



Microsoft®

Microsoft® Forecaster

FRx Software Corporation - a Microsoft subsidiary



Make your budget meaningful

The very words “budgeting and planning” remind accounting professionals of long, exhausting hours spent developing a budget. Errors in consolidation formulas, working with the wrong historical information and data inaccuracies can complicate the process, leading to a financial plan that does not reflect the goals of your organization. Involving more people in the budgeting process is time consuming and makes the process more difficult, and budget contributors generally don’t have the time necessary to provide insightful numbers that tie back to the strategic goals of the company. And finally, resulting plans are often obsolete by the time they are approved. With these challenges and more, it’s no wonder that budgeting and planning can keep finance executives awake at night.

But you can’t afford to give up, and you don’t have to. Microsoft® Forecaster, the powerful budgeting and planning application from FRx Software Corporation - a Microsoft subsidiary, was designed specifically for budgeting and planning. It’s the fast, affordable way to gain control of your

organization’s budgeting process, preserve the integrity of your data and formulas, and involve the right people. You’ll be able to produce budgets that are useful and meaningful, adjust plans to take advantage of new business opportunities right away, recognize an on-going return on investment through time and money savings and ultimately improve your chances of business success.

Quickly implement a controlled budgeting process

Microsoft Forecaster is so easy to use, you can implement it, train your organization and start building a baseline budget in as little as two weeks.

Utilizing the ExpressLink* wizard, key financial information can be pulled from your general ledger and mapped to Microsoft Forecaster, saving you time, preserving the integrity of your financial information and creating a repeatable process for the future. With the automated

transfer of this information, many of the tedious manual tasks associated with budget set-up are alleviated. Budget contributors can get started quickly, entering their cost center data into templates customized to fit the needs of your organization.

With Microsoft Forecaster, it's easy for your Budget Administrator to organize your company's chart of accounts and control how your posting data summarizes. Budget Administrators can create rollups for accounts, cost centers or whichever accounting entities are required by your organization. By specifying a range of accounts to be included in the rollup, any new accounts that fall within the range will be included automatically. Microsoft Forecaster consolidates your data at the time it is entered, based upon the rollups defined. This helps eliminate the errors that would otherwise occur during traditional spreadsheet consolidations. Features like multi-select, drag, drop and delete operations and the ability to view accounts that do not belong to a roll-up further simplify the process. This makes it easy to involve more people - especially those who traditionally haven't been included in the budgeting process, but should be.

Microsoft Forecaster supports Microsoft Windows® authentication, in addition to standard Microsoft Forecaster authentication. This means you can access Microsoft Forecaster using the same login information you use to sign into Windows. You don't have to remember additional login and password information, and your Budget Administrator doesn't have to distribute and maintain user names and passwords on behalf of the organization.

Microsoft Forecaster security features include several options for helping safeguard sensitive information. Security set-up for groups, users and assignments are combined into a single screen, making it quick and easy to assign the right level of responsibility to each user. "Power users" can help retain control over their information by performing basic administrative tasks without compromising security features or overwriting what has already been done. Building blocks and reports can only be modified by the original creator of the items. Finally, Budget Administrators can quickly lock all users out of the system for maintenance or other purposes as necessary.

A simple user interface based on design and functionality standards established by Microsoft Office Excel® helps new users feel confident while providing simplified navigation and intuitive functionality. And, of course, Microsoft Forecaster works in concert with Microsoft Excel, allowing budget administrators to define spreadsheet templates so users can continue to work in a familiar environment if they choose.

Familiar User Interface

ACCOUNT	Label	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
		Cur Yr	Cur Yr	Cur Yr	Cur Yr	Cur Yr	Cur Yr
OPERATING INCOME							
BLNETSA	Sales Units - Prod A	7,000	7,000	7,000	7,000	7,000	7,000
BLNETSD	Sales Units - Prod D	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000
BLNETSC	Sales Units - Prod C	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000
REVENUE							
4100	Sales	230,000	230,000	230,000	230,000	230,000	230,000
4200	Sales Discounts	(11,700)	(11,700)	(11,700)	(11,700)	(11,700)	(11,700)
4110	Sales Returns	(2,300)	(2,300)	(2,300)	(2,300)	(2,300)	(2,300)
TRNTRNY	Fuel Allowance	220,000	220,000	220,000	220,000	220,000	220,000
COGS							
4030	Raw Materials	127,600	127,600	127,600	127,600	127,600	127,600
TGRMG	Subtotal Gross Margin	92,400	92,400	92,400	92,400	92,400	92,400
OPERATING EXPENSES							
5200	Office Expense	1,200	1,200	1,200	1,200	1,200	1,200
5115	Postage	10,182	9,295	10,182	9,963	10,182	9,843
5220	Supplies Expense - Service	1,154	1,154	1,442	1,154	1,154	1,442
5240	Maintenance Expense - Service	800	800	800	800	800	800
5250	Other Expense	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
5120	Travel Shows	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000
5330	Travel Expense	6,000.00	6,000.00	6,000.00	11,000.00	11,000.00	11,000.00
SG&A EXPENSE							
5000	Salary Expense	23,004	23,004	23,004	23,004	23,004	23,004
5060	Business	2,405	2,405	2,405	2,405	2,405	2,405
5030	Payroll Taxes	2,191	2,191	2,191	2,191	2,191	2,191

