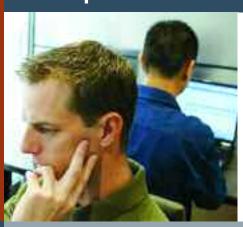
# **BLUEPRINT:**Retail Strategic Merchandise Planning Implementation Guide



A WEB-BASED PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT APPLICATION



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## **Overview**

Well-designed practices for merchandise planning and continual analysis of the results against plans are critical to a retailers' success – particularly in the current environment of changing demographics and pressure on margins. A differentiated assortment of goods that meets market demand ensures chains will be able to increase sales, protect profits and satisfy customers.

Equally important is collaboration—consensus between merchandise, finance, marketing and operational plans to ensure all parts of the organization are working towards a single set of financial objectives and business goals. In most retail chains this disconnected process of each organization operating as an independent silo causes company-wide execution and performance to suffer. Reaching consensus between top-down corporate strategies and bottom-up departmental plans lets cross-functional teams to work together to achieve financial goals and meet market demand.

The IBM Cognos Strategic Merchandise Planning Blueprint provides an integrated performance management framework—including planning, metrics, and reporting—that allows chains to plan sales, margin, gross profit and stock by division, channel, department or category. It is designed to reconcile with company-wide strategic financial plans and operational plans, so that all parts of the organization are planning to a single set of financial goals and business objectives.

The Blueprint gives merchandising executives target-setting capabilities to forecast sales and gross profit for divisions or channels; calendaring to normalize performance data for year-over-year differences in demand, such as date-based holidays; ability to spread top-down targets across departments or categories based on historical data to create financial and stock plans; exception-based planning to adjust line items and break-back capabilities to pro-rate costs to meet profitability requirements to support sales and margin targets. It gives merchandise planners a single tool to complete top-down and bottom-up planning processes that are integrated and synchronize finance, merchandisers, marketing and operations.

Cognos, an IBM company, provides performance management capabilities that empower retailers to develop plans and measure merchandise performance that meet market needs and financial goals:

- Top-down target setting for merchandise sales and gross profit by division or channel
- Calendar adjustments to accommodate year-over-year changes holidays to smooth demand patterns
- Financial merchandise plans by department / category for sales and gross profit
- Stock plans by department / category for managing value of inventory

This Implementation Guide demonstrates a Web-based process for managing top-down and bottom-up merchandise and stock planning using IBM Cognos 8 Planning and Business Intelligence, and provides an overview of the model design and complexities to be used as a guide for applying it in a customer environment.

The models and processes described in this document are generic for retail strategic merchandise planning in the United States, but can be configured to support alternative model requirements and to accommodate planning in any country.

# **Blueprint Objectives**

The Blueprint provides a complete performance management framework—including planning, metrics and reporting—that helps retail managers and executives meet sales objectives and profitability goals through an improved merchandise planning process that is fully synchronized with finance, operations and marketing. Using a single performance management system ensures bottom-up planning across the enterprise supports business strategies for growth, margins, market share and customer satisfaction.

Anchored on IBM Cognos 8, and based on retail industry best practices, the Blueprint delivers an intuitive top-down and bottom-up planning and reporting environment where retailers can capitalize on:

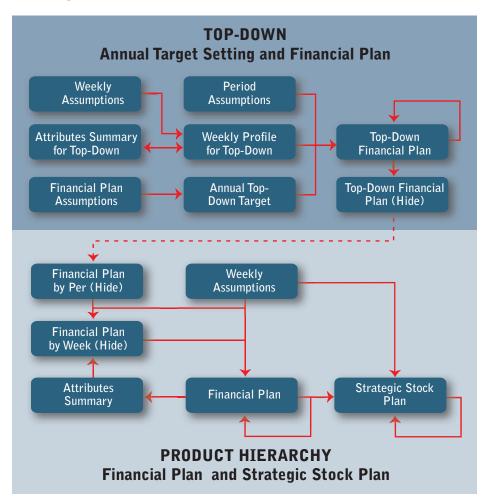
- Top-down target-setting capabilities to forecast annual sales and gross profit for divisions or channels
- Calendaring adjustments to accommodate year-over-year changes in holidays to smooth demand patterns
- Ability to spread top-down targets across departments or categories based on adjusted historical data
- Creating department or category-level plans for key financial indicators, including: sales, returns markdowns, promotions, shrink, cost of goods, gross margin, supply chain costs and gross profit
- Pre-season stock planning to manage the value of inventory at the department or category level
- Exception-based planning to adjust line items
- Break-back capabilities to pro-rate costs to meet profitability requirements to support sales and margin targets
- Seamless visibility into plans from other parts of the organization, including finance and cash flow implications, eliminating possible discrepancies and organizational silos
- Embedded, integrated workflow, complete with visual scorecard and alerting capabilities, that enables managers to easily determine latest plan status, drive collaboration to plan completion, and uphold accountability
- Calculated metrics summarization and links to scorecards and reports that help accurately measure and compare planned versus actual performance of merchandise by department, category and/or channel

In addition to the benefits specific to the Blueprint, the IBM Cognos 8 Planning tool provides significant benefits to an organization through its inherent capabilities:

- Flexible model development to support a wide variety of planning models;
- Web-based or Excel-based deployment of models for data collection and consolidation;
- Easy version control;
- Real-time workflow that drives collaboration;
- Real-time consolidation;
- Real-time reporting;
- Real-time calculations in the browser for immediate results;
- Audit and user textual annotations at the cell, worksheet and model level again used to drive collaboration;
- Drop-down validation lists for ensuring data consistency;
- Scalable architecture with proven deployments to thousands of users;
- Linking functionality to provide divergent yet interrelated components of planning environment;

- Off-line capabilities;
- Custom date capabilities with no limit on the time dimension, allowing planning by the week, season, period, quarter or year;
- Unique multi-directional calculation engine that allows input across any dimension at the detail level or the total level.

# **Planning Model Flowchart**



The process for the strategic merchandise planning occurs in stages. The first step includes a top-down annual target exercise for sales and gross profit. This planning process includes setting targets by division and category, and is then transferred to a periodic financial plan, using the prior year's actuals, adjusted for holiday movement, as a foundation for the periodic profile. Those targets are then linked to the product hierarchy portion of the model in which the bottoms-up detailed financial plans and strategic stock plans are finalized, resulting in a variance analysis to target.

# **Real Time Workflow Visibility**

As merchandising professionals, Contributors, are planning and validating their financial plans and stock plans, senior managers, Reviewers, have real-time visibility to the workflow status of that information. In this blueprint, merchandise planning could be performed by division for each department/category, or by department/category for each division. Reviewers can see the workflow status of each division or department/category, and can be co-owners of that information, allowing them to make edits, if required. All workflow status changes, data consolidations and aggregations occur in real-time as the information is saved by the Contributors, making frequent planning iterations possible.

Before data is entered, the state of the plan is designated as Not Started. Once a plan is saved, the state becomes Work In Progress and remains accessible for further editing. When an item is submitted, the plan is Locked and is accessible in a read-only state. The Locked state indicates that the plan is ready for review. Reviewers can review the plans in any state, but can only reject a Locked plan item. When a Locked plan is rejected, it returns to a state of Work In Progress, making it editable once again for the owner of that plan.

The following is an example of the workflow in which the strategic merchandise plan is performed by division, and departments/categories are planned within that division.



The following is an example of the workflow in which the strategic merchandise plan is performed by department/category, and divisions are planned within each department/category.

# **Representative Workflow**

The following sections of this implementation guide describe the process in which merchandising professionals might participate during the planning process. This guide will also provide additional insight into modeling techniques, calculations and linking used throughout the blueprint.

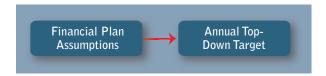
## Top-Down Financial Plan

The starting point for the Blueprint takes place within the Top-Down Financial Plan node of the hierarchy. This top-down planning level of the hierarchy provides the ability for merchandising senior management to set top-down annual targets for sales and gross profit by division and by department/category.

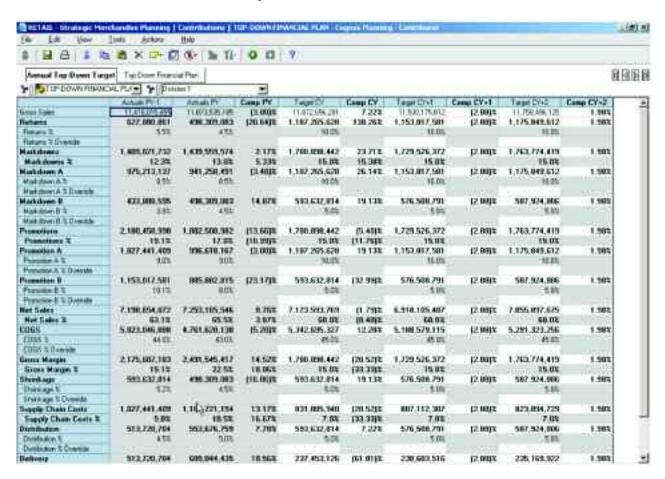


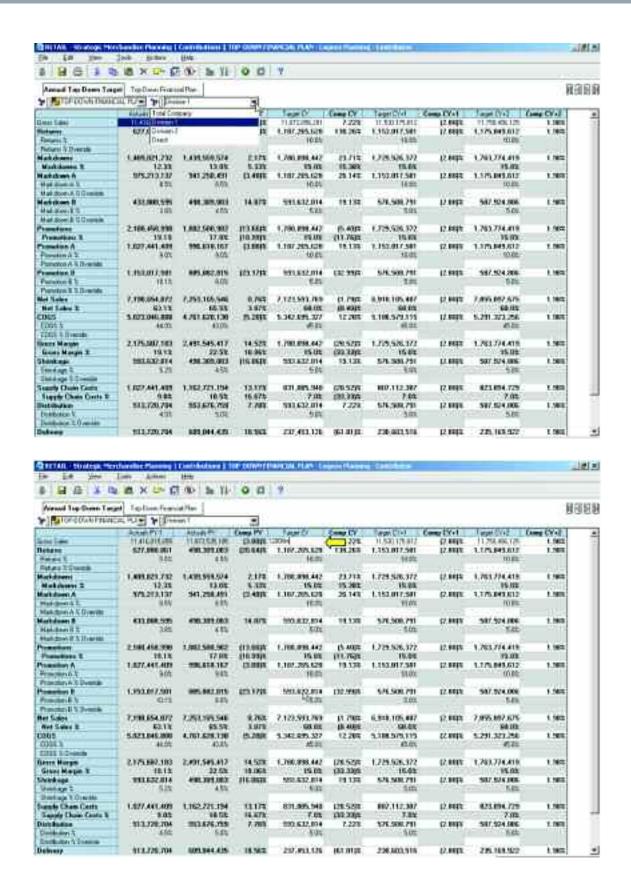
Upon clicking the Top-Down Financial Plan item on the Contributor home page, the Planning model is opened and includes two tabs (tabs are represented as d-cubes in the Analyst model, and are referred to as such in this document) used for this top-down planning: Annual Top-Down Target and Top-Down Financial Plan. These two tabs are available only to the Top-Down Financial Plan item in the hierarchy, and access tables created in the Contributor Administration Console (TopDownFinancialPlan1.txt and AnnualTopDownTarget1.txt in the setup instructions) verify that none of the other items in the hierarchy see those tabs.

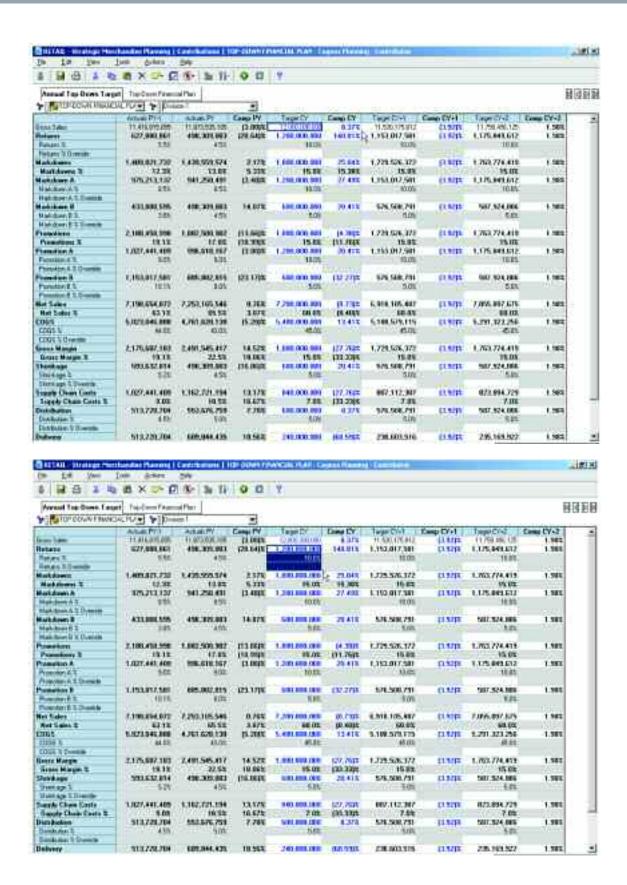
## Annual Top-Down Target

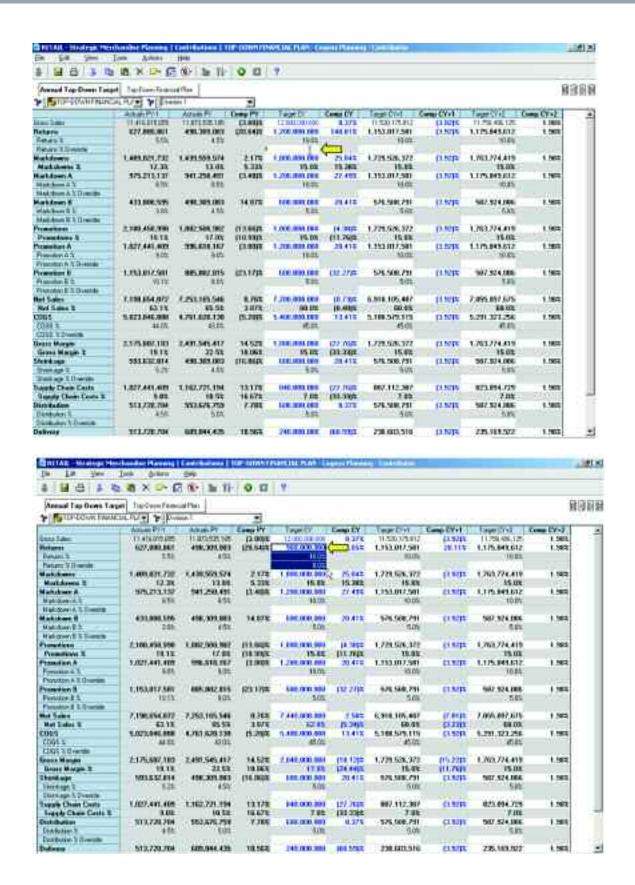


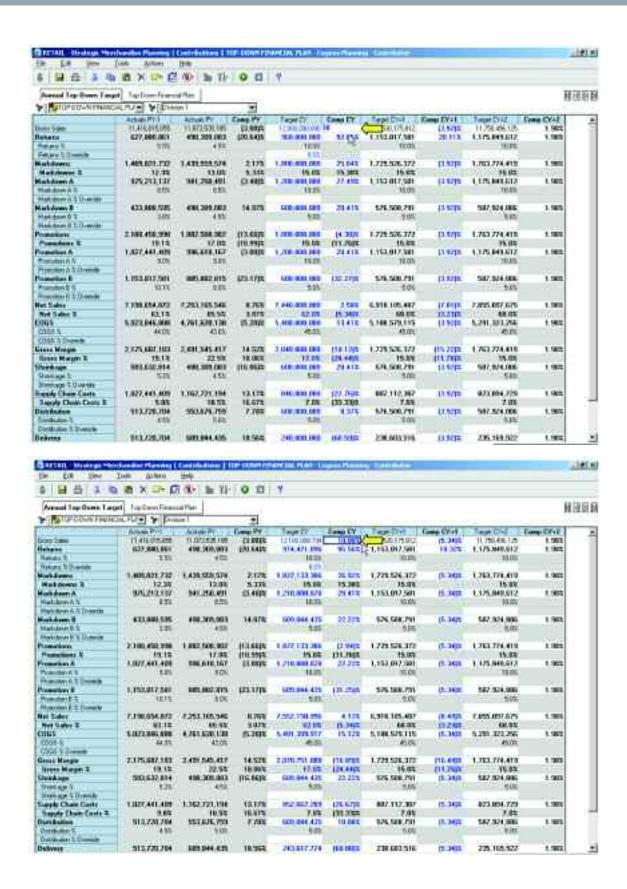
The first tab in the Top-Down Financial Plan is called 'Annual Top-Down Target'. This tab is based on an Analyst d-cube made up of four dimensions in the following order: Annual Top-Down Target, Product Hierarchy (eList), Division and FY and Comparable. The user is provided with two years of actuals, three years for forecast and the year-over-year comparables for each division. It is assumed that the two years of actuals would be loaded from the system of record. The users can set the top-down targets by inputting dollar amounts, percentage of gross sales values for the items in the financial plan or year-over-year comparables to achieve the desired results for the forecast periods.



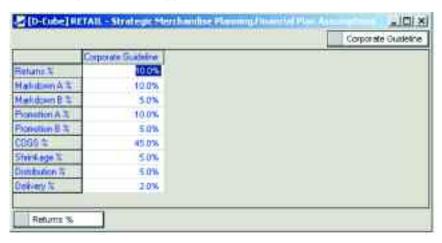




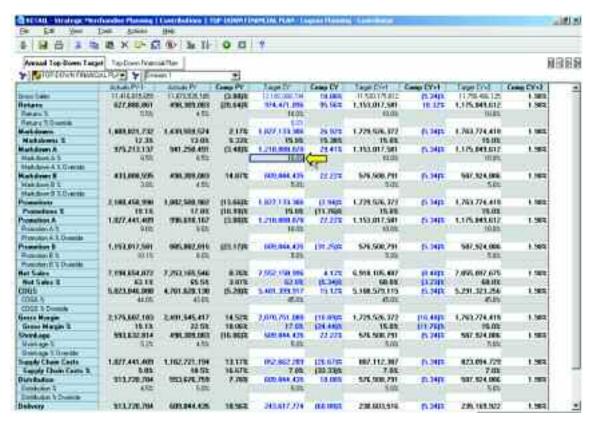


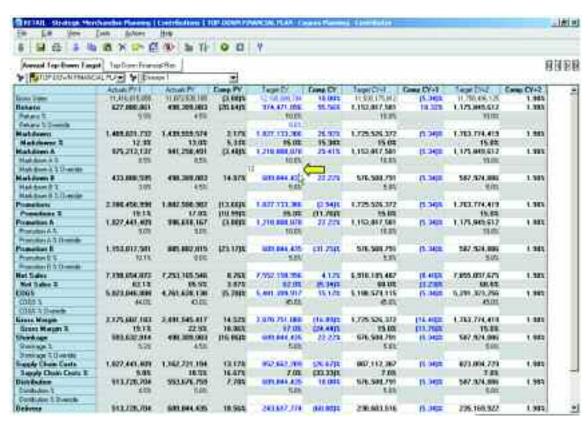


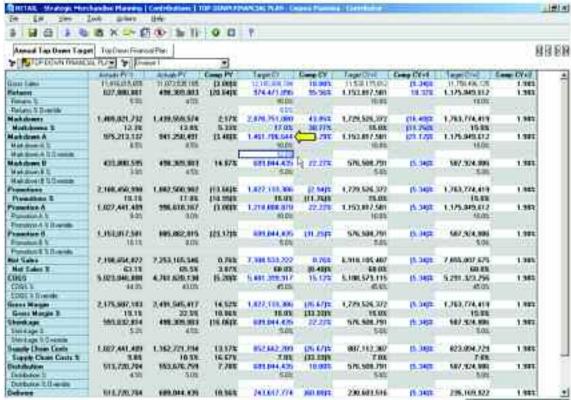
There is one d-link into this d-cube from a hidden assumptions d-cube called Financial Plan Assumptions. The hidden Financial Plan Assumptions d-cube is made up of two dimensions: Percent of Sales and Financial Plan Assumptions. It contains the data for the percent of gross sales assumptions linked into the Annual Top-Down Target to calculate the values for each item in the Annual Top-Down Target. It is assumed that these values will be set at a corporate level and provided to the end user as assumptions in the Contributor model. The Financial Plan Assumptions d-cube appears as follows in Analyst:



Those assumptions can be overwritten in the lines labeled override in the Annual Top-Down Target tab. In the following example, the Markdown A % assumption of 10% was linked from the hidden Financial Plan Assumptions tab, and is overwritten with the value of 12% in the Markdown A % Override field to recalculate the value associated with Markdown A.

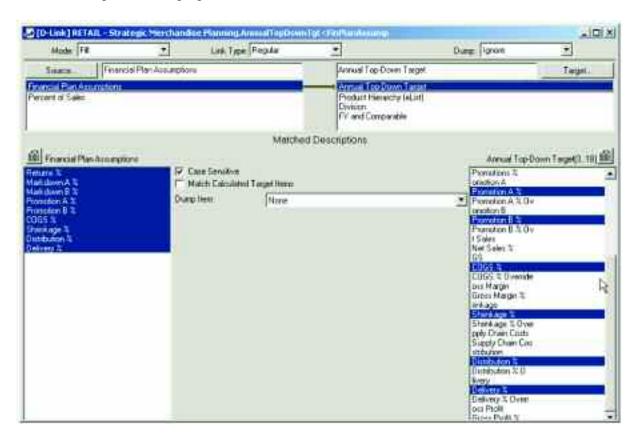


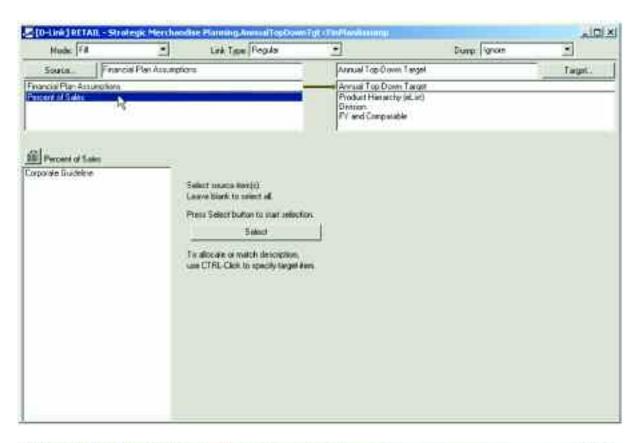


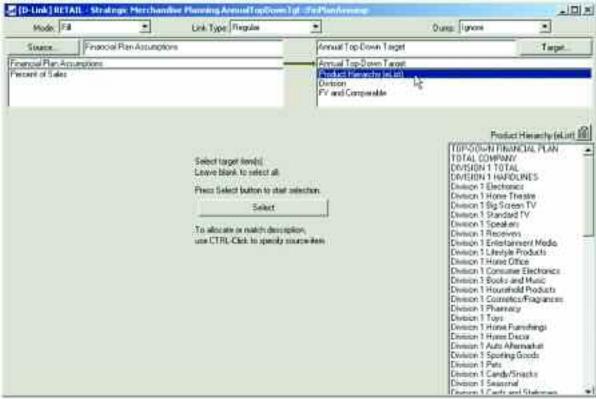


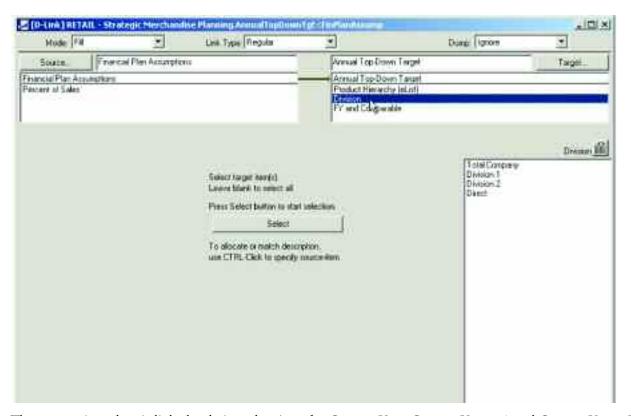
This d-link from the hidden Financial Plan Assumptions d-cube to the Annual Top-Down Target d-cube is called AnnualTopDownTgt<FinPlanAssump, and is included in the D-Cube Update for the Annual Top-Down Target d-Cube. The d-link is setup as follows:

The Financial Plan Assumptions d-list is linked to the Annual Top-Down Target d-list. The Cut Sub-Column setting is used on the source side of the link for spaces three through eighteen to allow for a Matched Description between the two d-lists as the Annual Top-Down Target d-list has some preceding spaces in the item names for presentation purposes.

