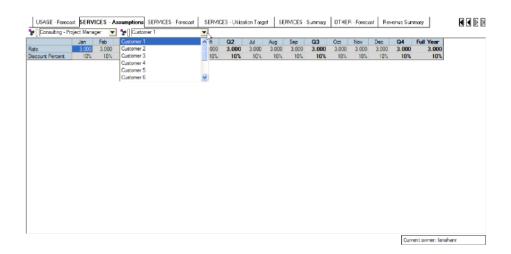
SERVICES METHOD

The *Services* method enables a professional services consultant to forecast revenue in relation to specific customers, daily work rates, and key project characteristics such as project start and completion dates. This sales model is typical in service industries that invoice customers for work based on staff utilization. For instance, the IT professional services and management consulting industries operate in this manner. In the workflow below, a project manager forecasts revenue for professional services rendered for specific customers.

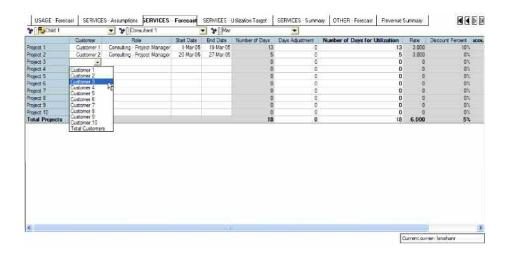
The *SERVICES – Assumptions* tab is used to provide read-only rate and discount information by services role for each customer. This information will be linked into the services forecast.

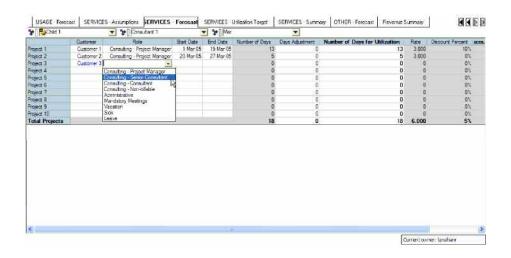


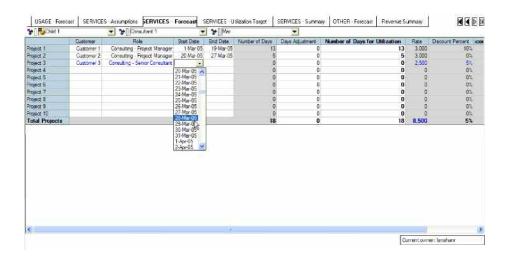
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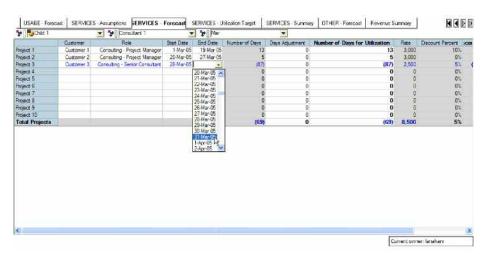


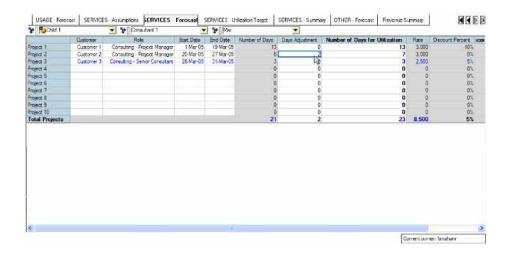
The *SERVICES – Forecast* tab is used to forecast the customer activity, utilization, and revenue generation for each consultant. The user inputs information regarding customer, consulting role, and dates to generate the forecast. Additionally, the user may adjust the number of days worked for those consultants working more days than the utilization target.