*ExpressLink is not available for all general ledgers. Customers who cannot use ExpressLink can take advantage of a simplified import process using text files.

Develop accurate, strategic and realistic budgets

Microsoft Forecaster helps your organization construct a thoughtful budget that is based on valid data and assumptions and that is predictive of the future. And because it can be accessed over the Web or via a local installation, it is readily available for all individuals participating in the budgeting process.

Data Input

Flexible input screens can be designed to help Budget Administrators control what users see and how they enter their numbers. The screens can be customized to use the periods and accounts specified, and formulas can be defined to perform calculations on any row, column or cell. Data from multiple versions such as actual, forecast and budget can be accommodated, and multiple input screens and reports can be open at the same time.

Several toolbars, icons and helpful symbols to the left of the input rows guide the user through the data entry process. Color options and indicators incorporate visual clues to highlight important information and show users where the numbers are coming from.

A Single Row screen makes it easy to apply increases or decreases based on variance percentages or amounts over a baseline, such as last year's actuals or budget. Spread methods can be established by your Budget Administrator to enable users to apply amounts based upon trends or pre-defined factors, or users can apply budget amounts based upon a historical version, current factors based on existing amounts, or based on a different account. Copy/Grow functions let users enter an amount in a cell and either copy the amount across time periods or increase or decrease the amount according to their specifications, further simplifying the user experience.

Supporting line items can be added to most accounts, improving the precision of your budget, and a difference row calls out any variance between the account balance and

the line-item entries. This approach, combined with sophisticated human resources budgeting capabilities, capital expenditure planning, expense allocation and revenue modeling helps your organization build a realistic and accurate budget.

Human Resources Budgeting

Employee-related costs typically account for the highest expense in a company's budget. When it comes to budgeting for this important cost component, Microsoft Forecaster supports you by allowing you to budget to the level of detail that works best for your organization. Advanced capabilities like customized salary grades that link individual employees to a specific set of salary and benefit accounts save you time and help eliminate errors, enabling you to create a more accurate budget. It automatically calculates the salary, benefits and payroll taxes for each employee and applies the figures to the appropriate account. And it also makes it easy to budget for employees monthly or annually, on a salaried or hourly basis, account for raises, promotions and bonuses (accrued or by specific periods), and by pay types such as overtime, shift differential, billable and non-billable, productive and non-productive time. Microsoft Forecaster enables you to allocate employees, and account for changes to their salary grades across multiple cost centers, and view employee information to determine the time allocation by individual. Detailed records for each component of employee compensation are stored to make it easy to report on this important information. An incremented benefits tier can be defined to apply fixed benefits - flat rate, fixed amount, or fixed amount incremented. Limits on individual benefits can also be defined and enforced. Changes made to

the Human Resources Master screen ripple through all Human Resources Input screens, allowing certain details like employee names to change across all versions. Budget Administrators can also hide fields that they don't want users to have access to, can define those fields that can be edited and those that cannot and can specify the order in which the fields are displayed to users.

Capital Expenditure Planning

The Capital Expense Module accelerates the budgeting process by calculating the depreciation generated by your planned fixed asset purchases and allows your organization to standardize the accounting of capital expenditure by cost center. Based on the type of capital expense, depreciation is calculated using the straight line, sum of years and sum of months methods based on the life of the asset, and the results are allocated to the accounts that you specify. You can even track the cash outflow and balance sheet impact of projected purchases.

Expense Allocations and Adjustments

Using the Allocation Wizard, you can allocate company overhead or other items among cost centers by defining the distribution percentages yourself, or by

letting Microsoft Forecaster distribute it for you based upon the factors you choose, such as headcount or square footage.