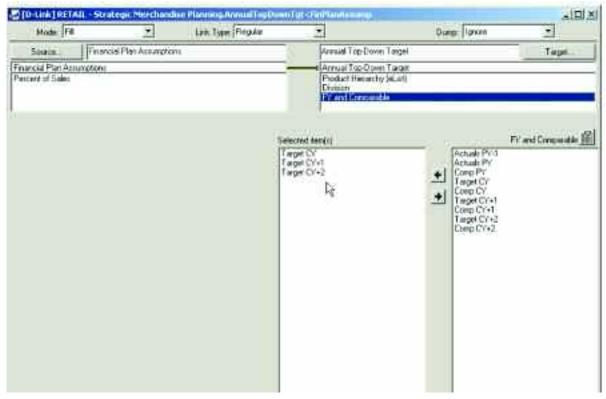




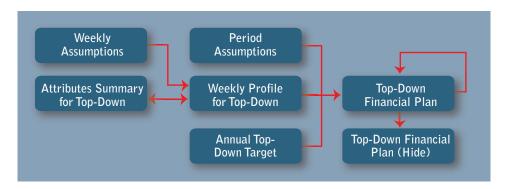




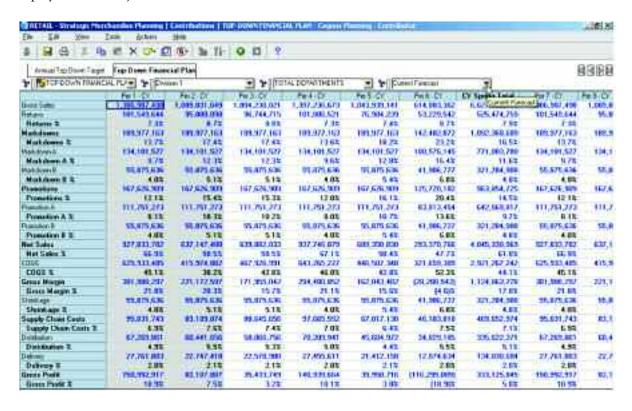
The assumptions data is linked only into the views for Current Year, Current Year + 1 and Current Year +2 as prior year actuals should not be impacted.



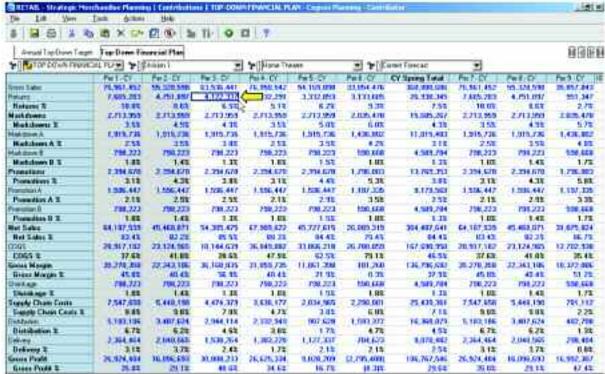
Top-Down Financial Plan

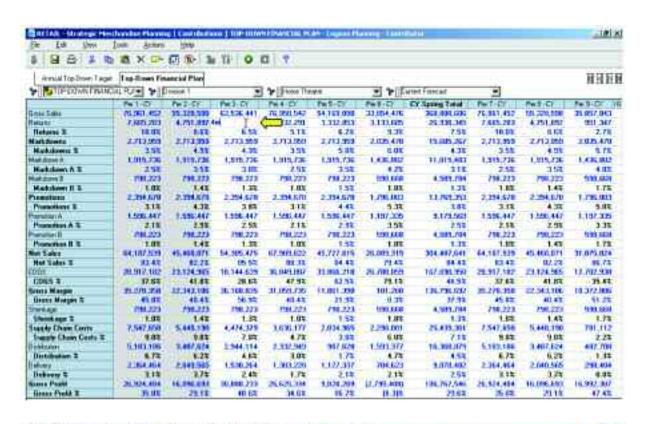


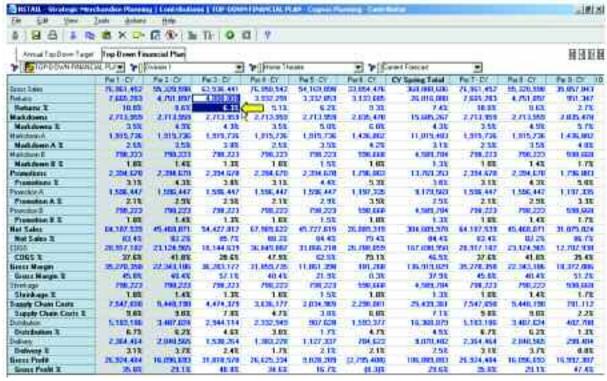
The second tab in the Top-Down Financial Plan is called 'Top-Down Financial Plan'. This tab is based on an Analyst d-cube made up of six dimensions in the following order: Financial Plan, Product Hierarchy (eList), Department/Category, Division, Periods and Versions. The top-down targets set in the previous tab are linked into this tab and displayed by period, using prior year actuals, adjusted for event changes in the calendar, as the basis for the periodic spread. The annual targets are linked into an item in the Versions dimension called Top-Down Forecast, and this value is added to another item in the Versions dimension called Adjustment to equal the item in the Versions dimension called Current Forecast. This structure allows the user to overwrite data in the view called Current Forecast, and the delta between overwritten value and the top-down value will be displayed in the Adjustment item.

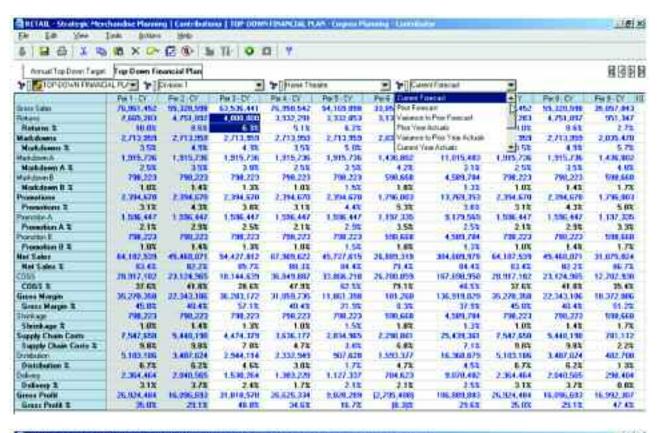


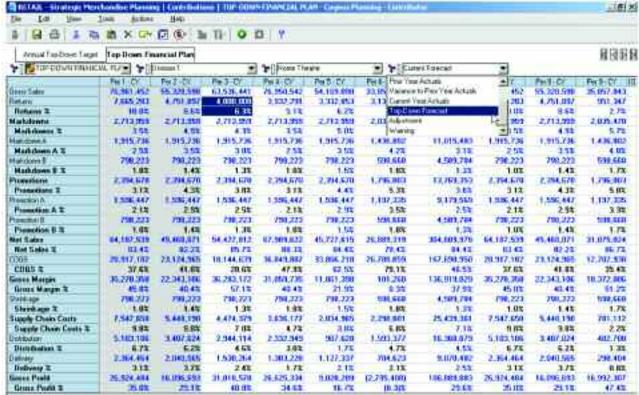


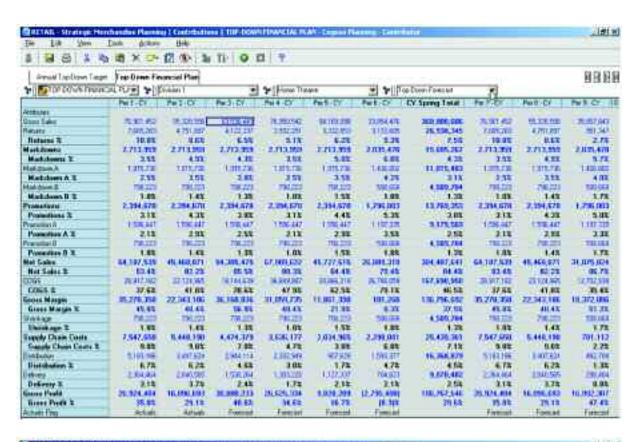




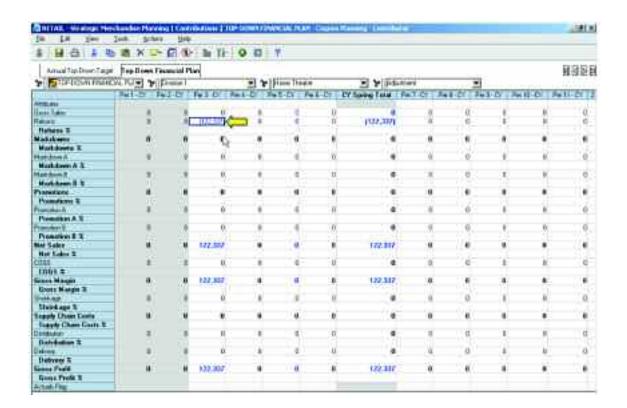




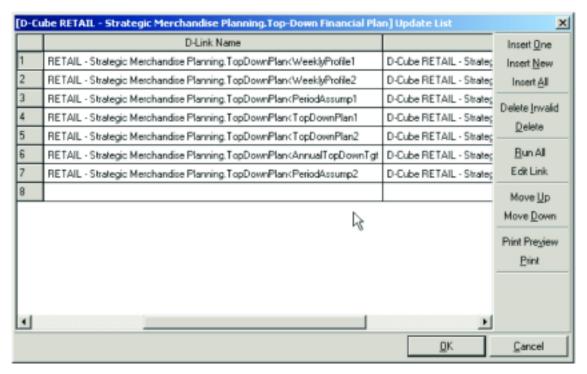




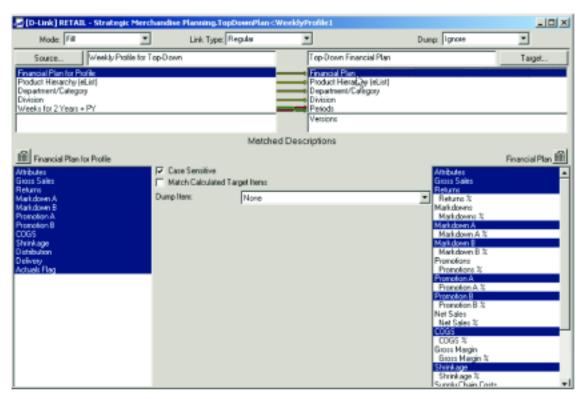


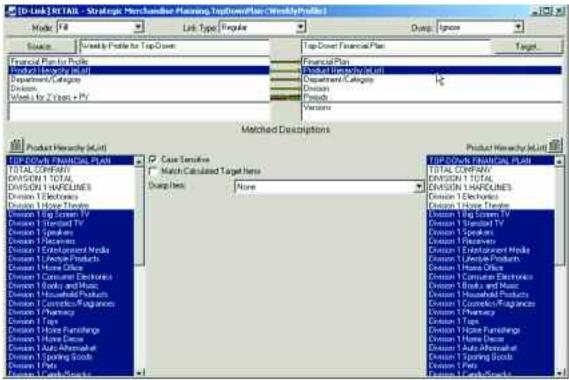


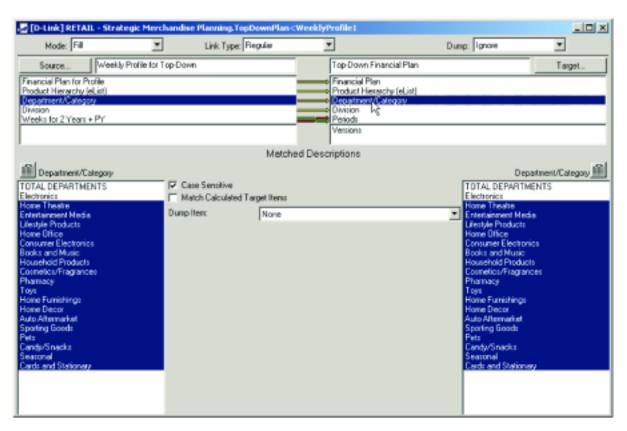
There are seven d-links into this cube to update the information, and they are included in the d-cube update in the following order:

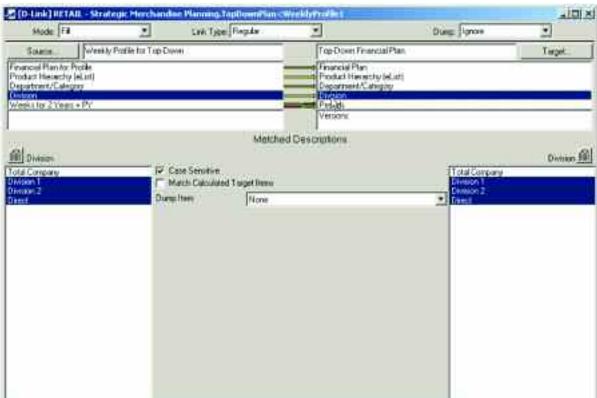


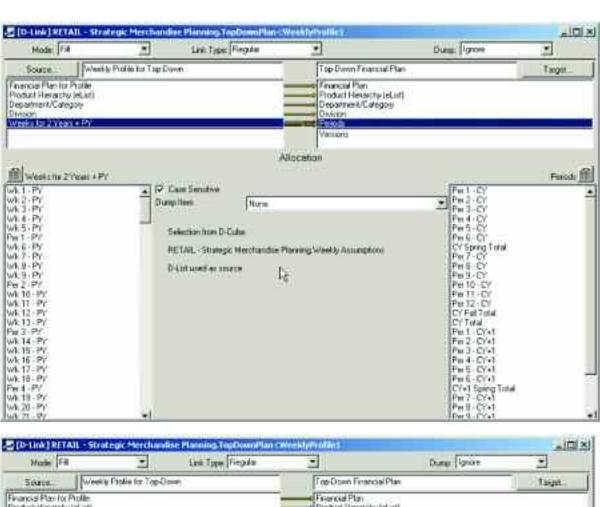
The first d-link, called TopDownPlan<WeeklyProfile1 links the prior year weekly actuals into the Top-Down Financial Plan d-cube from the hidden d-cube called Weekly Profile for Top-Down.

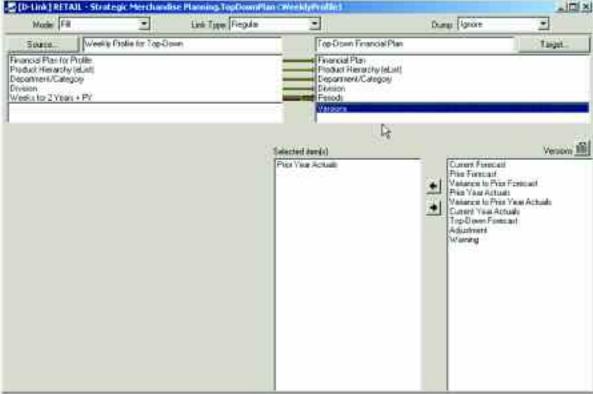




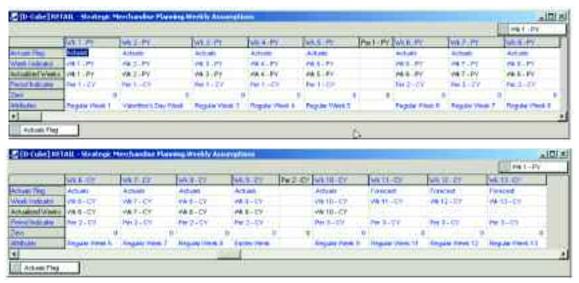




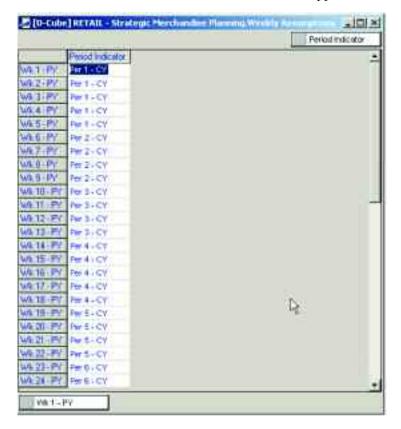




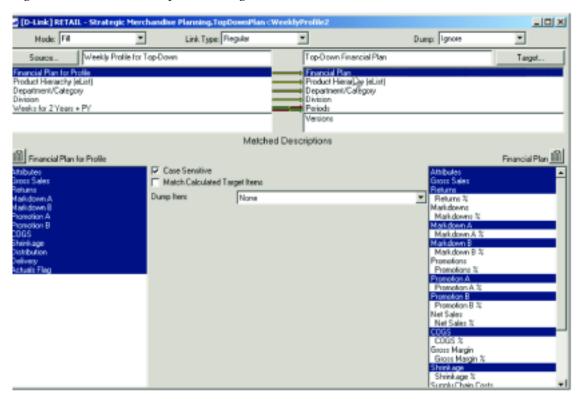
The match between the Weeks for 2 Years + PY dimension and the Periods dimension leverages information contained in a hidden d-cube called Weekly Assumptions made up of two dimensions: Weekly Assumptions and Weeks for 2 Years + PY. The Weekly Assumptions d-cube contains information about the weeks in the model, such as whether it is an actual week or a forecast week, what period the week falls into and what the attributes are for that week (e.g., Easter Week vs. Regular Week).

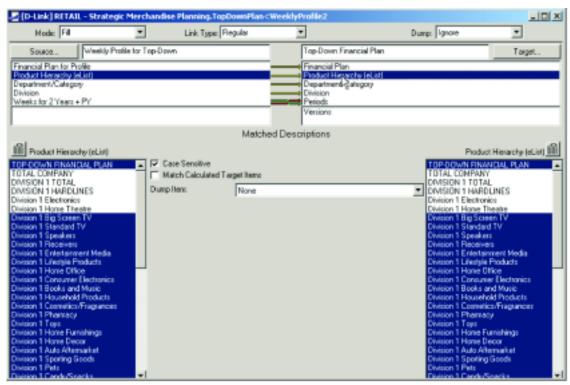


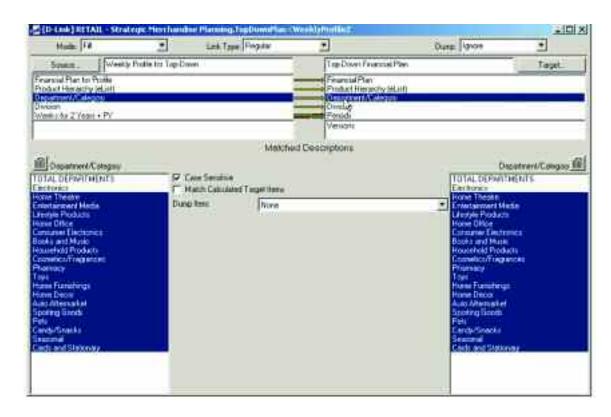
The d-link TopDownPlan<WeeklyProfile1 uses a slice of the Weekly Assumptions d-cube to assign data for the Prior Actuals in the Versions dimension. For example, Wk 1—PY values will be linked to Per 1—CY in the Versions item called Prior Year Actuals. That slice appears as follows for the purposes of the d-link:

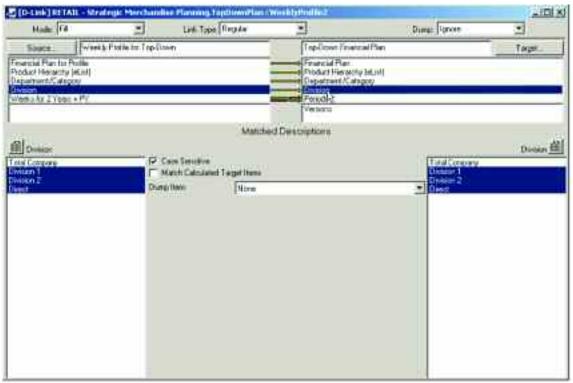


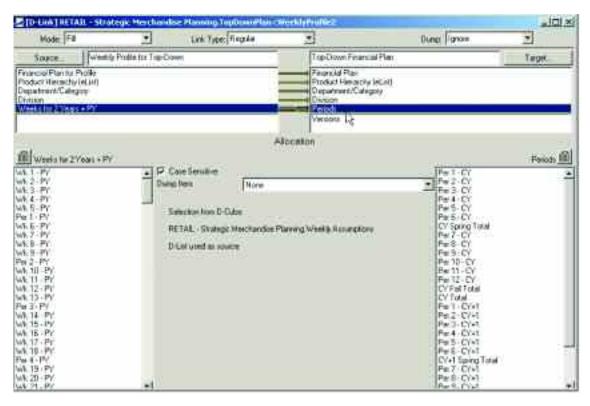
The second d-link into the Top-Down Financial Plan d-cube is called TopDownPlan<WeeklyProfile2. This d-link moves data into the Top-Down Forecast item in the Versions dimension to be used as a profile for the annual targets set in the Annual Top-Down Target tab.