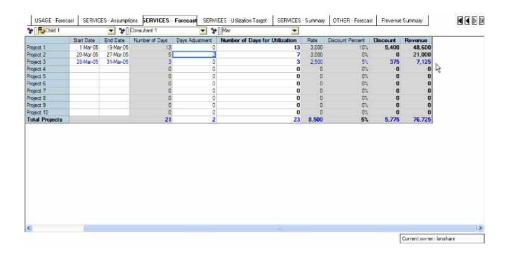




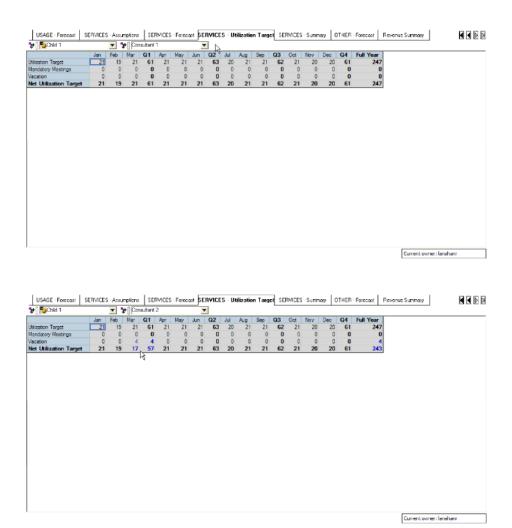




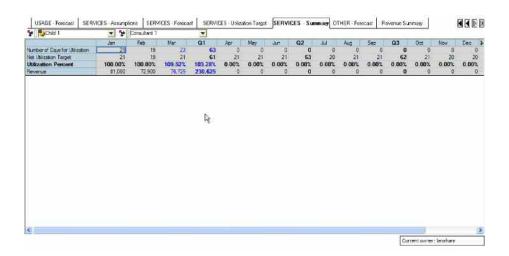




The SERVICES – Utilization Target tab is another assumptions tab providing utilization target information for each consultant. There are built-in offsets for mandatory company meetings and vacation time that will lower the target for that month. This target information is linked into the summary tab and can be used for bonus calculations and performance reviews.

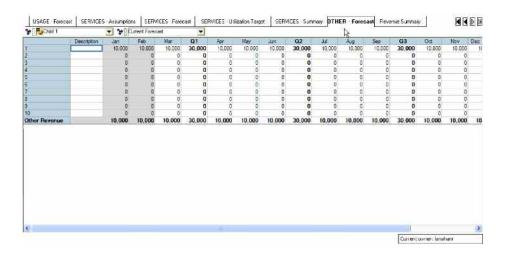


The SERVICES - Summary tab provides utilization and revenue information for each consultant.



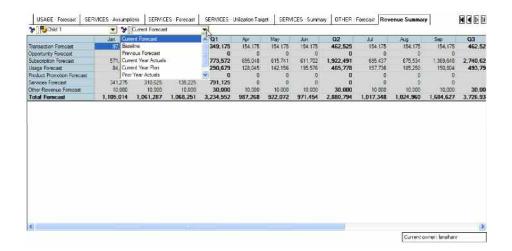
OTHER METHOD

The *OTHER – Forecast* tab is used to capture revenue that does not fit into the other revenue modeling methods. It allows for simple manual entry and a column for a text description.



REVENUE SUMMARY

Finally, the *Revenue Summary* tab provides output for all of the revenue forecasting methods. This information is provided by method and by month for each of the forecast versions.



ABOUT THE COGNOS INNOVATION CENTER FOR PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

The Cognos Innovation Center was established in North America and Europe to advance the understanding of proven planning and performance management techniques, technologies, and practices. The Innovation Center is dedicated to transforming routine performance management practices into "next practices" that help cut costs, streamline processes, boost productivity, enable rapid response to opportunity, and increase management visibility.

Staffed globally by experts in planning, technology, and performance and strategy management, the Innovation Center partners with more than 600 Cognos customers, academicians, industry leaders, and others seeking to accelerate adoption, reduce risk, and maximize the impact of technology-enabled performance management practices.