Making adjustments to the budget model is simple. Adjustments can be applied to one or multiple cost centers and can be reflected throughout your budget quickly. Once the adjustments are finished, impacted users can be notified of the changes via e-mail. The result is a high quality plan with goals that are realistic and more achievable.

Revenue Modeling

Microsoft Forecaster helps you track revenue, statistics and expenses by allowing you to add an additional level of detail in accordance with your business and industry. You can set up separate input templates for each model type, or utilize units and rates tables to capture and calculate the data as necessary. Custom formulas can be used to calculate revenues, cost of sales, rates, units, hours and other associated costs in the worksheet. Enter factors such as price/cost per item, items sold, price and quantity, and then let it automatically calculate your profit margin for you.





Microsoft Forecaster facilitates a complete budgeting process

Microsoft Forecaster comes equipped with built-in collaboration features designed to help Budget Administrators increase cross-company communication and involve the right people in the budgeting process. With role-based security settings to control the level of information that users can access, and an automatic, detailed audit trail to help you understand who made changes when and why, it can help eliminate much of the stress surrounding the budgeting process. Microsoft Forecaster even comes equipped with a currency conversion feature which translates sets of data from one currency to another, using the exchange rates that you specify. And, because all budget contributors can be trained in as little as an hour, your organization can have an accurate, high quality plan in a short amount of time.

Workflow

With Microsoft Forecaster, overseeing the budgeting and planning process is easy - even with multiple contributors. With the workflow management feature, Budget Administrators can design a customized approval process to

fit the unique needs of their organization. A wizard assists with the step-by-step workflow status definitions, and optional reason codes can be added to each step so that when a status changes, those who are a part of the approval process understand why. It even has an e-mail notification feature to alert budget contributors that the budgeting process has started, to keep the process tracking to schedule, and to inform users when their budgets are approved or rejected. The Workflow feature gives Budget Administrators greater control over the budgeting process, while keeping budget contributors on track.

Reporting

Microsoft Forecaster allows you to immediately view the impact to your plans as the numbers change, by allowing you to view reports that show both budgeting goals and actual performance. With ownership of the numbers, and current budget-to-actual comparisons, front-line managers can see how their departments are performing in



relation to their targets. Anyone with appropriate security rights can access reports via the Web whenever they want, and customizable layouts, column width and spacing, fonts, colors and formatting carry through from online to printed reports. Report viewers can answer their own questions immediately by drilling down from summary data in the budget to supporting details. In fact, organizations that already use Microsoft® FRx® for their financial reporting can add their budget data to their existing financial reports to view actual and budget comparisons.

Re-forecasting and Re-budgeting

With Microsoft Forecaster, you can quickly reforecast the numbers to come up with a realistic projection of the future. You can even take an approved budget and copy it into a new version for “what if” analysis at any time. Finally, it comes equipped with the tools your Budget Administrator needs to quickly change calculations, center rollups, benefits and accounts. With this advanced functionality, your organization will have accurate and relevant plans that reflect the changes that happen in your business.

Taking the next steps

Are you ready to learn more about the power of Microsoft Forecaster and what it can do for your organization?

Participate in an informative product demonstration, online, live each week or available in a prerecorded version for your convenience. Alternatively, you can take a self-guided tour of Microsoft Forecaster. You can register on our Web site at www.frxsoftware.com/demos

Experiment with the Microsoft Forecaster ROI tool, and get a better picture of the immediate and ongoing return on investment your company may be able to recognize. Find it on our Web site at www.frxsoftware.com/roitool

Speak to an FRx Software Corporation representative or partner. Our products are distributed directly by us or through FRx Software Corporation partners supporting your general ledger. To speak with someone regarding the powerful benefits of Microsoft Forecaster, please call us at + 1.303.741.8000 or 1.800.379.8733. Depending upon the general ledger that you currently use, your call may be routed to an FRx Software Corporation partner for follow-up.





ABOUT FRx SOFTWARE CORPORATION

FRx Software Corporation - a Microsoft subsidiary, provides financial reporting and budgeting and planning applications to give you the control you need to be more effective. Microsoft® FRx® is licensed by more than 110,000 sites worldwide to gain immediate control of the financial reporting process. Microsoft® Forecaster gives you a fast and affordable way to gain control over budgeting and planning. Used together or separately, Microsoft FRx and Microsoft Forecaster provide the financial visibility you need to help you actively manage your business and take decisive action. Our applications are available directly or through a worldwide channel of partners.

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