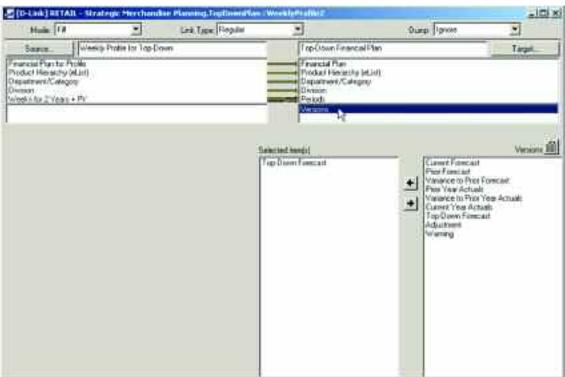




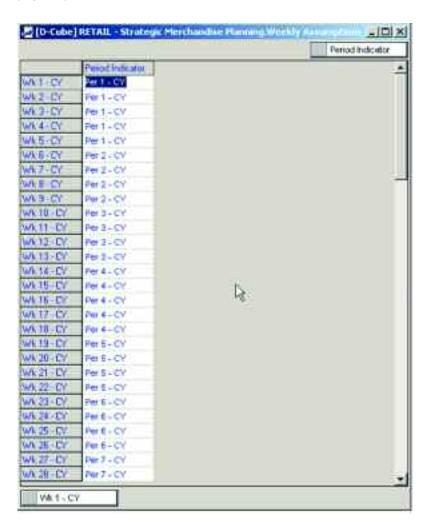




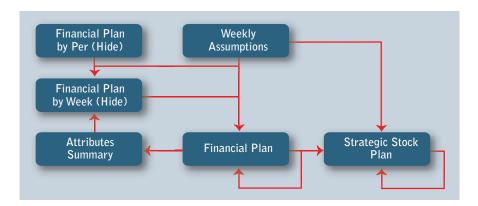




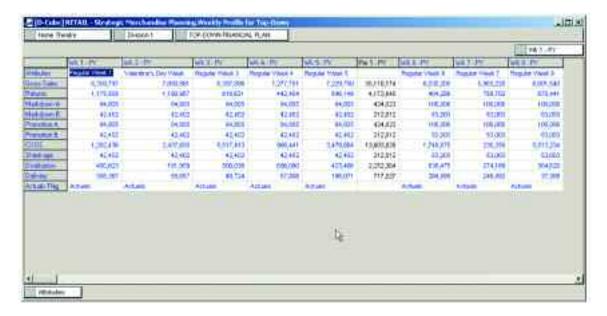
This d-link also leverages the information from the hidden Weekly Assumptions d-cube to match the appropriate weeks to periods for this link. The following is a slice of the Weekly Assumptions d-cube used in this link:



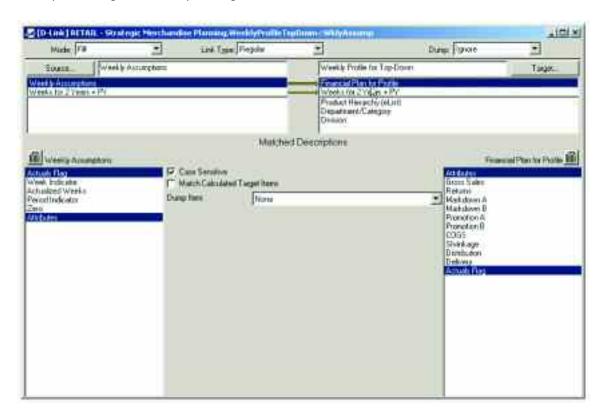
The information contained in the hidden Weekly Profile for Top-Down d-cube is refreshed in a three-step process before being linked into the Top-Down Financial Plan d-cube.

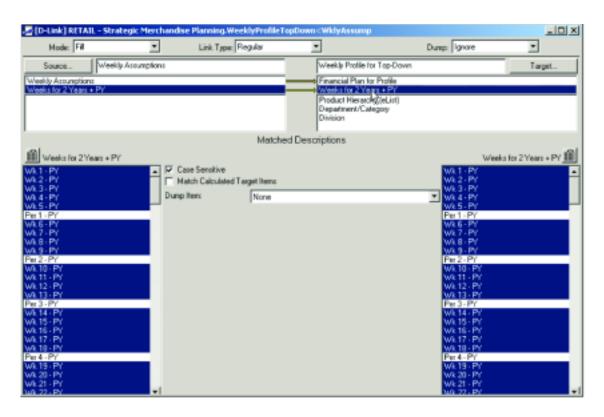


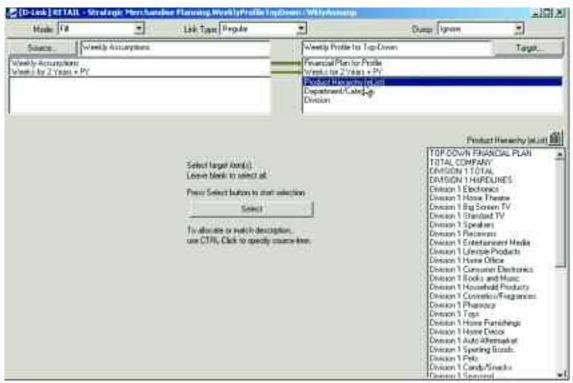
The Weekly Profile for Top-Down d-cube is made up of five dimensions: Financial Plan for Profile, Product Hierarchy (eList), Department/Category, Division and Weeks for 2 Years + PY.

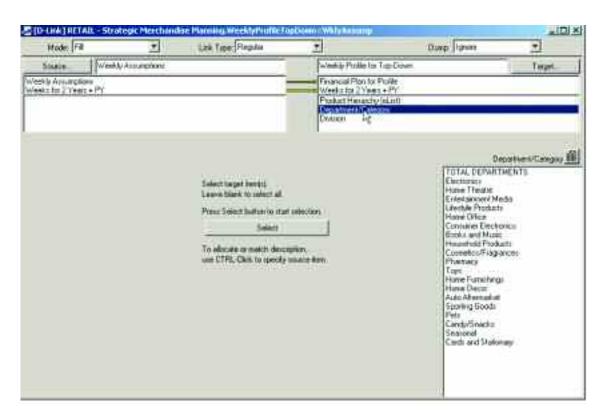


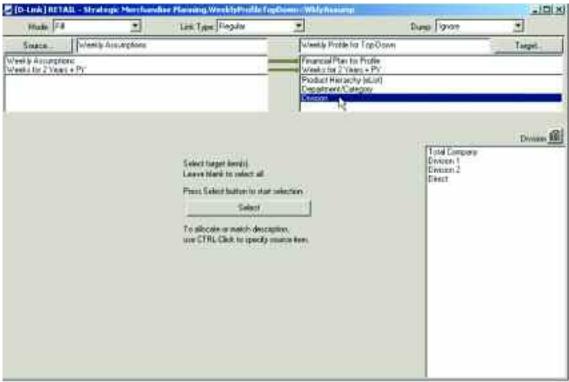
In the first step to create the profile for the forecast, the weekly attributes are linked into the Weekly Profile for Top-Down d-cube from the Weekly Assumptions d-cube through a link called WeeklyProfileTopDown<WklyAssump.



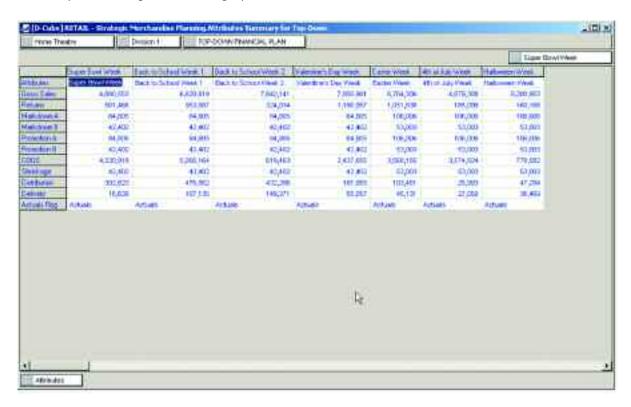




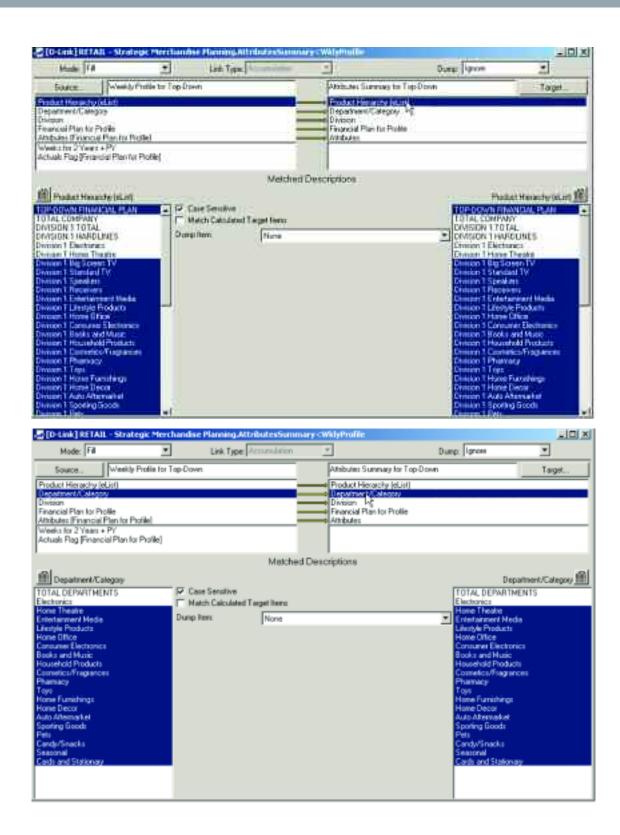


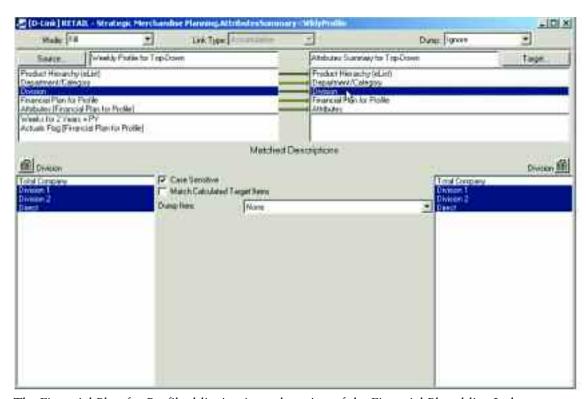


The second step of the creation of the weekly profile assumes that the Prior Year Actuals will be linked into the Weekly Profile for Top-Down d-cube from the customer's system of record. Those prior year actuals are linked into the weeks labeled as PY (e.g., Wk 1 – PY, Wk 2 – PY, etc.). The prior year actuals are used as a profile for the Current Year and Current Year + 1 forecasts, but they are reassigned to the forecast weeks based on the Attributes associated with that week (e.g., the Easter Week PY actuals are linked into the Easter Week for the Current Year and Current Year + 1 forecasts, to account for the movement of significant holidays or events for retailers). Therefore, data linked into the Weekly Profile for Top-Down for prior year is linked into a d-cube called Attributes Summary for Top-Down. The dimensions in this d-cube are: Financial Plan for Profile, Product Hierarchy (eList), Department/Category, Division and Attributes.

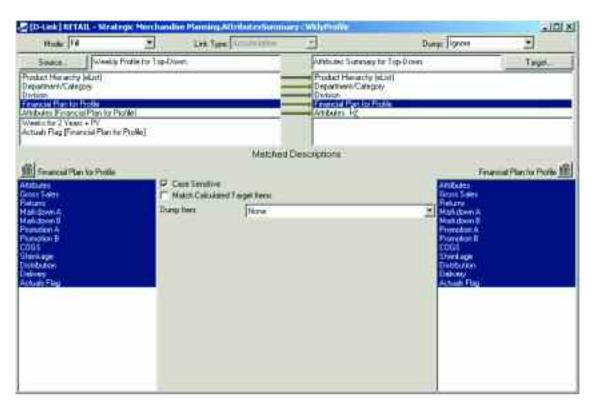


The link which moves the prior year actual data from the Weekly Profile for Top-Down d-cube into the Attributes Summary for Top-Down d-cube is called AttributesSummary<WklyProfile.

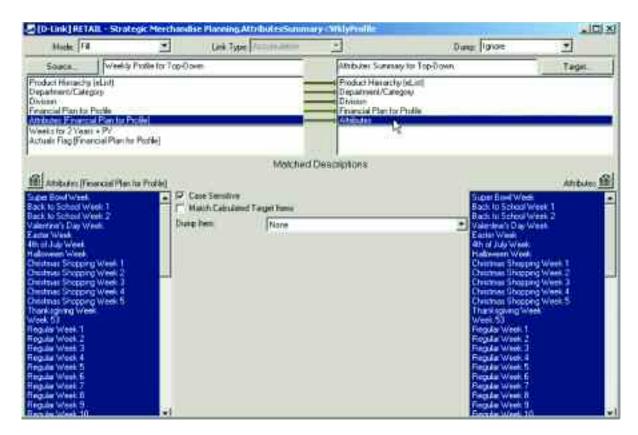




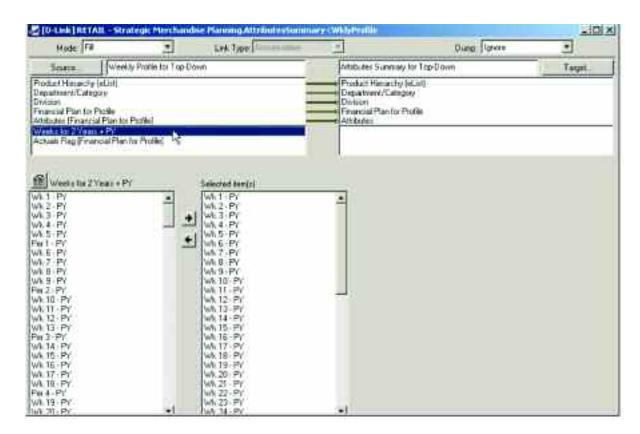
The Financial Plan for Profile d-list is trimmed version of the Financial Plan d-list. It does not contain the calculations from the Financial Plan as those will be recalculated once the actuals data is linked into the Current Year and Current Year + 1 forecast views.



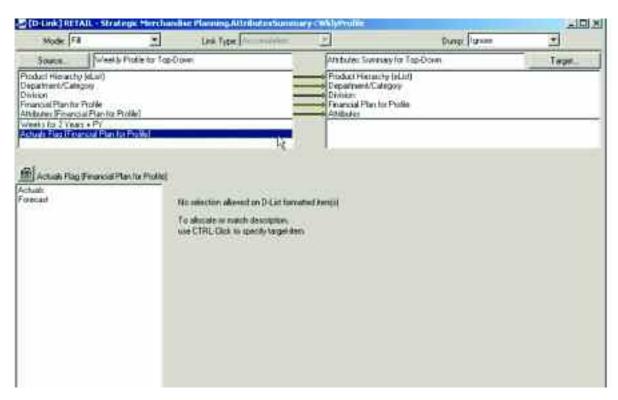
This is an Accumulation d-link in which we use a d-list formatted item on the source side of the d-link (Weekly Profile for Top-Down), in this case Attributes which is a formatted item on the Financial Plan for Profile d-list, and match it to an actual d-list on the target side of the d-link (Attributes Summary for Top-Down), in this case the Attributes d-list.



Only the weeks indicated with a PY are chosen as the d-link is only moving prior year actuals.

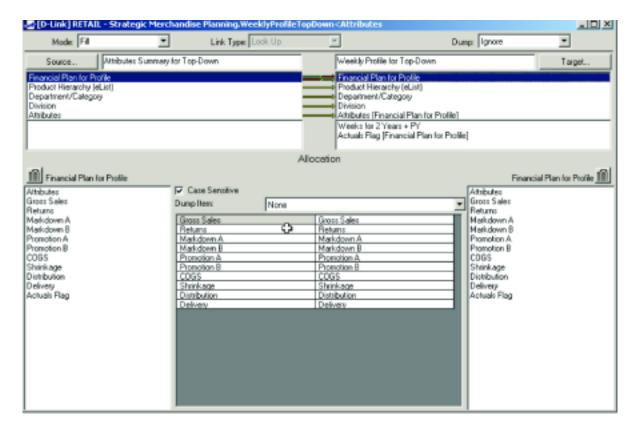


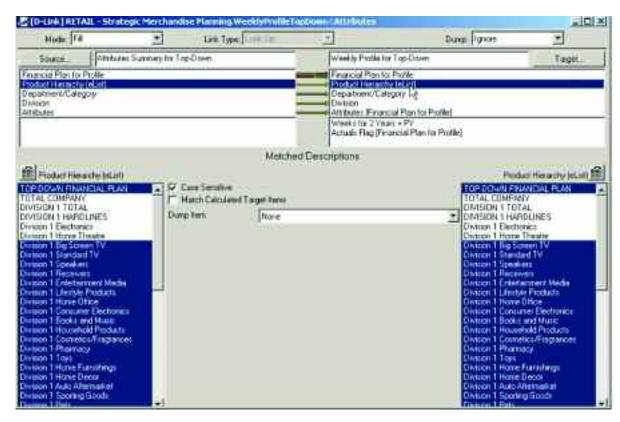
The Actuals flag is also a d-list formatted item on the Financial Plan for Profile d-list. It is not relevant in this d-link, and selections on this item are not allowed.

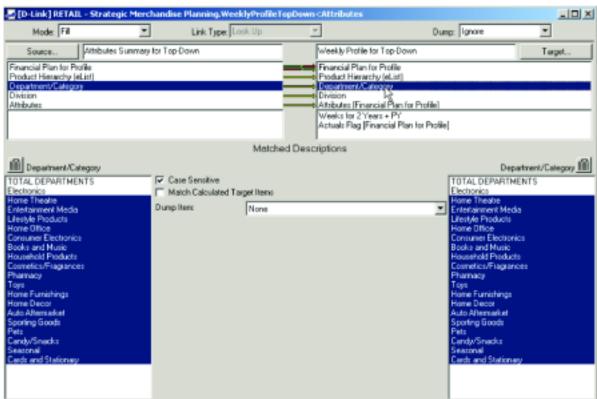


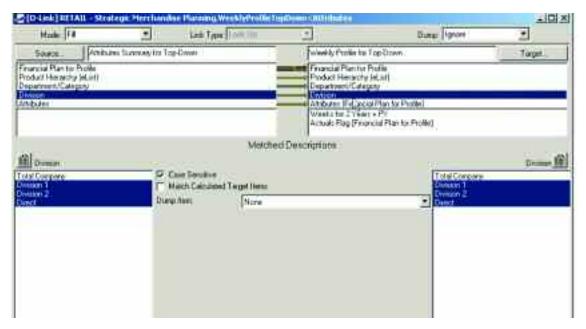
Once the prior year data is linked into the Attributes Summary for Top-Down d-cube, the third step can take place which involves moving the prior year actuals data into the appropriate week in the Current Year and Current Year + 1 forecasts based on the attributes of that week. This step takes place through a d-link called WeeklyProfileTopDown<Attributes.

All items in the Financial Plan for Profile mapping are linked, other than the Attributes and Actuals Flag, as those items are linked into the Weekly Profile for Top-Down d-cube from the Weekly Assumptions d-cube and should not be overwritten in this d-link.

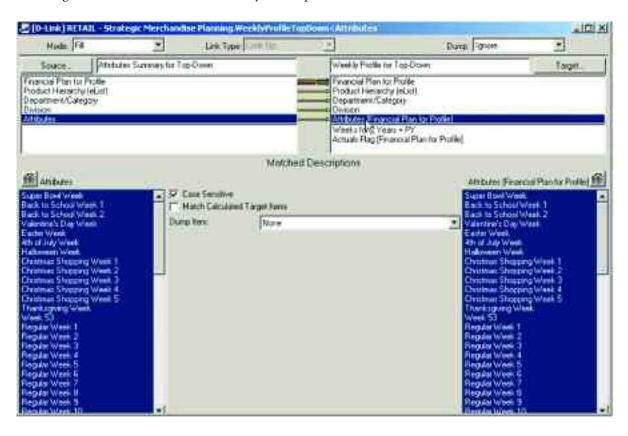




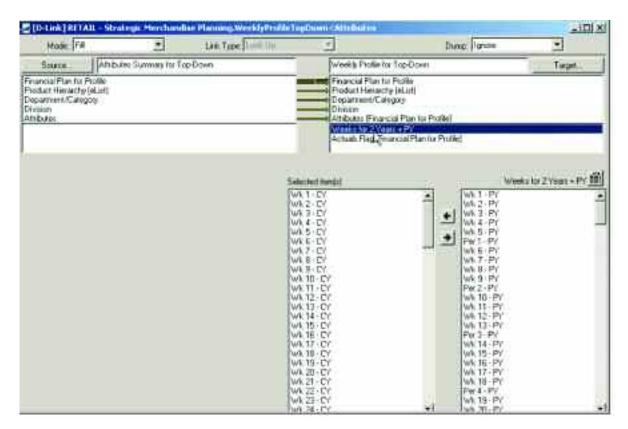




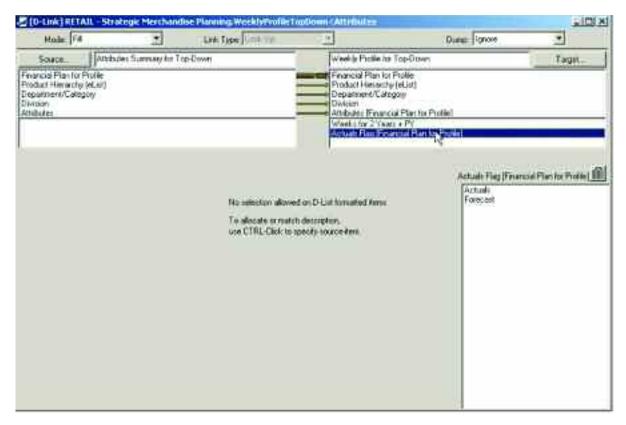
The WeeklyProfileTopDown<a tributes d-link is a Look Up d-link in that it matches an actual d-list on the source side of the link (Attributes Summary for Top-Down) to a formatted d-list on the target side of the d-link (Weekly Profile for Top-Down). The Attributes item on the target side of the d-link is a d-list formatted item on the actual d-list in that d-cube called Financial Plan for Profile. This linking mechanism moves data associated with each Attribute on the source side to the appropriate week in the target side based on whether that attribute was assigned to the week from the Weekly Assumptions.



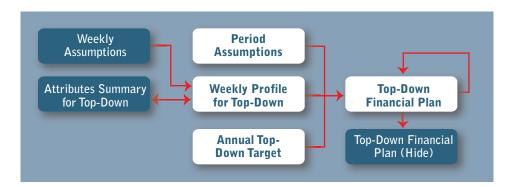
Only the weeks for the Current Year and the Current Year + 1 are chosen in the d-link, as the d-link should not overwrite the actuals data that exists in the weeks that are labeled as Prior Year.



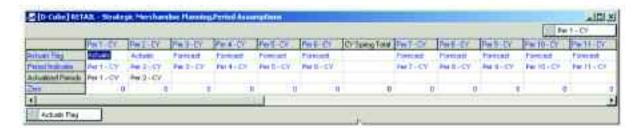
The Actuals Flag is another d-list formatted item in the Financial Plan for Profile d-list, is not used in the d-link, and therefore, no selection is allowed in the d-link.

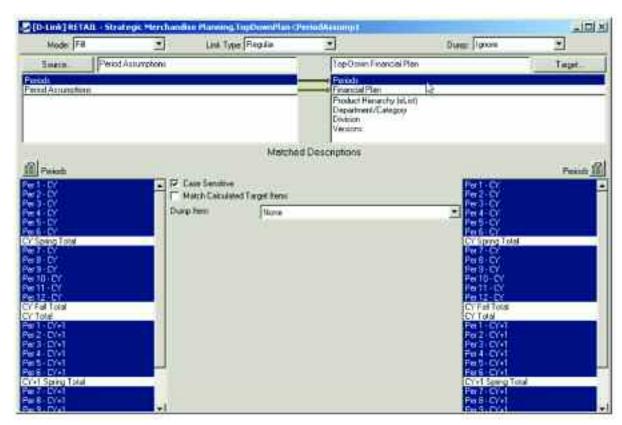


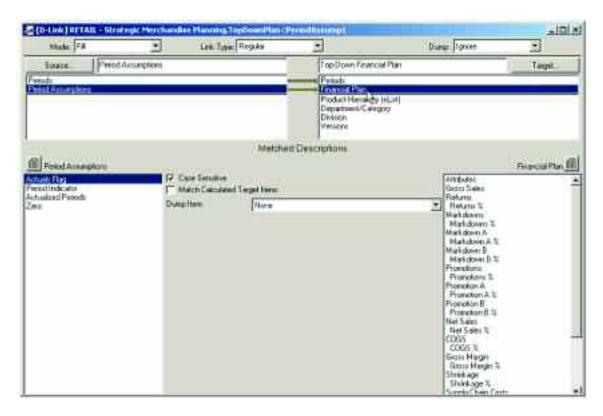
These d-links are run automatically in Contributor and update the Top-Down Financial Plan without any action required of the end users.

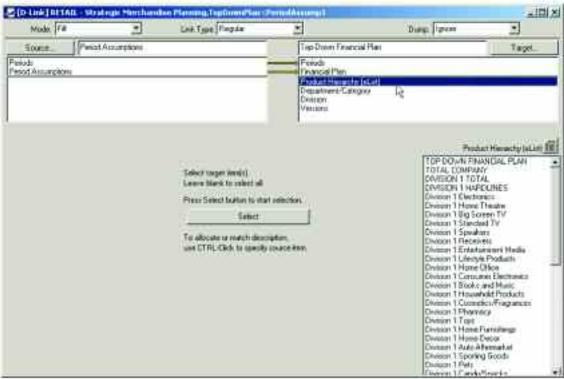


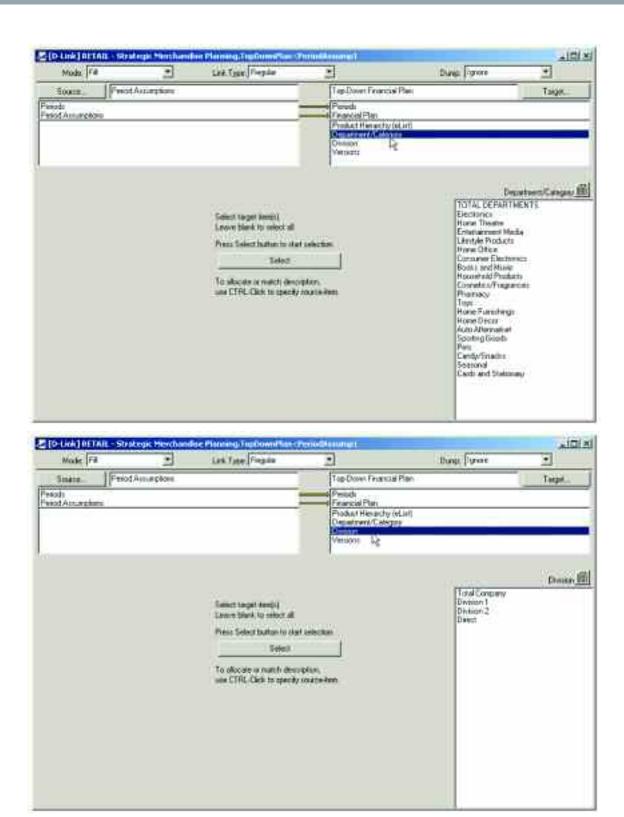
The third d-link into the Top-Down Financial Plan is called TopDownPlan<PeriodAssump1 and links assumptions about each period into the planning tab from a d-cube called Period Assumptions. The Period Assumptions d-cube is made up of two dimensions: Periods and Period Assumptions.



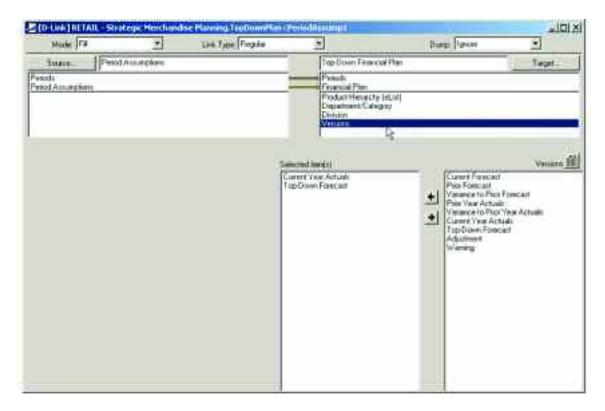




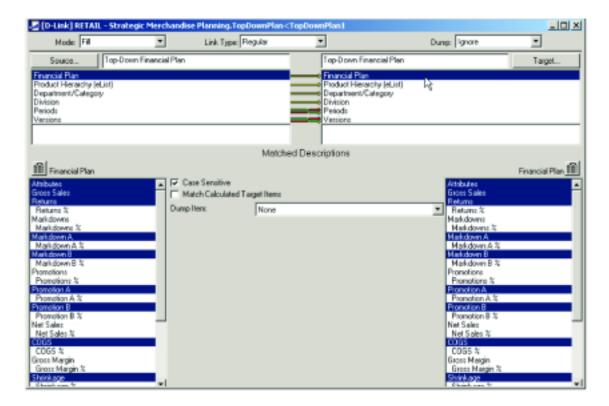


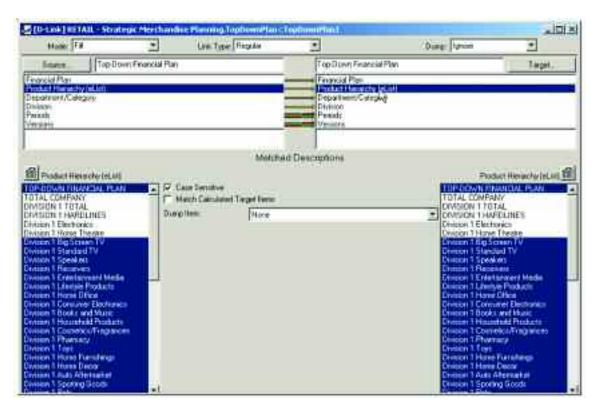


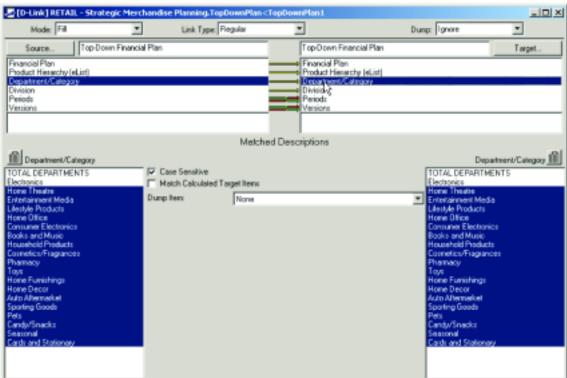
The information from the Period Assumptions d-cube is only linked into the Current Year Actuals and Top-Down Forecast items in the Versions dimension, as the other items in that dimension are either historical or calculations and should not change based on information linked from the Period Assumptions d-cube.

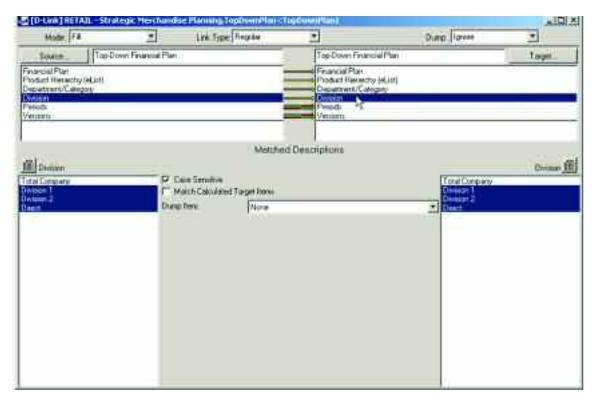


The fourth d-link into the Top-Down Financial Plan d-cube is called TopDownPlan<br/>
TopDownPlan1 and is an internal d-link that Current Year Actuals to the Prior Year Actuals view for the Current Year + 1.

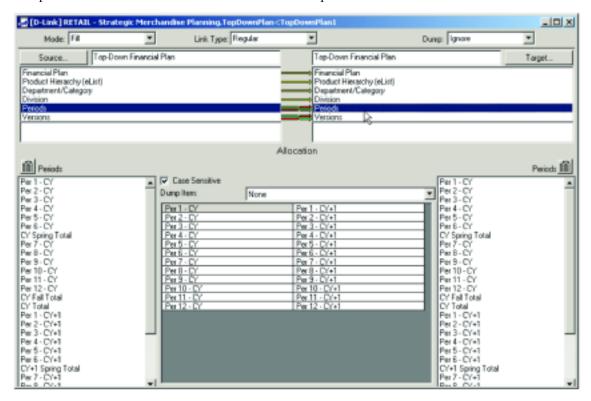




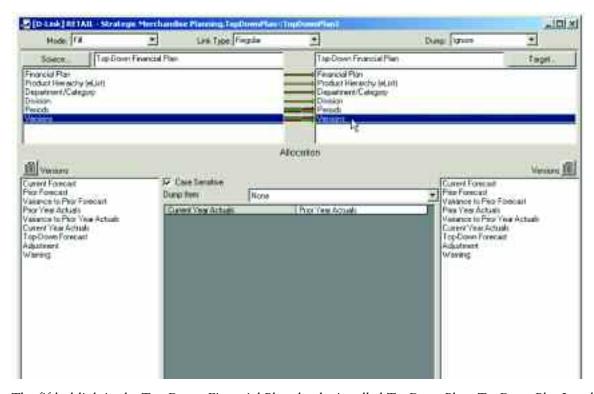




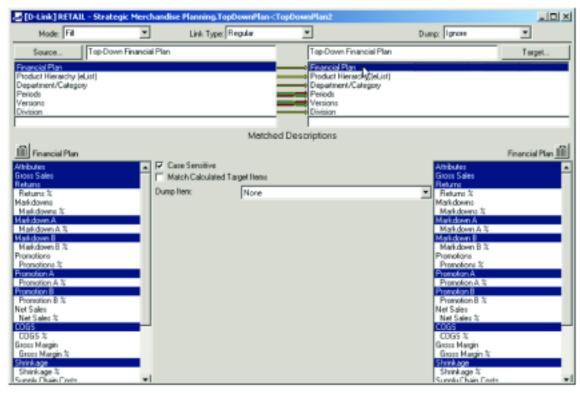
The periods for the Current Year are matched to the periods for the Current Year + 1.

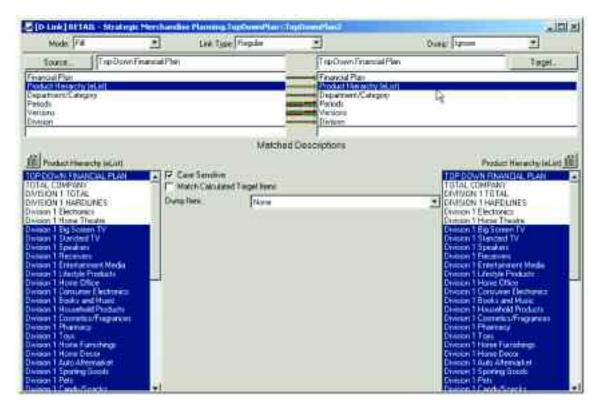


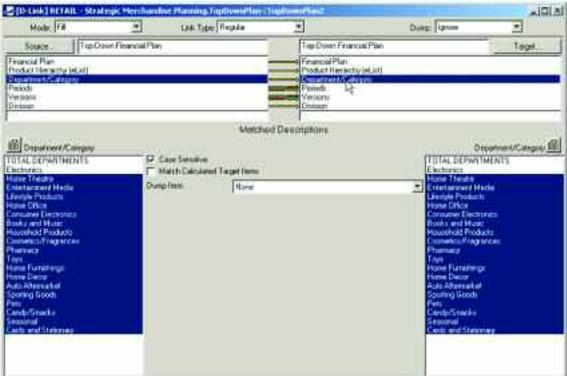
The Current Year Actuals item in the Versions dimension is linked to the Prior Year Actuals item.



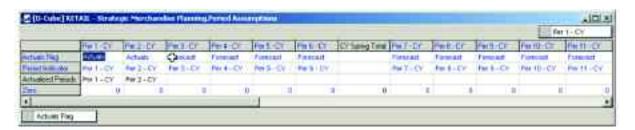
The fifth d-link in the Top-Down Financial Plan d-cube is called TopDownPlan</br>
TopDownPlan2 and is another internal d-link. This d-link moves Current Year Actuals into the Top-Down Forecast item in the Versions dimension so that those periods are taken into account in the forecast process and are not affected by the forecast values created in the Annual Top-Down Target tab.

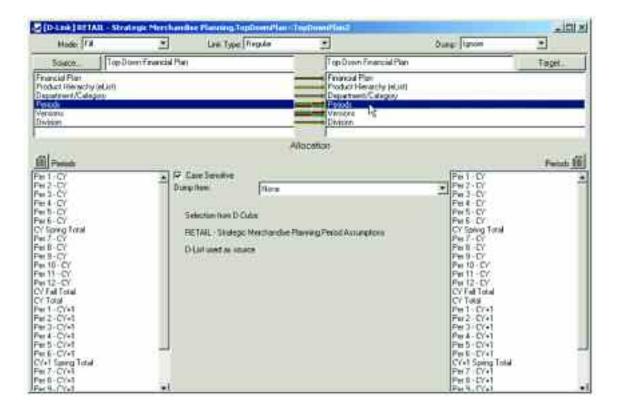




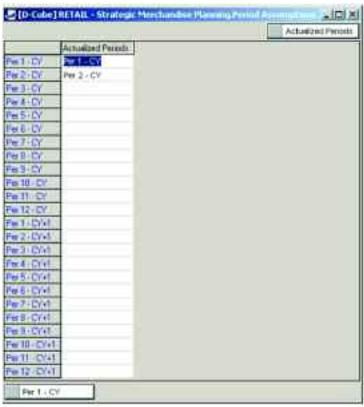


The link between Periods leverages information from the Period Assumptions d-cube. In that d-cube, the periods that are actuals are identified by the flag in the first line, and using a conditional calculation are identified in the row called Acutalized Periods.

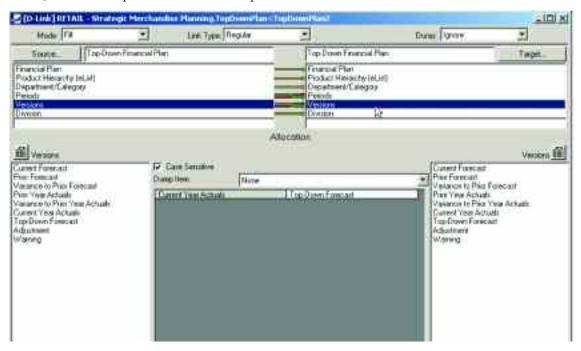


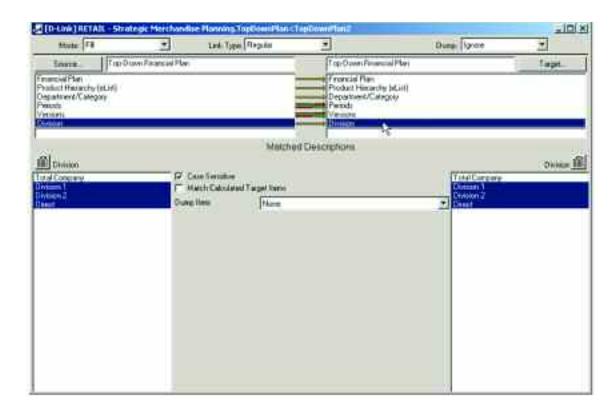


The assumption for purposes of this blueprint is that the first ten weeks of the forecast period are actuals. Therefore, the view of the Periods Assumptions d-cube leveraged in this link appears as follows:

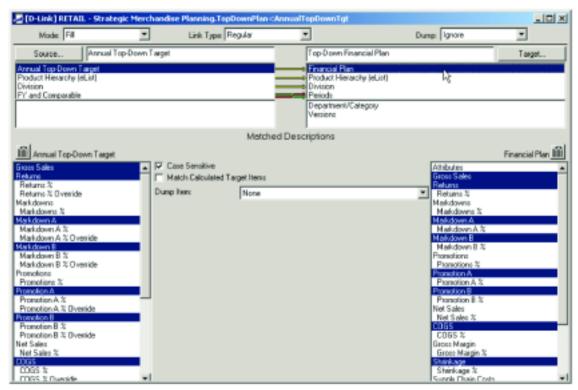


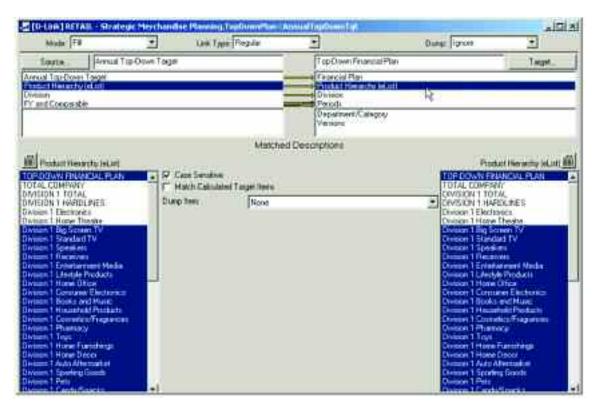
The link for the Versions lists moves information in the Current Year Actuals item to the Top-Down Forecast item. Therefore, once the data from the Annual Top-Down Target is linked into the Top-Down Financial Plan d-cube, these actual periods will not be impacted.

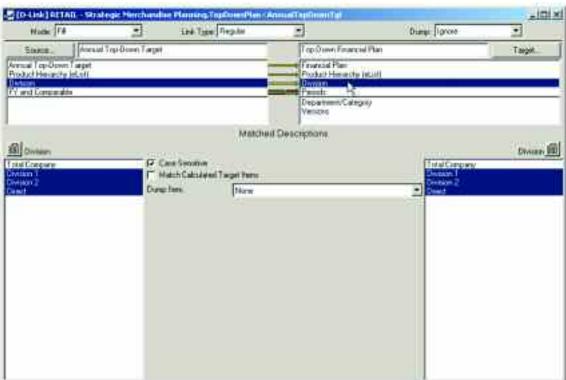




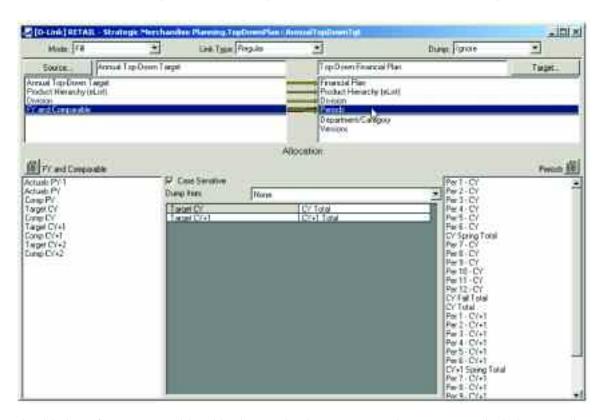
The sixth d-link into the Top-Down Financial Plan d-cube is called TopDownTarget<AnnualTopDownTgt and links the information forecasted in the Annual Top-Down Target tab.



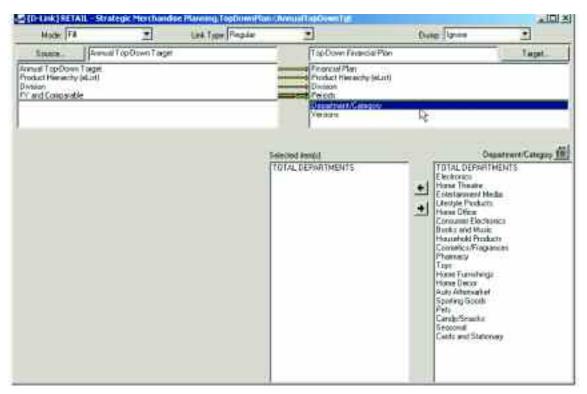




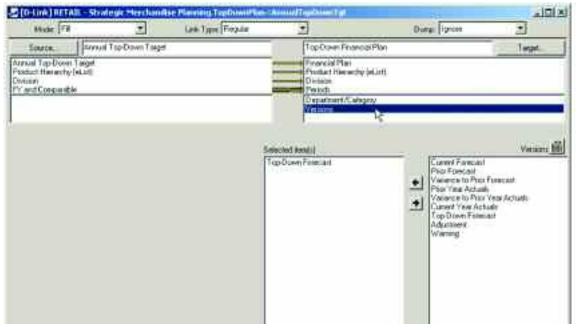
The Target CY from the Annual Top-Down Target d-cube is linked to the CY Total in the Top-Down Financial Plan, and the Target CY+1 is linked to the CY+1 Total. In the Top-Down Financial Plan, the CY Total and CY+1 Total are sub-totals of the periods in each of those years. Therefore, this d-link will create a breakback of the top-down information to the periods, using the profile information linked from the Weekly Profile for Top-Down d-cube, but not impacting the actual periods that were linked internally in a prior link.



The d-link performs a second breakback over the departments and categories as the link moves data into the TOTAL DEPARTMENTS item in the Department/Category dimension, which is a sub-total of the departments.



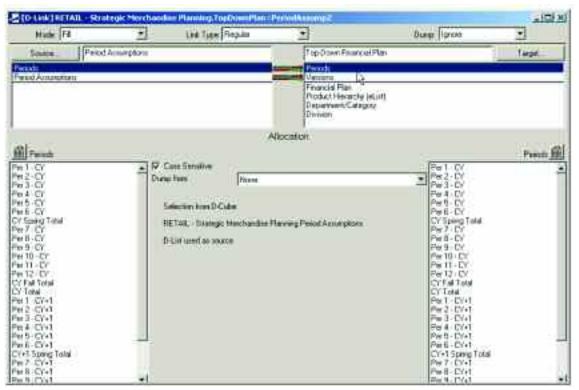
This information is linked into the Top-Down Forecast item in the Versions dimension as that is the view that will be presented to the user in a read-only manner and will be available for variance analysis and consensus.



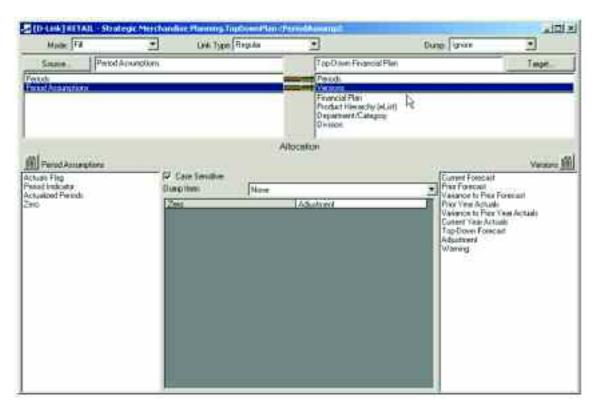
The seventh, and final, d-link into the Top-Down Financial Plan is called TopDownPlan<PeriodAssump2. It is a second d-link from the Period Assumptions d-cube leveraging the row called Zero. The purpose of this d-link is to clear any data that may exist in the Adjustments item in the Versions dimension for those periods that are actuals so that those adjustments will not affect the Current Forecast as it is a sub-total of the Top-Down Forecast and Adjustment lines.

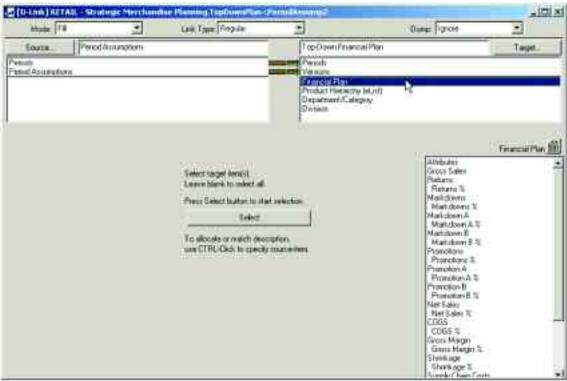


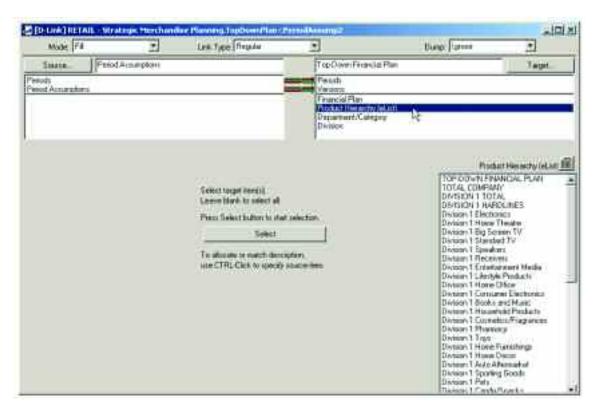
The d-link again leverages the Actualized Periods line of the Period Assumptions d-cube so that only the periods that are actuals are affected by the d-link.

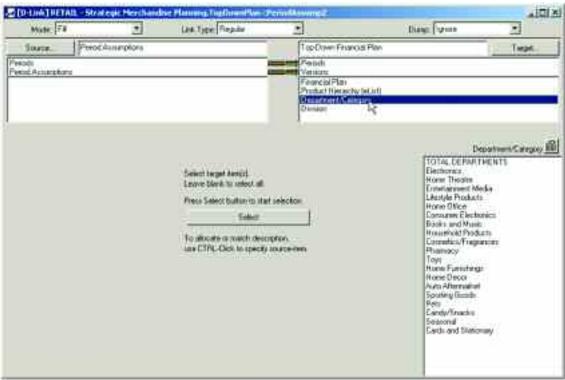


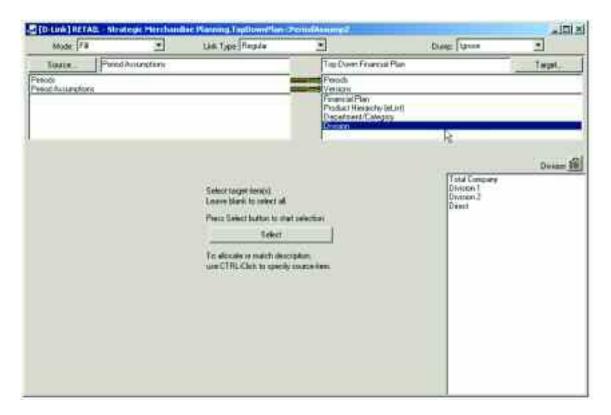
The Zero item from the Period Assumptions dimension in the Period Assumptions d-cube is linked to the Adjustment item in the Versions dimension in the Top-Down Financial Plan d-cube.



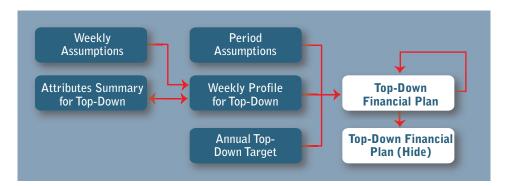




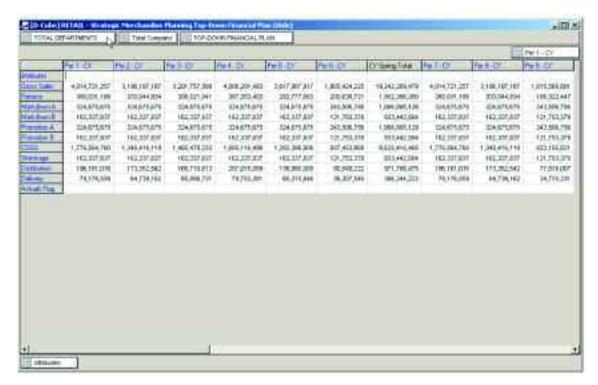


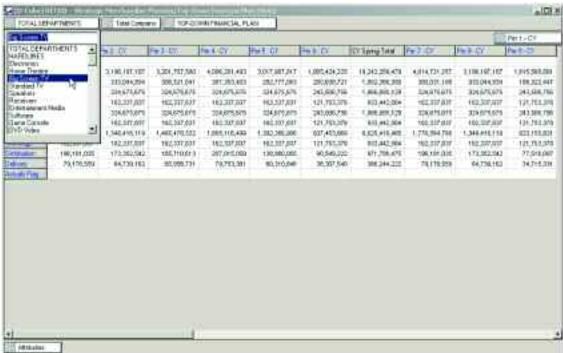


The final step of the Top-Down Financial Plan process is to link the final forecast in the Top-Down Financial Plan d-cube to a hidden d-cube that spreads the results to the class level for use by the merchants in the stage of planning.



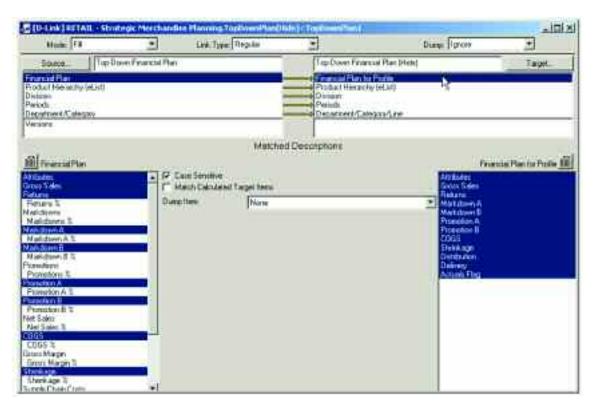
This information is linked into a hidden d-cube called Top-Down Financial Plan (Hide), and that cube is made up of five dimensions: Financial Plan for Profile, Product Hierarchy (eList), Department/Category/Line, Division and Periods.

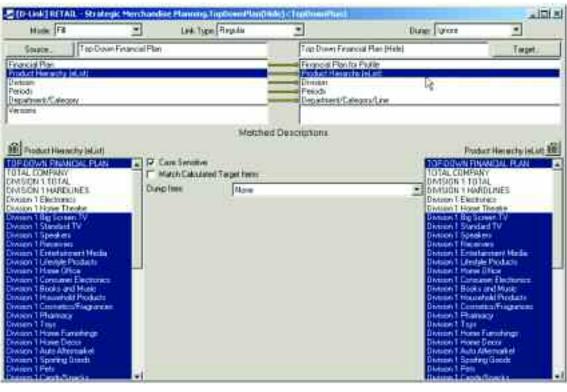


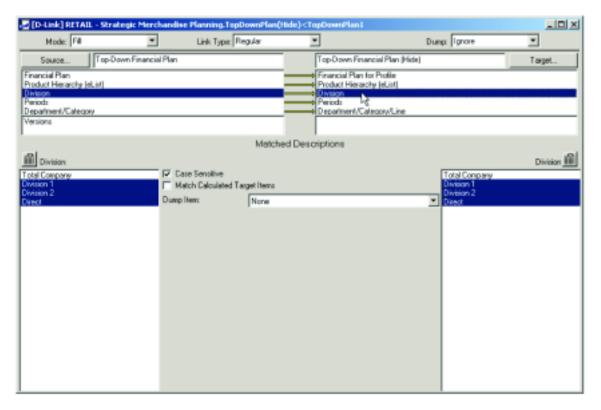


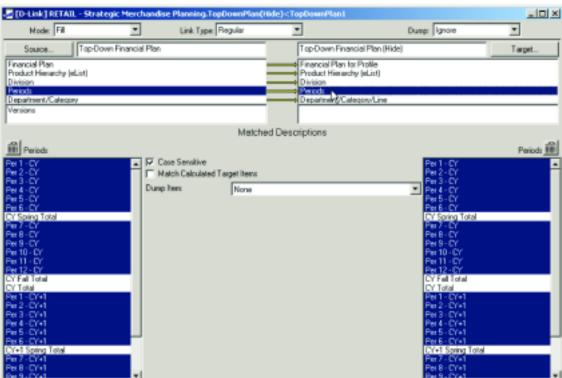
The d-link from the Top-Down Financial Plan to the Top-Down Financial Plan (Hide) is called TopDownPlan(Hide)<TopDownPlan1.

Only the details are linked to the hidden d-cube as the calculated fields will be calculated using this data in the view for the merchants.

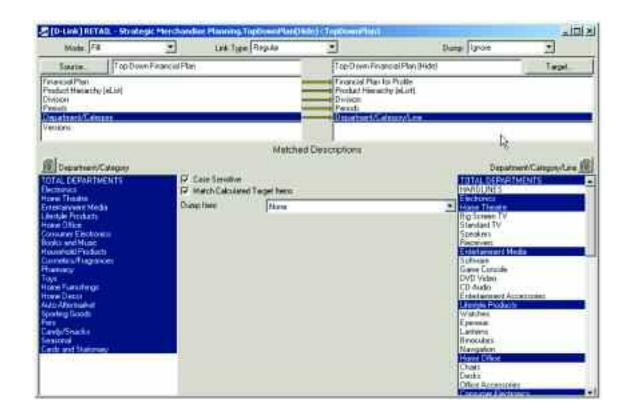








The Department/Category dimension is linked to the Department/Category/Line dimension and will create a breakback as the Departments and Categories in the Department/Category/Line dimension are sub-totals.



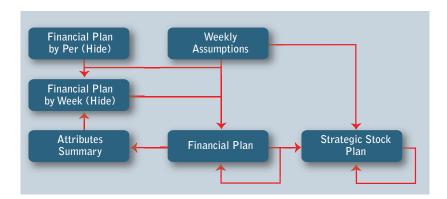
# **Merchant Plan**

Information from the top-down financial plan is linked to the financial plan for the merchants represented in the product hierarchy.

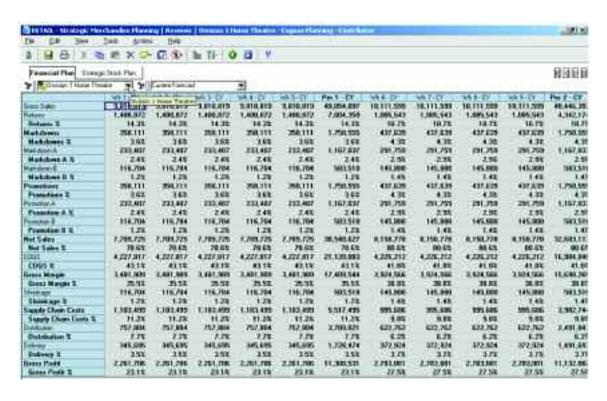


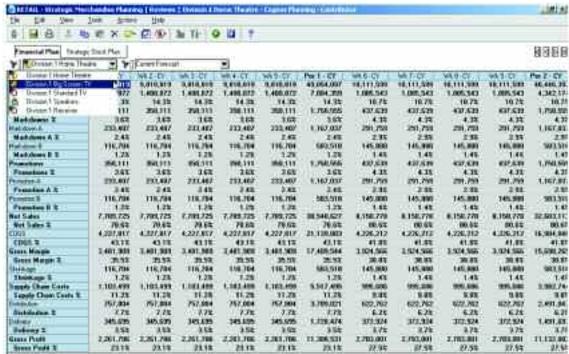
For purposes of demonstration, the Division 1 Home Theatre category and its children will be used to review the functionality of the blueprint.

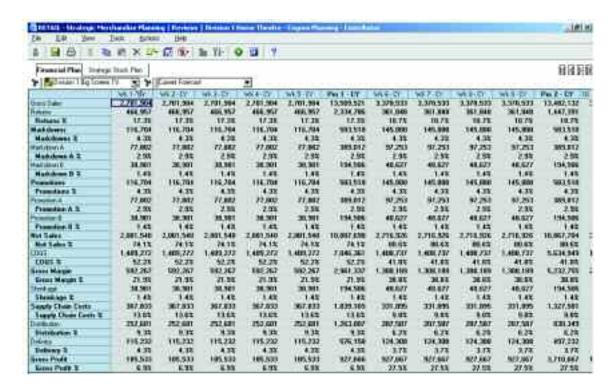
# Financial Plan



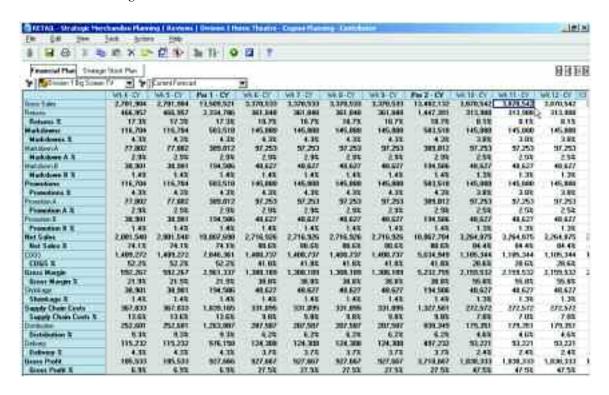
The first tab in the merchant plan is called Financial Plan. This tab is created from an Analyst d-cube comprised of four dimensions: Versions, Financial Plan, Product Hierarchy (eList) and Weeks for 2 Years. In this tab, the users have visibility into the top-down forecast that was derived in the first stage of the planning process, and similar to the top-down exercise, can modify that forecast value in a view called Current Forecast. The variance between the Current Forecast will populate a view in the Versions dimension called Adjustment. This setup allows for streamlined visibility into the variance to the top-down targets. There is also a warning message if the Parent levels of the hierarchy do not tie to the top-down targets.

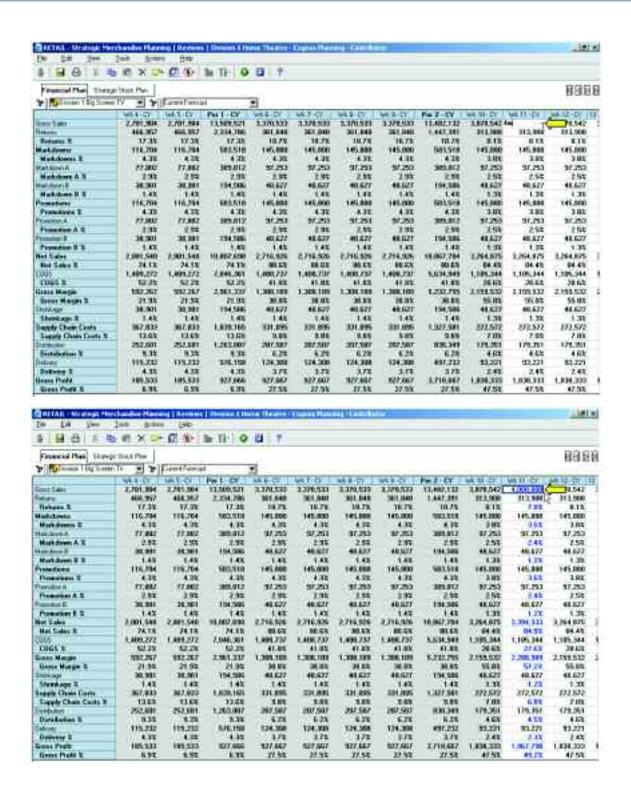


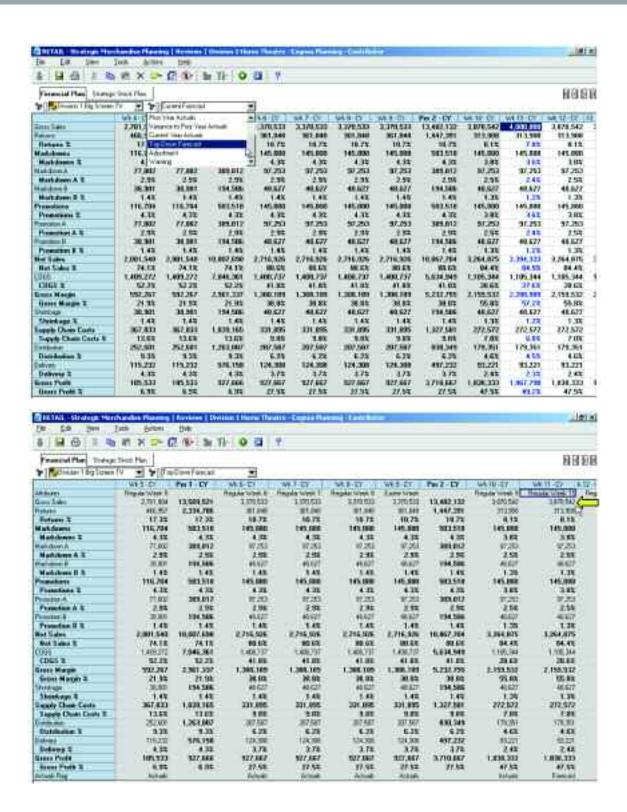


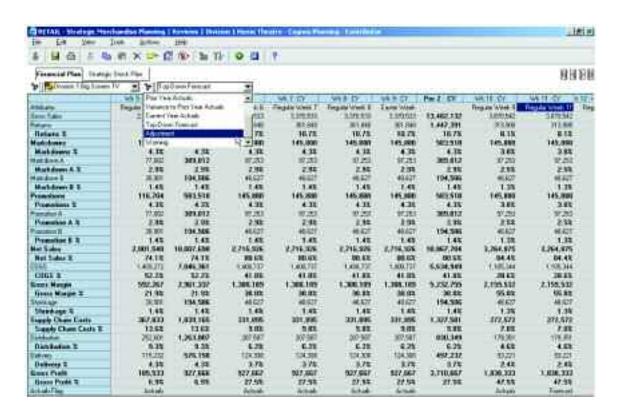


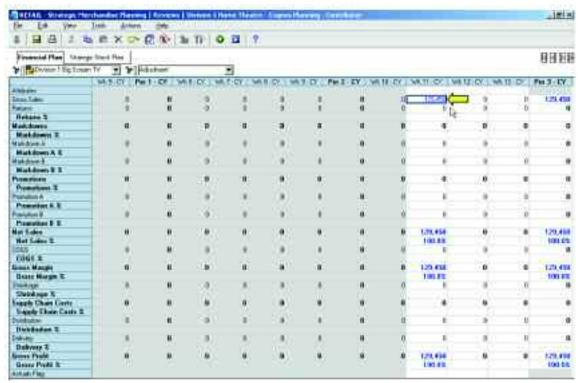
For purposes of demonstration, the blueprint setup assumes that the first ten weeks of the fiscal year are actuals and the forecast begins in Week 11.

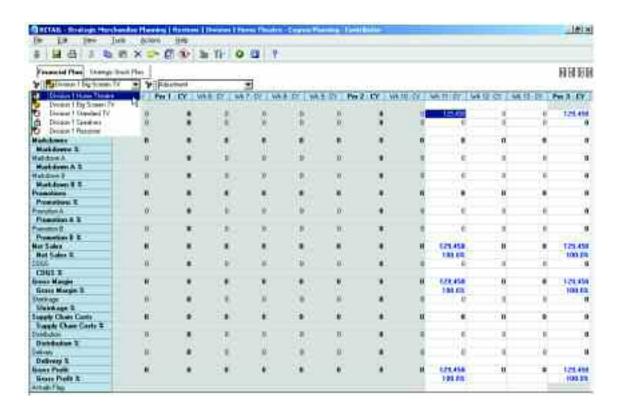


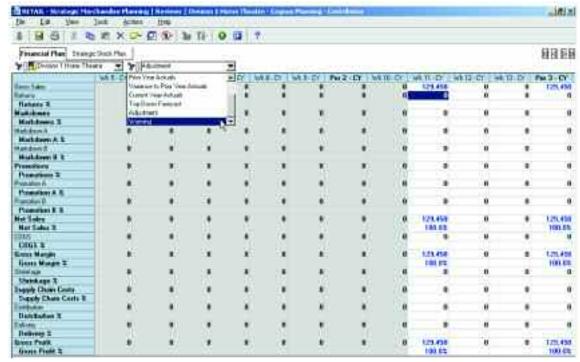


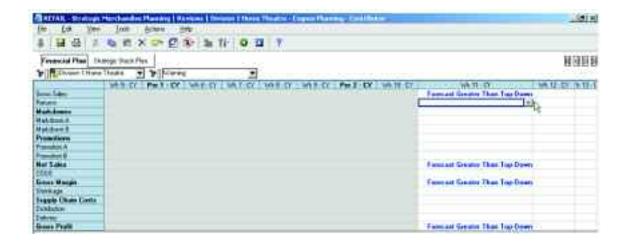




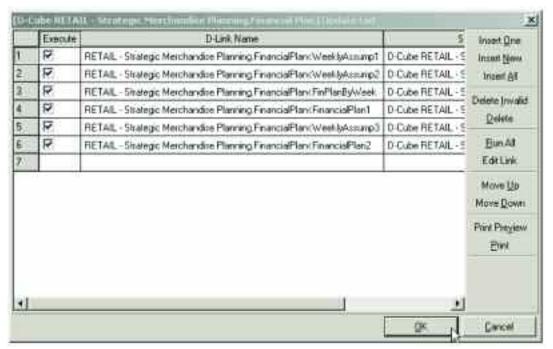




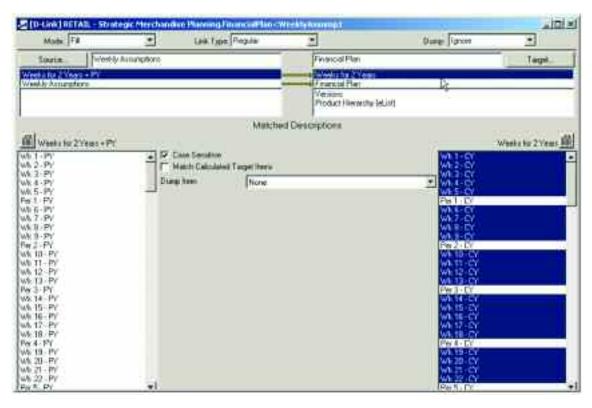


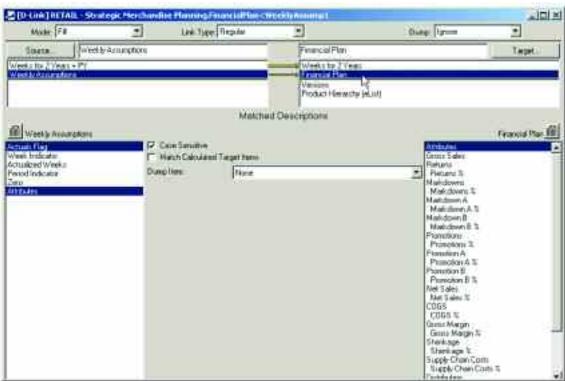


There are six d-links into the Financial Plan to create the forecast view seen by the end users for analysis and updates. Those links are included in the D-Cube Update for the Financial Plan d-cube, and are highlighted in the table below:

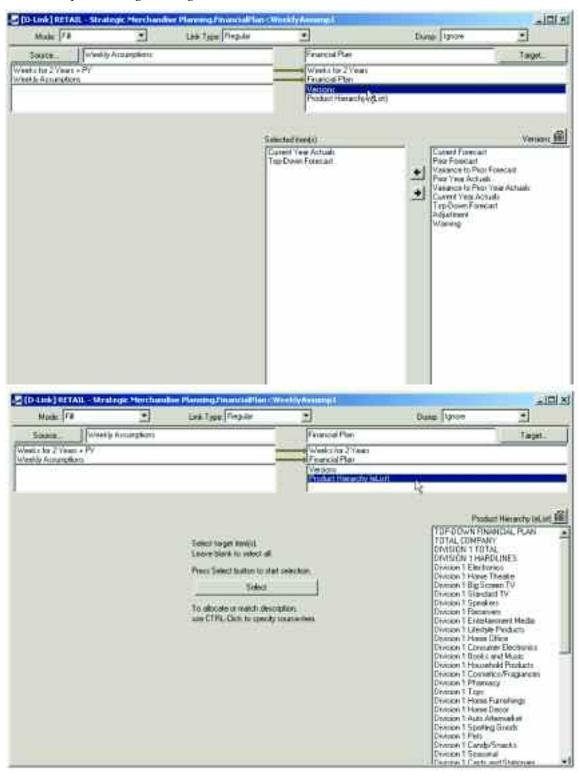


The first d-link, called FinancialPlan<WeeklyAssump1 links the weekly Attributes and Actuals Flag information from the Weekly Assumptions d-cube described earlier in this guide to the Financial Plan d-cube.

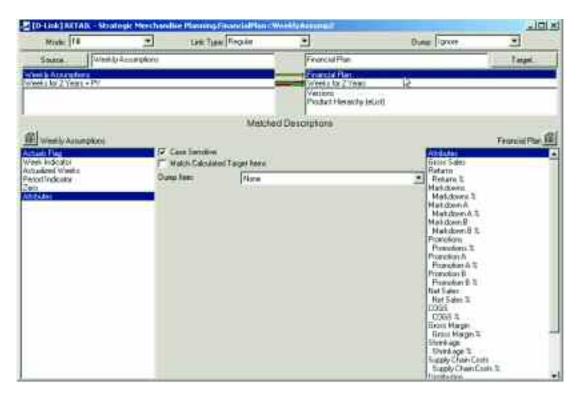




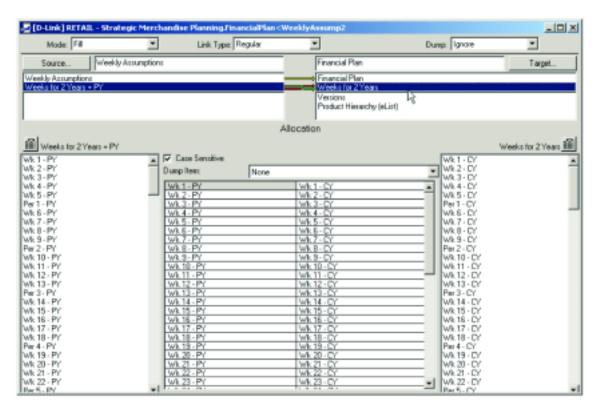
The Attributes and Actuals Flag information is only linked to the Current Year Actuals and Top-Down Forecast items in the Versions dimension. This insures that only those views are impacted with updates, the Current Year Actuals view when new weeks of actuals are loaded, and the Top-Down Forecast with the updated information from the top-down target setting exercise.

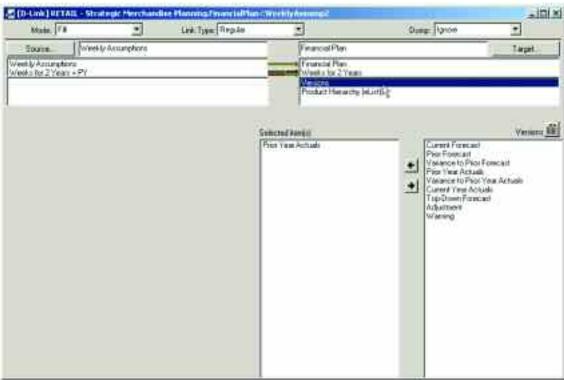


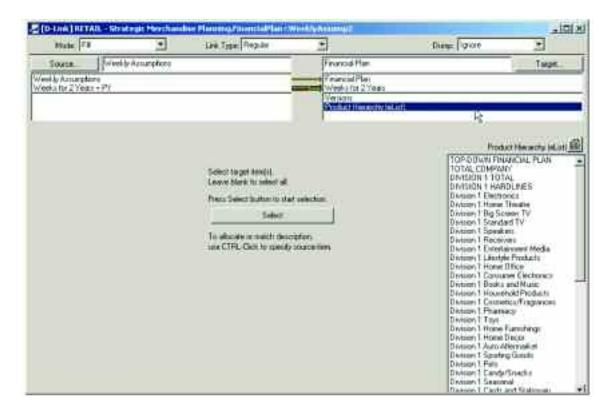
The second d-link into the Financial Plan d-cube is called FinancialPlan<WeeklyAssump2. It links Attributes and Actuals Flag information into the Financial Plan d-cube for the Prior Year Actuals.



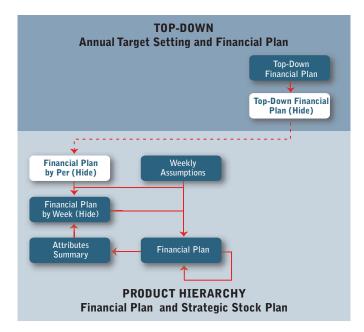
The information for the prior year from the Weekly Assumptions d-cube is linked to the current year items in the Financial Plan d-cube, but those items are only linked into the Prior Year Actuals item in the Versions dimension.



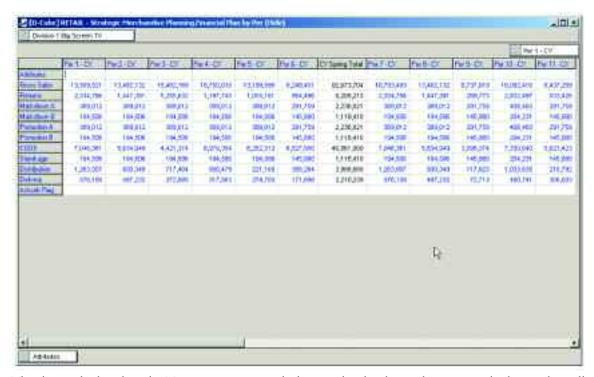




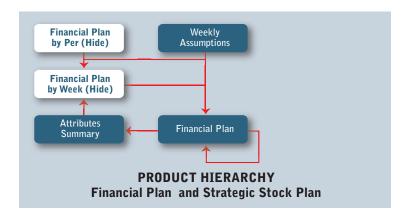
The third link into the Financial Plan d-cube is called FinancialPlan<br/>FinPlanByWeek. The top-down forecast created in the first stage of the planning process is spread by week in a hidden d-cube called Financial Plan by Week (Hide). Before reaching this hidden cube, the top-down is first linked into a hidden d-cube called Financial Plan by Per (Hide).



The Financial Plan by Per (Hide) d-cube is comprised of three dimensions: Financial Plan for Profile, Product Hierarchy (eList) and Periods.

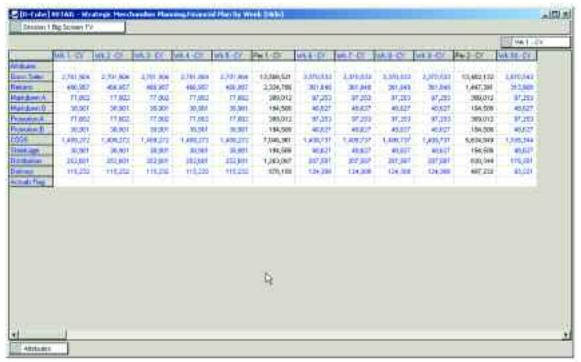


The data calculated in the Top-Down Financial Plan (Hide) d-cube in the view in the hierarchy called Top-Down Financial Plan is linked, either through an administration link or a system link<sup>1</sup> to the d-cube called Financial Plan by Per (Hide). The data in the Financial Plan by Per (Hide) is then used to update the Financial Plan by Week (Hide).

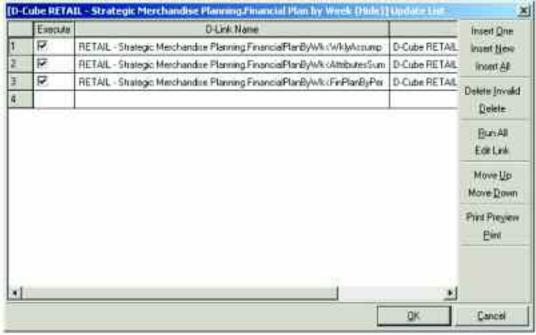


<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Please see the setup instructions for creating administration and system links to accomplish this step in the process.

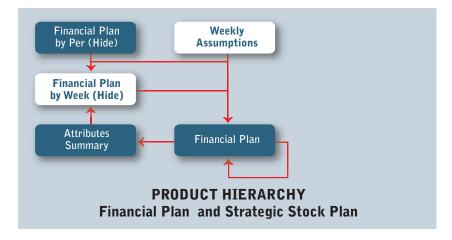
The Financial Plan by Week (Hide) d-cube contains the profile for the spread, using the prior year actuals, and adjusting them based on the movement of calendar attributes. The Financial Plan by Week (Hide) is made up of three dimensions: Financial Plan for Profile, Product Hierarchy (eList) and Weeks for 2 Years.

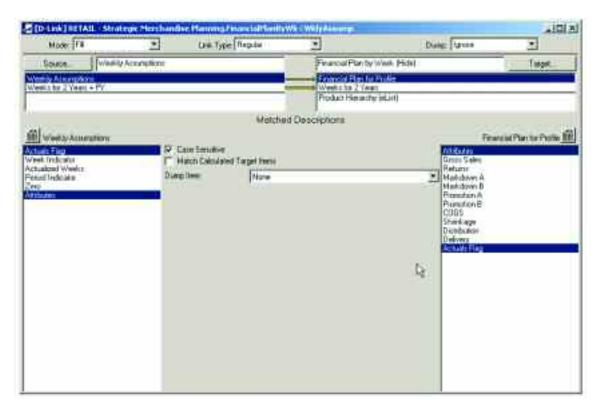


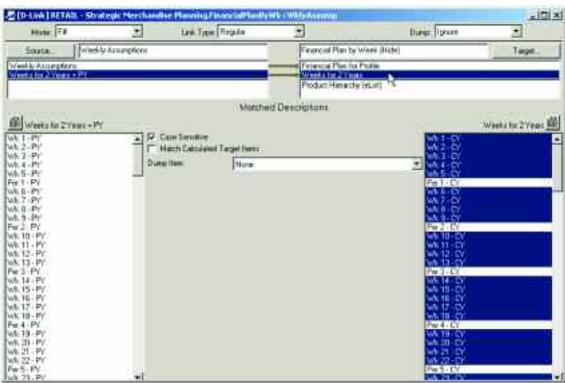
There are three d-links into the Financial Plan by Week (Hide) d-cube, included in the D-Cube Update and highlighted in the following table:

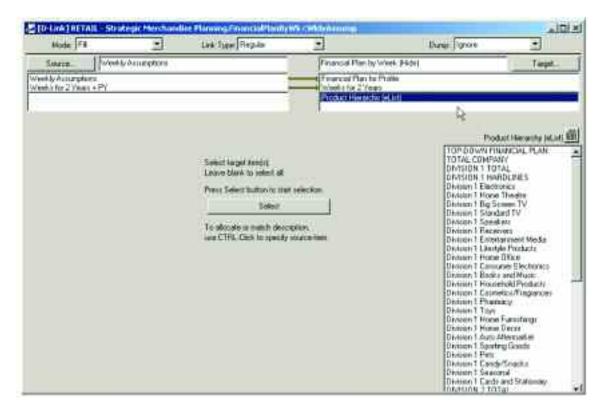


The first d-link into the Financial Plan by Week (Hide), called FinancialPlanByWk<WeklyAssump, is from the Weekly Assumptions d-cube. It links the weekly Attributes and Actuals Flag information from the Weekly Assumptions d-cube into the Financial Plan by Week (Hide) d-cube.

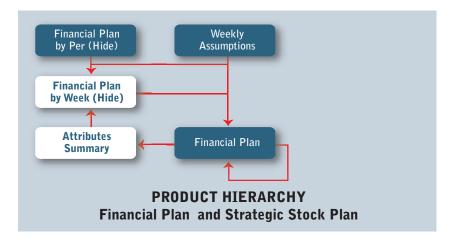




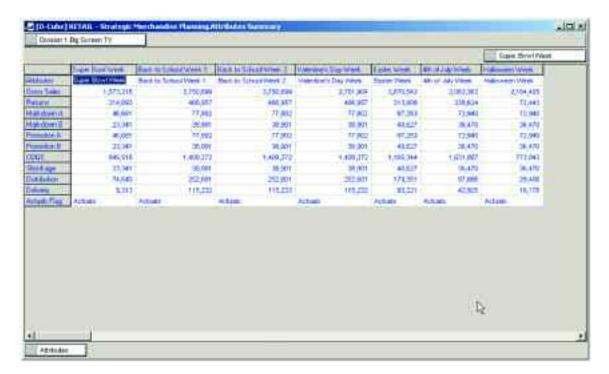




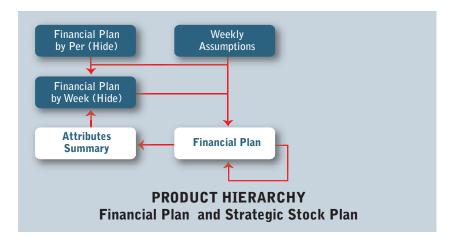
The second d-link into the Financial Plan by Week (Hide) d-cube is called FinancialPlanByWk<AttributesSum. It links information from a hidden d-cube called Attributes Summary to the Financial Plan by Week (Hide) d-cube.

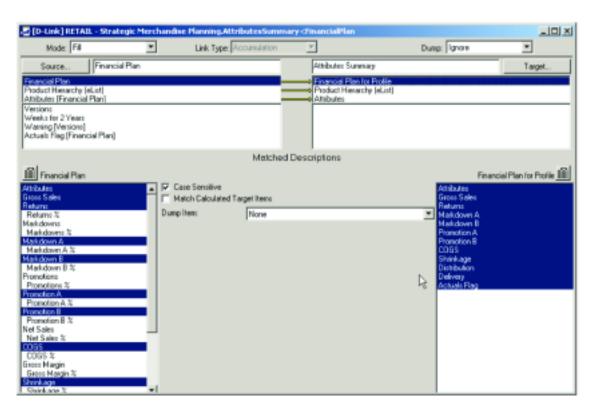


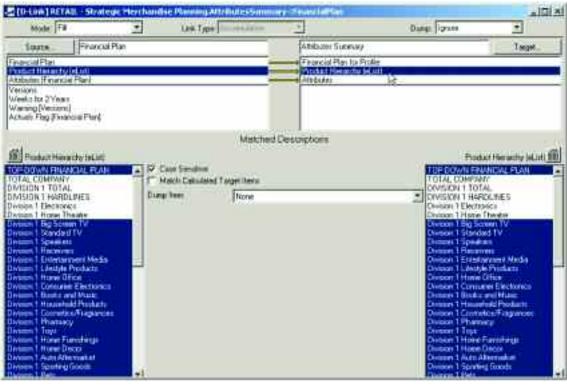
The Attributes Summary d-cube is made up of three dimensions: Financial Plan for Profile, Product Hierarchy (eList) and Attributes.



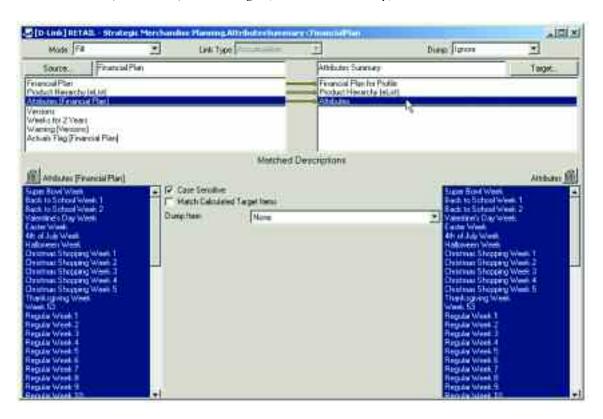
Data for the Prior Year Actuals item in the Versions dimension of the Financial Plan d-cube is linked into the Attributes Summary d-cube through a d-link called AttributesSummary<FinancialPlan.



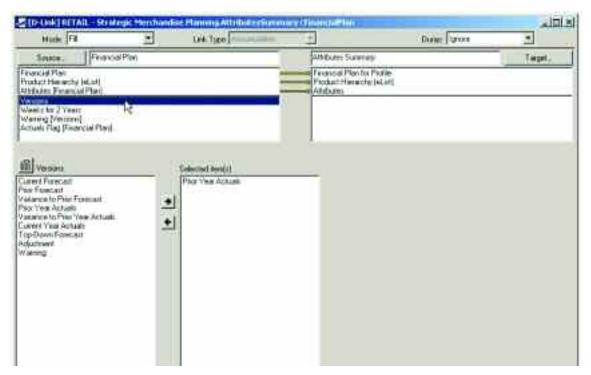




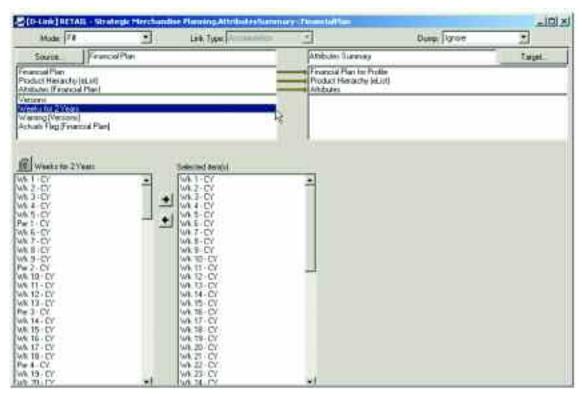
The AttributesSummary<FinancialPlan d-link is an Accumulation d-link and allows a d-list formatted item, Attributes on the Financial Plan d-list, on the Source (Financial Plan) side of the d-link to be linked to a an actual d-list item, Attributes, on the Target (Attributes Summary) side of the d-link.



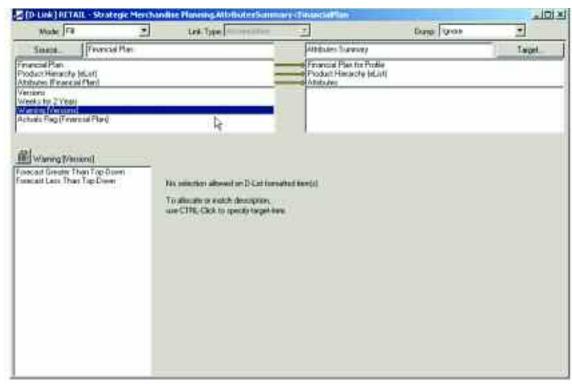
Only the information associated with the Prior Year Actuals is linked into the Attributes Summary d-cube. This will allow the data by attribute to link over to the Financial Plan by Week (Hide) d-cube by attribute, creating the appropriate profile for spreading the top-down targets to week.

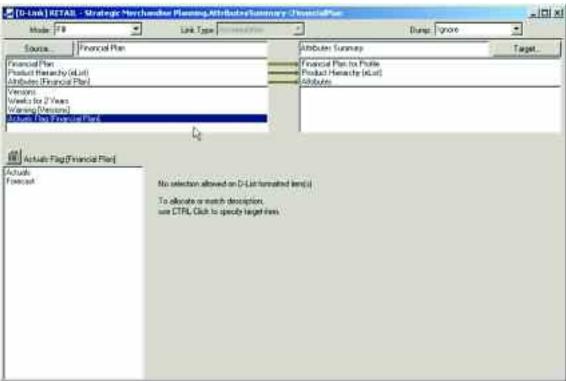


The Prior Year Actuals item in the Versions dimension of the Financial Plan d-cube is associated with the weeks for the current year, and therefore, only those weeks are chosen in the d-link.



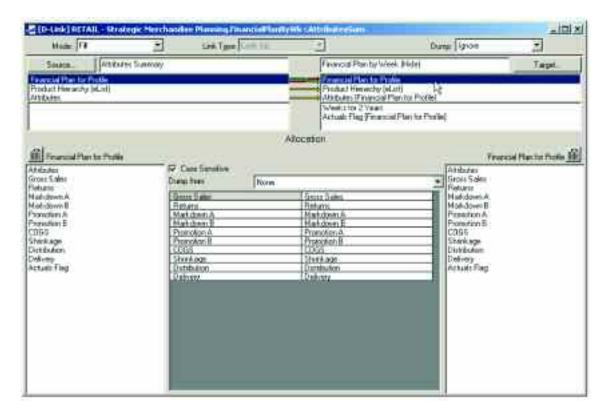
The final two items on the source side (Financial Plan) of the d-link are also d-list formatted items, but are not relevant to this d-link and no selection is allowed.

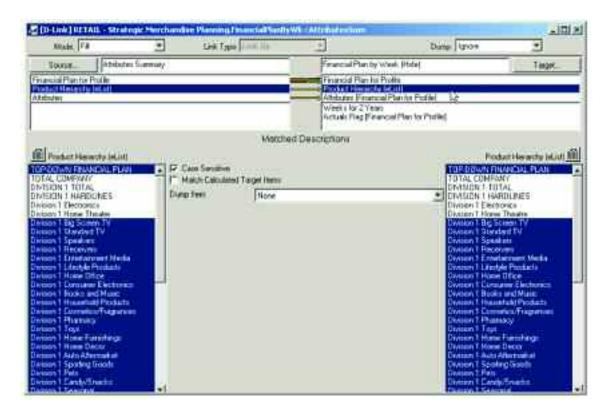




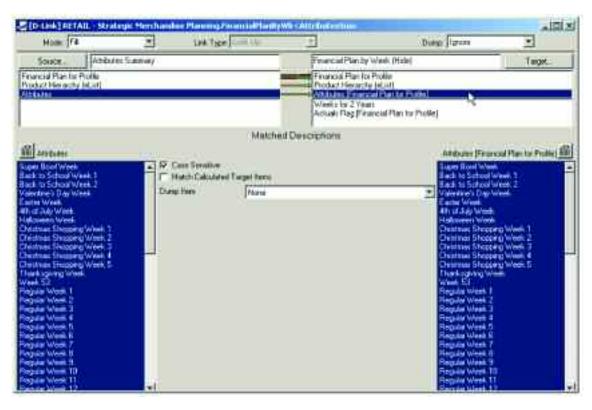
The data in the Attributes Summary d-cube is now ready for the second d-link into the Financial Plan by Week (Hide) d-cube, called FinancialPlanByWk<AttributesSum. This d-link moves the prior year actuals information into the Financial Plan by Week (Hide) d-cube based on attribute, and will act as a profile for the top-down target values contained in the Financial Plan by Per (Hide).

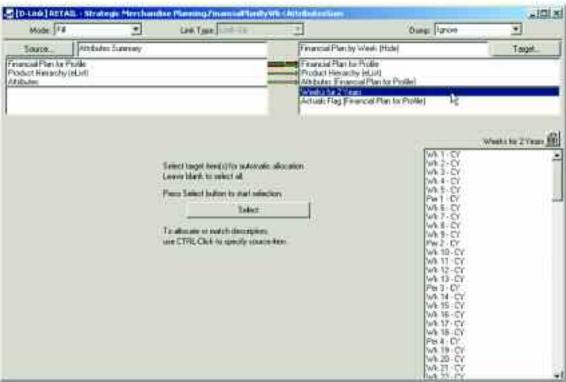
Only the data in the Financial Plan for Profile list is linked, as the link should not overwrite the Attributes or Actuals Flag assumptions.



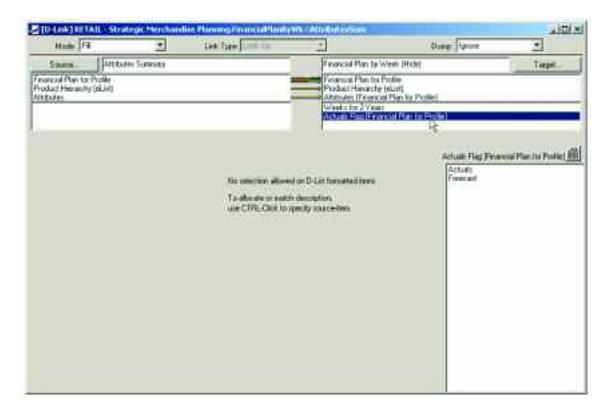


The FinancialPlanByWk<AttributesSum d-link is a Look Up link and allows an actual dimension, Attributes, on the Source side of the d-link (Attributes Summary) to be linked to a formatted d-list (Attributes formatted on the Financial Plan for Profile d-list) on the Target side of the d-link (Financial Plan by Week (Hide)).



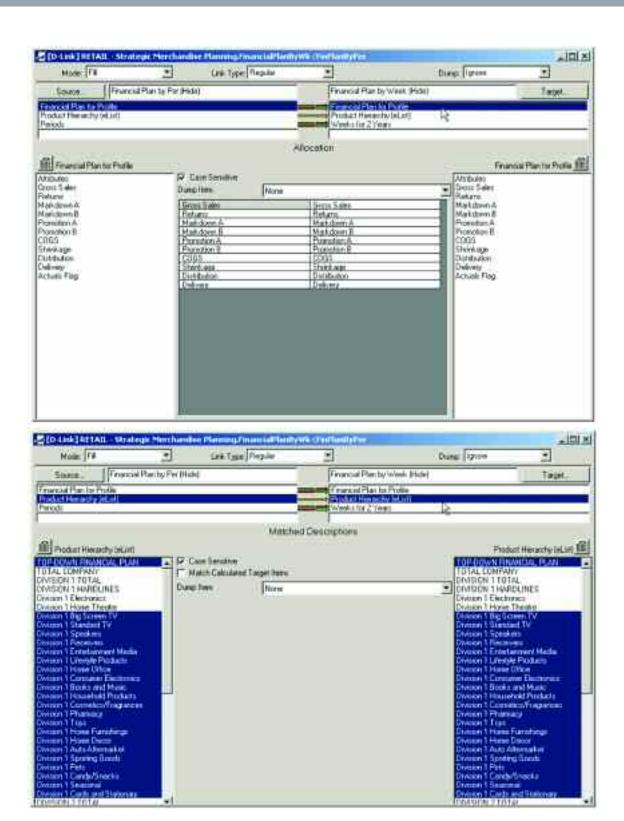


The final item in the d-link is another d-list formatted item that is not leveraged in the d-link, and therefore, no selection is allowed.

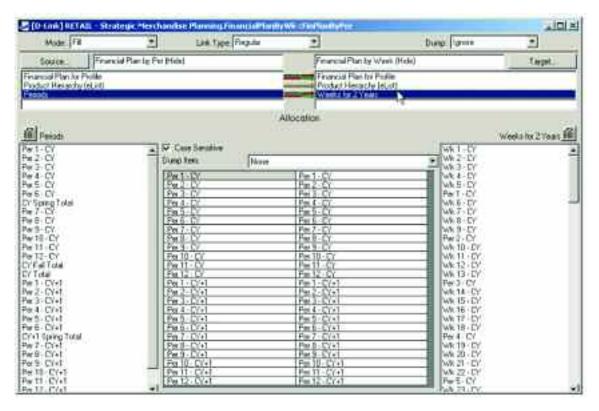


The third d-link into the Financial Plan by Week (Hide) d-cube is called FinancialPlanByWk<FinPlanByPer. This d-link moves the hidden data linked through an administration or system link from the top-down forecast to the Financial Plan by Per (Hide) d-cube into the Financial Plan by Week (Hide) d-cube and spreads the periodic information into a weekly view based on the prior year actuals, moved into the appropriate weeks based on the attributes.

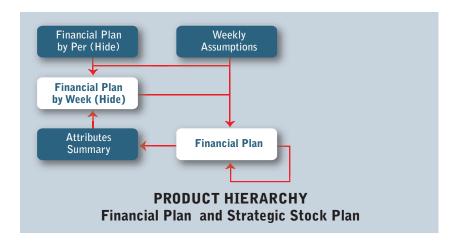
Only the data is moved in the link between the Financial Plan for Profile lists so that the Attributes and Actuals Flag assumptions are not overwritten.

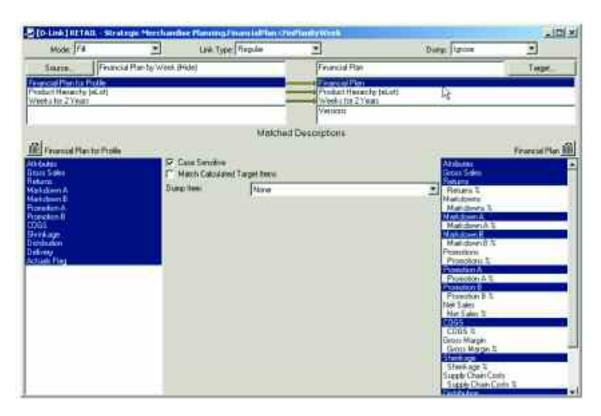


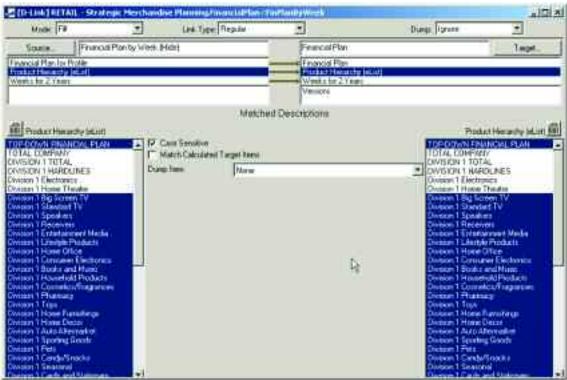
Periods are linked to Periods, which are sub-totals in the Weeks for 2 Years d-list, creating the spread over the profile linked in from the Attributes Summary d-cube.

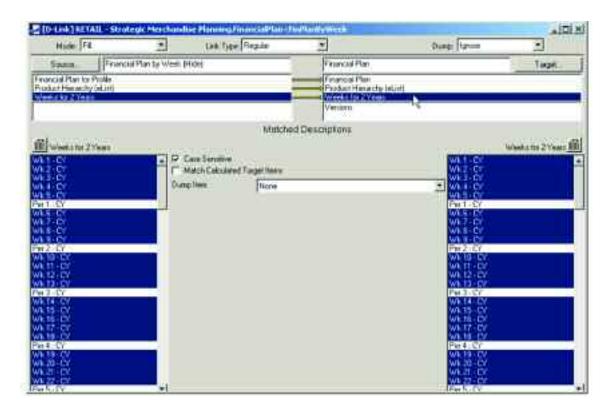


The data in the Financial Plan by Week (Hide) is now ready to be linked into the Financial Plan d-cube through the link called FinancialPlan<FinPlanByWeek.

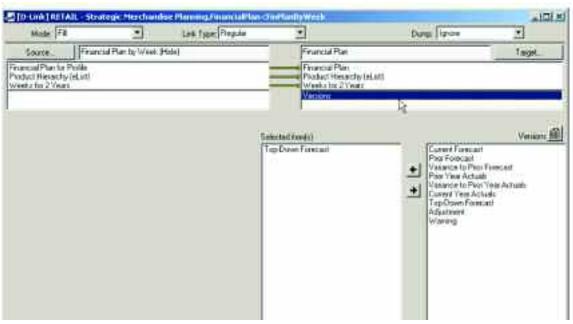




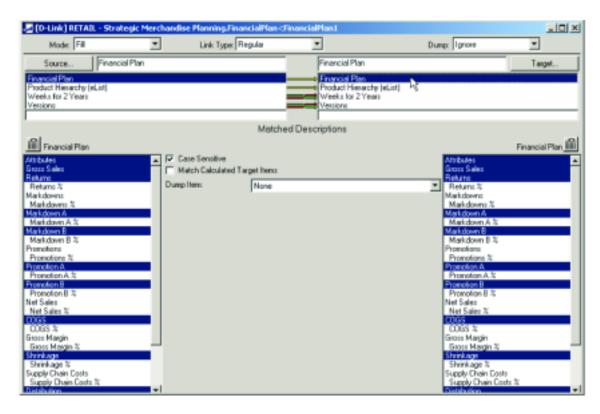


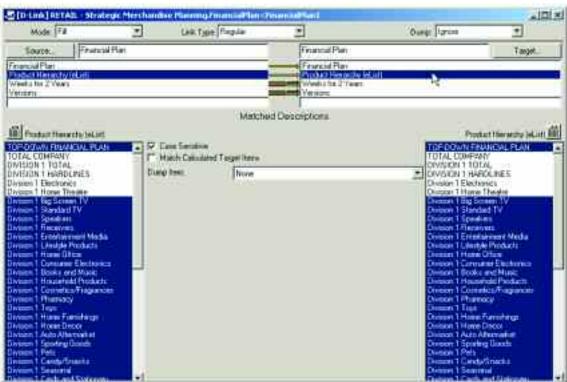


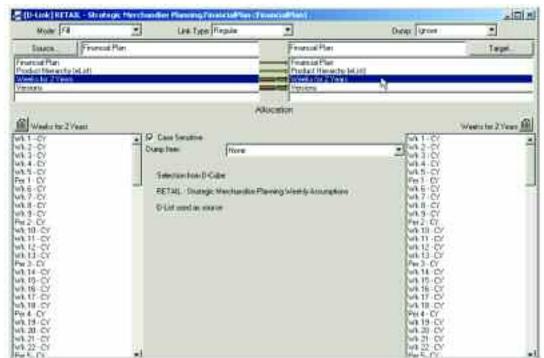
The top-down data spread into weeks is only linked into the item in the Versions dimension associated with the Top-Down Forecast.



The fourth d-link into the Financial Plan d-cube is an internal d-link called FinancialPlan</br>
FinancialPlan1. It links the Current Year Actuals in the Versions dimension to the Top-Down Forecast in the Versions dimension for those weeks that are already closed. This will insure that the forecast is updated with the most recent actuals.

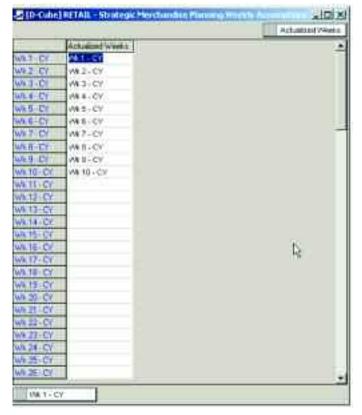




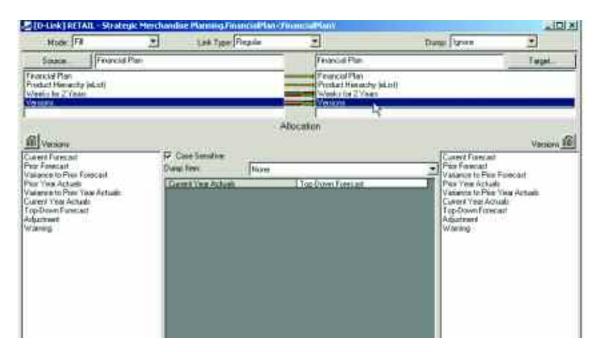


The link uses information from the Weekly Assumptions d-cube to link only those weeks that are actuals.

The slice of the Weekly Assumptions d-cube used in this d-link appears as follows:

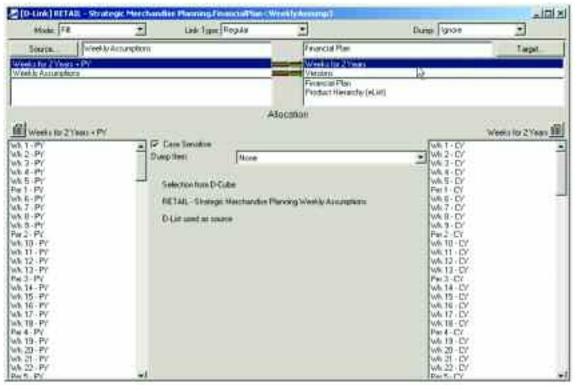


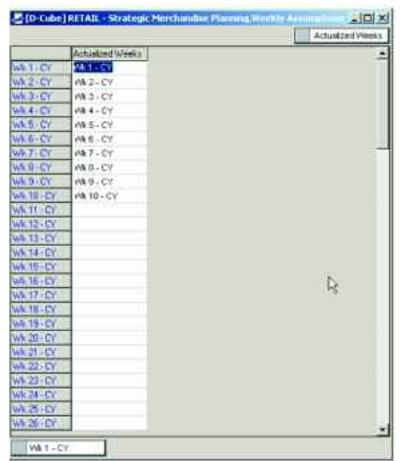
The Current Year Actuals are linked to the Top-Down Forecast, and the Top-Down Forecast is added to the Adjustment to equal the Current Forecast view for the end users.



The fifth d-link into the Financial Plan d-cube is another d-link from the Weekly Assumptions d-cube called FinancialPlan<WeeklyAssump3. It clears any data that may exist in the Adjustment item in the Versions dimension for those weeks that are actual. Therefore, the Current Forecast item in the Versions dimension, which is the sub-total of the Top-Down Forecast and Adjustment items, won't be incorrect due to previously entered data in the Adjustment item.

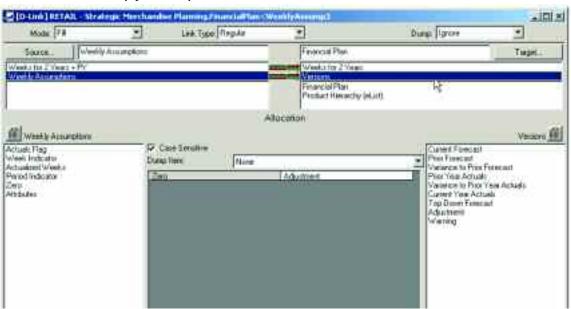
The link uses information from the Weekly Assumptions d-cube to link only those weeks that are actuals.

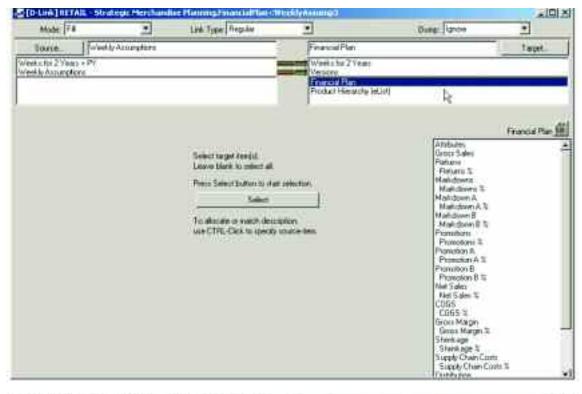


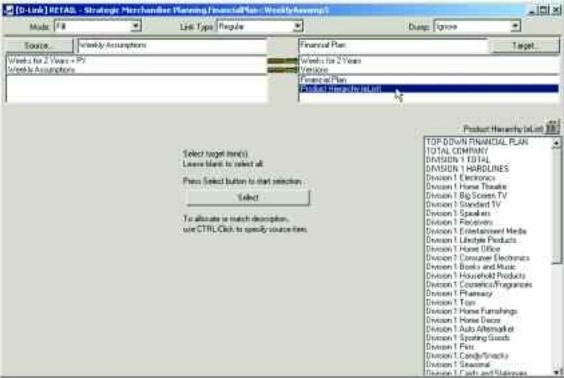


The slice of the Weekly Assumptions d-cube used in this d-link appears as follows:

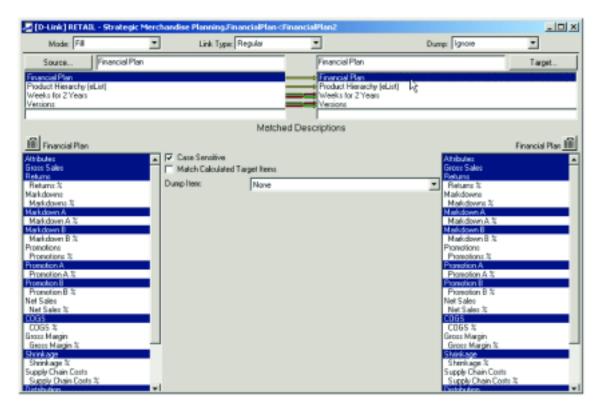
The Zero item in the Weekly Assumptions dimension is linked to the Adjustment item in the Versions dimension to clear any previously entered data for the actual weeks.

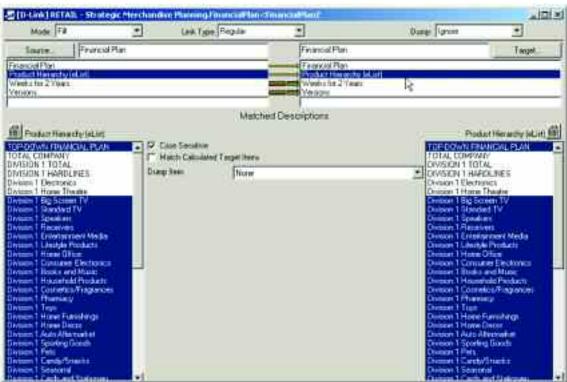


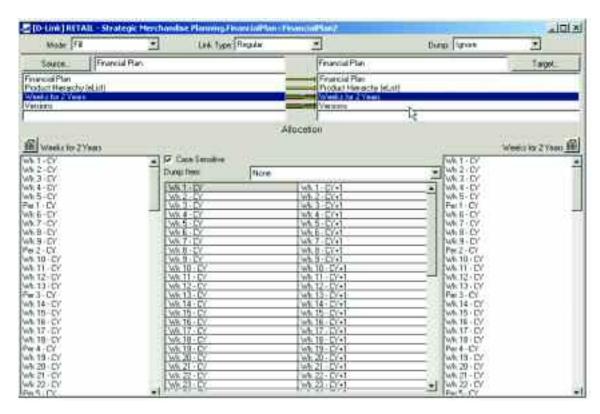


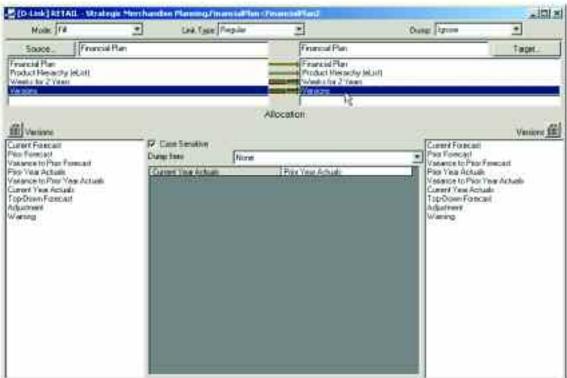


The sixth and final d-link into the Financial Plan d-cube is an internal d-link called FinancialPlan<br/>
FinancialPlan<br/>
FinancialPlan<br/>
Current Year Actuals data for the current year to the view for Prior Year Actuals for the Current Year + 1.



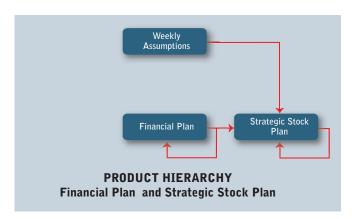


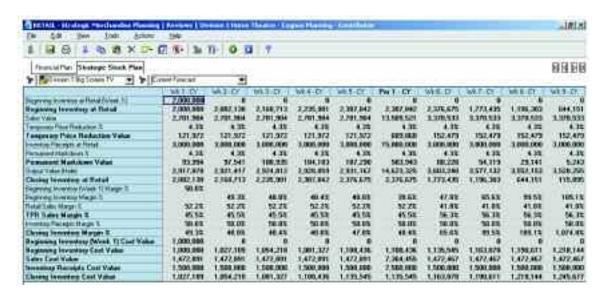


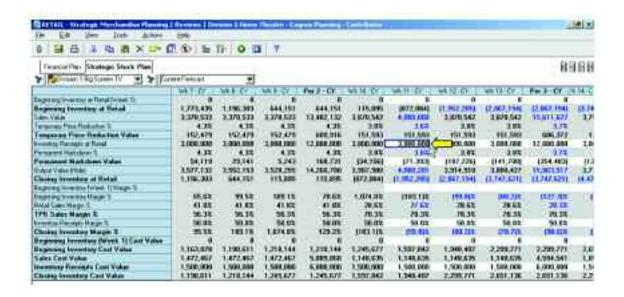


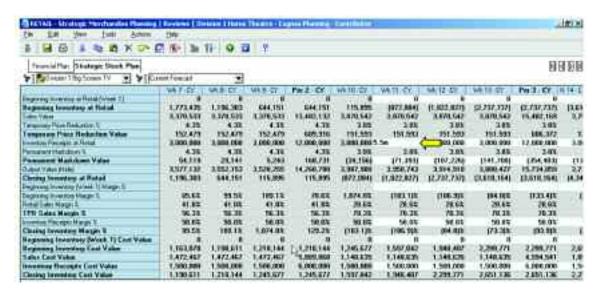
# Strategic Stock Plan

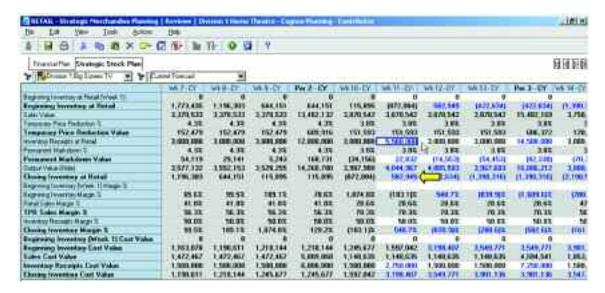
The final stage of the Strategic Merchandise Planning process is the Strategic Stock Plan. Information from the Financial Plan, such as Gross Sales, Temporary and Permanent Markdowns, and Sales Margins are linked to the Strategic Stock Plan tab and used by end users for planning Inventory Receipts requirements and margins.



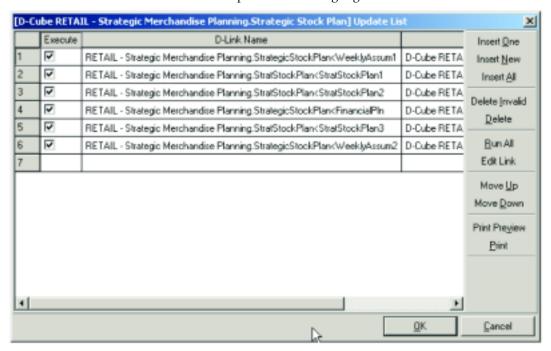




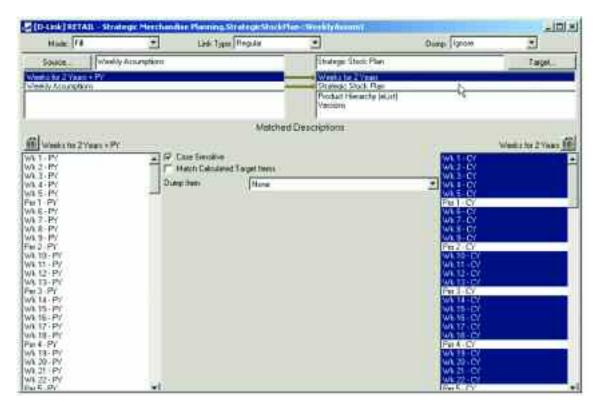


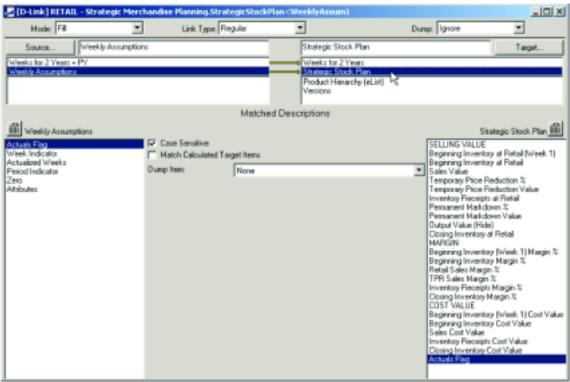


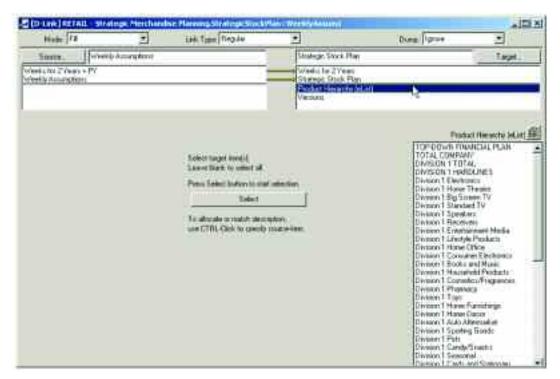
The Strategic Stock Plan tab is created from an Analyst d-cube with four dimensions: Strategic Stock Plan, Product Hierarchy (eList), Weeks for 2 Years and Versions. There are six d-links into the Strategic Stock Plan. The links are included in the D-Cube Update and are highlighted in the table below:



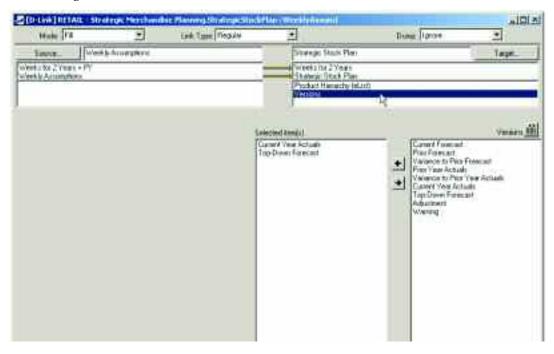
The first d-link is called StrategicStockPlan<WeeklyAssum1 and links the Actuals Flag assumptions from the Weekly Assumption d-cube to the Strategic Stock Plan d-cube.



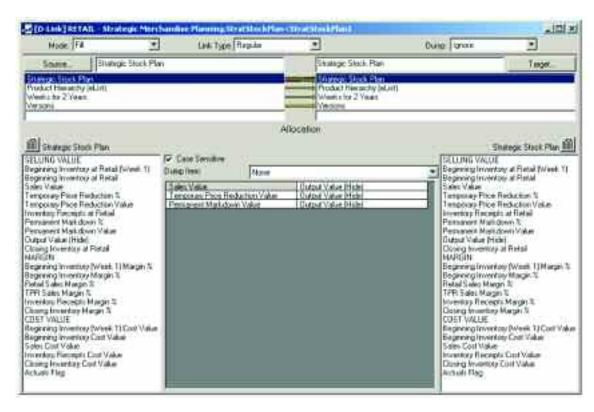


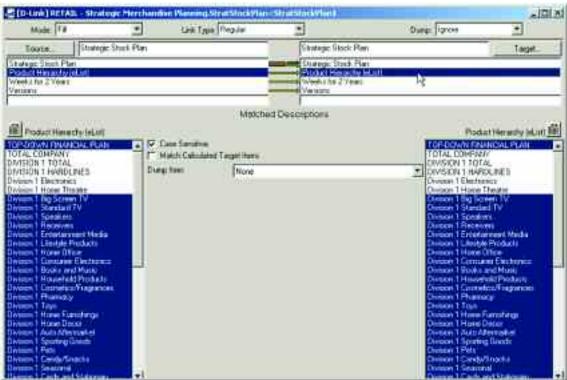


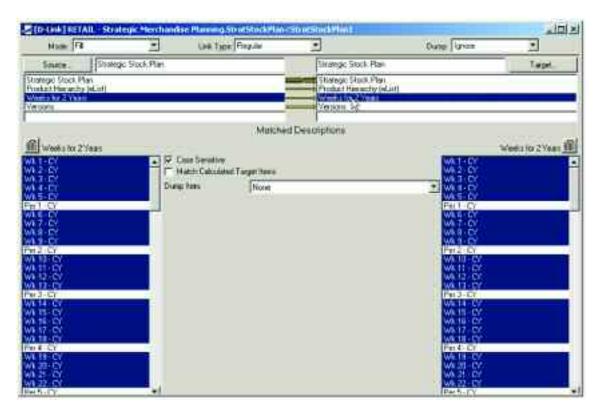
The Actuals Flag assumptions are linked only to the Current Year Actuals and Top-Down Forecast items in the Versions dimension so that historical information or calculated fields are not impacted by the linking of the Actuals Flag.

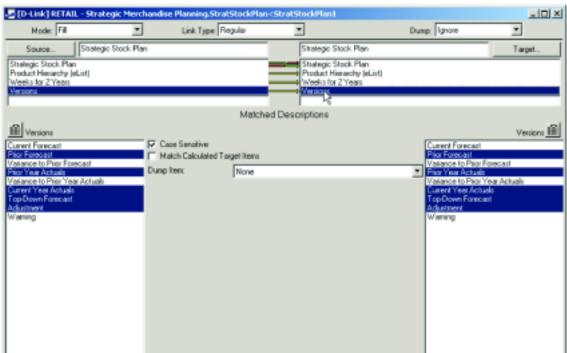


The second d-link into the Strategic Stock Plan d-cube is an internal d-link called StratStockPlan<br/>StratStockPlan<br/>StratStockPlan1. This d-link moves three items in the Strategic Stock Plan d-list to another item within that d-list. This functionality acts as a sub-total for the target item, as it is used in a built-in function calculation and cannot contain a traditional sub-total calculation.

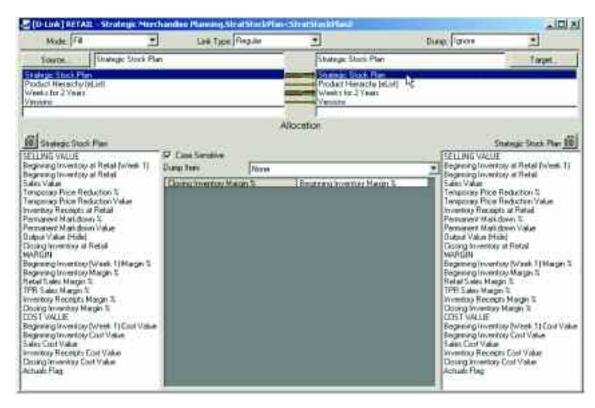


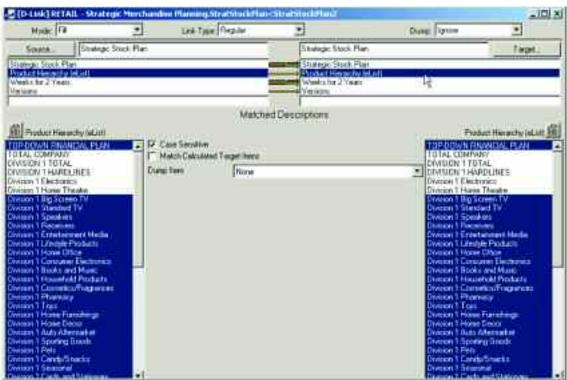


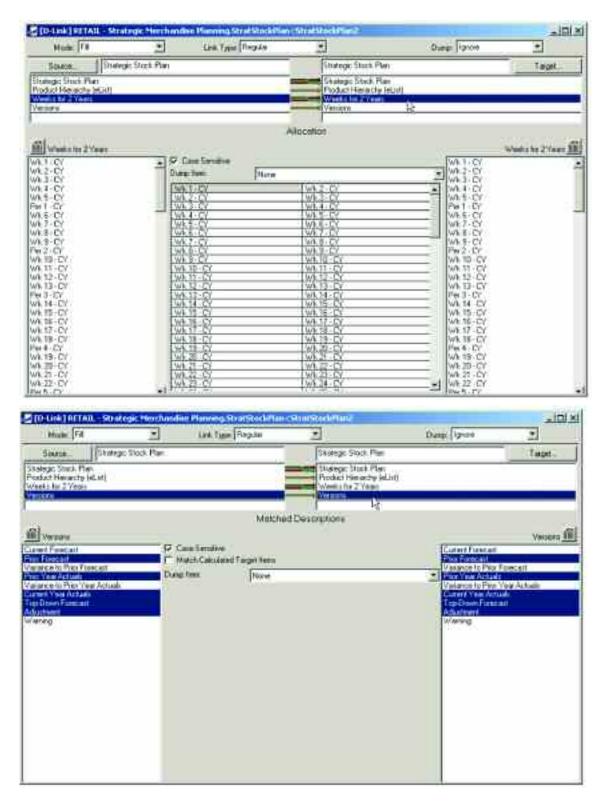




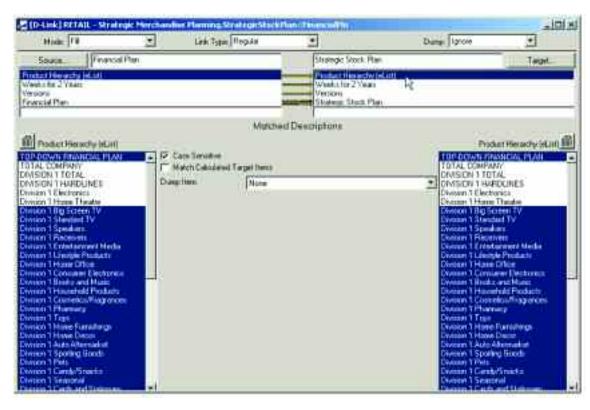
The third d-link into the Strategic Stock Plan is also an internal d-link and is called StratStockPlan<5tratStockPlan<6. This d-link moves the Closing Inventory Margin % calculation in the Strategic Stock Plan d-list to the Beginning Inventory Margin % item in that list. This functionality acts like the Built-in Function called Feed, but allows the items in the feed process to contain different calculations.

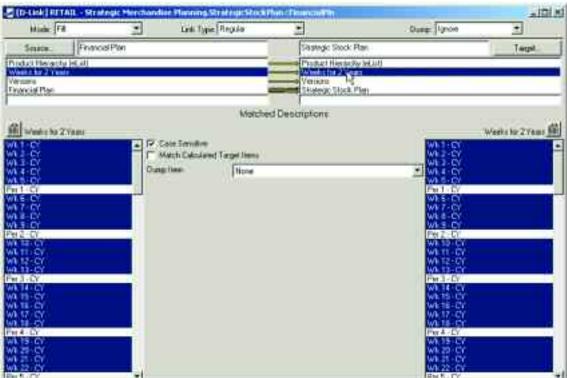


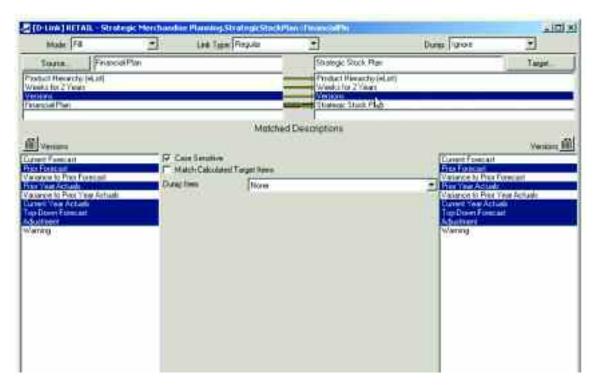


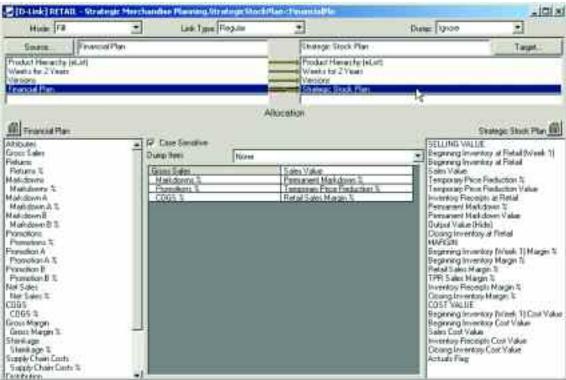


The fourth d-link into the Strategic Stock Plan is called StratStockPlan<FinancialPln. It links information such as sales, markdown percentages and sales margin from the Financial Plan d-cube to the Strategic Stock Plan d-cube.

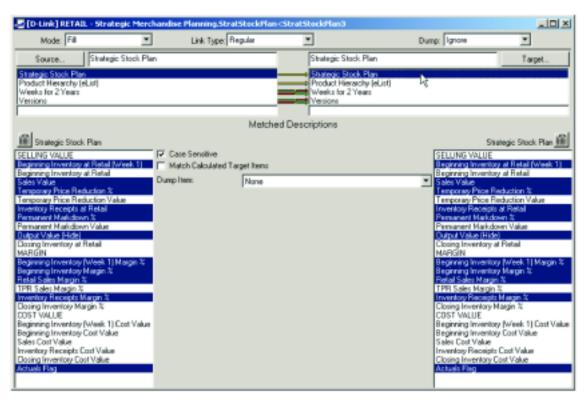


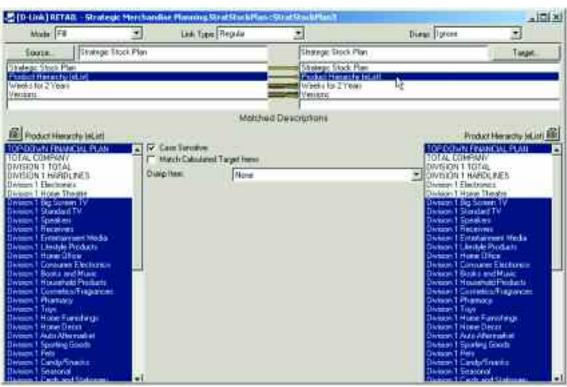


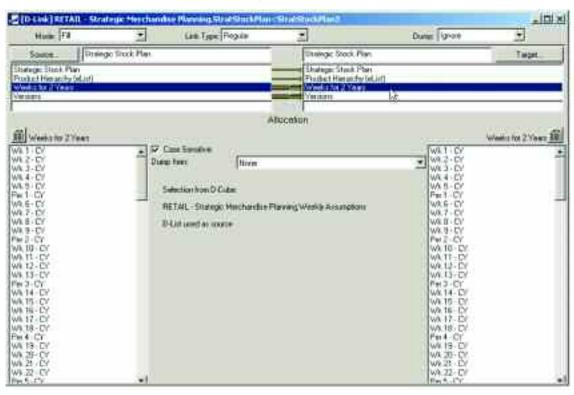




The fifth d-link into the Strategic Stock Plan is an internal d-link called StratStockPlan<StratStockPlan3. It links the Current Year Actuals to the Top-Down Forecast for those weeks that are actuals.

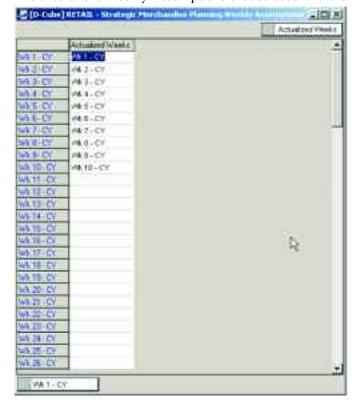


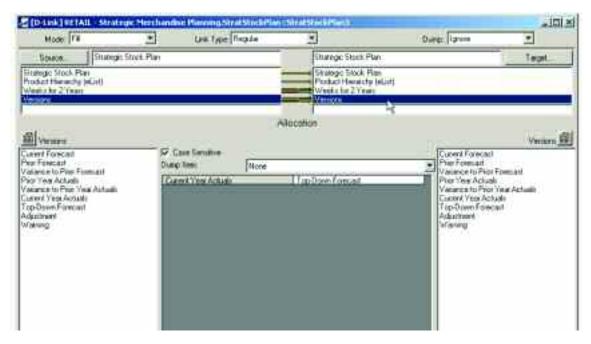




The d-link uses a slice of the Weekly Assumptions d-cube that identifies the weeks that are actuals.

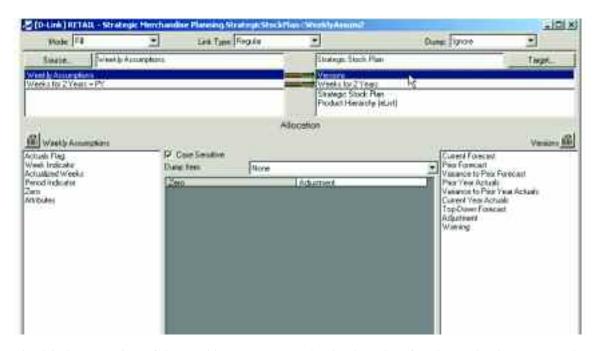
The slice of the Weekly Assumptions d-cube used in the d-link appears as follows:



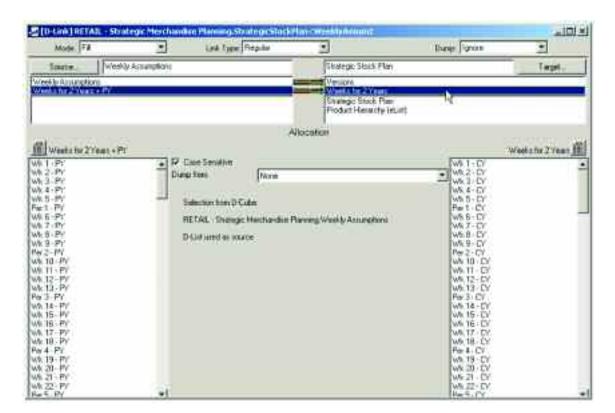


The sixth and final d-link into the Strategic Stock Plan is another d-link from the Weekly Assumptions d-cube called StratStockPlan<WeeklyAssum2. It clears any data entered into the Adjustment item in the Versions dimension for those weeks that are actuals, so that the Current Forecast, which is the sub-total of the Top-Down Forecast and Adjustment items, is not improperly calculated due to entries in the Adjustment line that are no longer relevant.

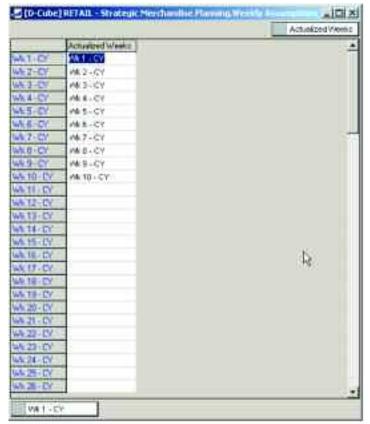
The Zero item in the Weekly Assumptions dimension is linked to the Adjustment item in the Versions dimension.

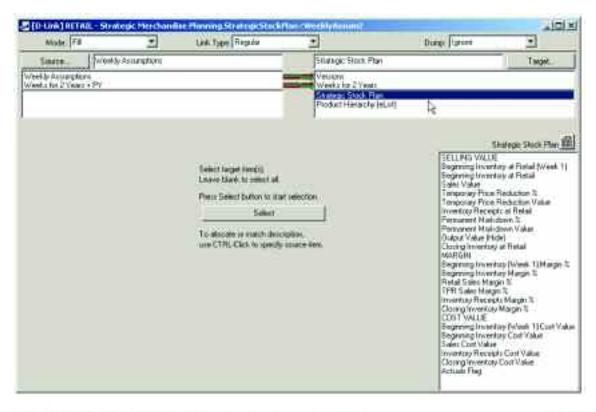


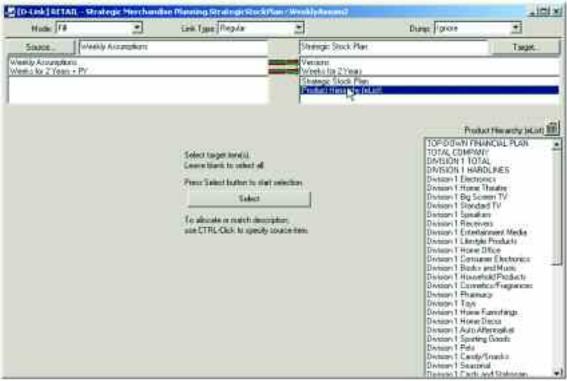
The d-link uses a slice of the Weekly Assumptions d-cube that identifies the weeks that are actuals.



The slice of the Weekly Assumptions d-cube used in the d-link appears as follows:









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