# **ALLOCATIONS**



PLAN-TO-PERFORM BLUEPRINT A WEB-BASED PROCESS FOR ALLOCATING EXPENSES

A COGNOS INNOVATION CENTER ENTERPRISE PLANNING APPLICATION BRIEF

# **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This application brief demonstrates best practices for managing allocations using Cognos Planning. By implementing this Blueprint, a company will have forward-looking visibility into expense decisions at the divisional level and at the company level overall. The Allocations Blueprint uses projections in the Expense Planning and Control (2.0) Blueprint as well as actual history to drive the planning process of the organization. The Blueprint allocates cost-center expenses to profit centers. The processes described in this document are generic for expenses in any industry in the US, but can be configured to support the complexity of fixed and variable expense requirements for any industry across many countries.



#### **OVERVIEW**

With the exception of revenue, expenses are often the main focus on a company's profit and loss statement. At the corporate level, best efforts are taken to manage expenses and set guidelines. At the divisional level, line managers make expense decisions to optimize the efficiency and output of their staff. Collaboration needs to occur on a forward-looking basis so that divisional level decisions are in line with corporate expectations.

The *Allocations Blueprint* allows cost-center managers to allocate all or part of their expenses to the appropriate profit enters. Within the *Allocations Blueprint*, profit-center managers collaborate with cost-center managers to either accept or reject the proposed allocations.

For example, the head of the IT cost center allocates a percentage of the center's expenses—brought in from the *Expense Planning and Control (2.0) Blueprint*—to the various profit centers using his or her services. The *Blueprint* calculates actual dollars as a proposed allocation and gives the receiver an opportunity to accept or reject the allocated expenses. After running through the allocation engine, these expenses are returned as either expenses allocated or expenses received within the original *Expense Planning and Control (2.0) Blueprint*.

The *Blueprint* requires very little input from the user yet returns a great deal of information for their effort. Each user has only one tab that requires input. The *Cost Center to Profit Center* tab is used by both the assignor and receiver of the expense allocations.

A cost-center manager sees a tab view that enables assignment of a *Proposed Allocation* % or *Proposed Allocation* \$'s to each of the available profit centers. The cost-center manager may allocate all or a portion of their expenses.

A profit-center manager sees an *Allocations Blueprint* view that displays all the cost centers that are proposing to allocate expenses to them. For each cost center, they see *Proposed Allocation* %, the percent of total dollars being allocated to their profit center, and *Proposed Allocation* \$'s, the actual dollar amount the cost-center manager wishes to allocate to them. The profit-center manager can then accept or reject the proposed allocation on a monthly basis. After the cost-center and profit-center managers have completed their entries, the administrator runs a macro that records each center's results back into the original expense model. Cost centers see expenses allocated out as well as expenses that were rejected, and profit centers notice the arrival of the expenses they've agreed to.

#### **BLUEPRINT OBJECTIVES**

The Allocations Blueprint achieves a number of planning objectives:

- Manages expenses by assigning (allocating) them to the appropriate profit centers.
- Demonstrates a collaborative environment to allocate expenses equitably based upon both historical patterns and user input from both cost-center managers and profit-center managers.
- Consolidates expenses allowing for seamless planning.
- Links expense projections between departments so as to assign expense to appropriate profit centers.
- Demonstrates Cognos Planning Contributor to Contributor links.
- Uses Cognos Planning system links functionality.
- Demonstrates internal transfer planning capabilities.
- Demonstrates the use of macros within a Cognos Planning PAD (Planning Application Domain).

#### COGNOS PLANNING KEY BENEFITS

- Flexible and powerful model development. The Cognos Analyst component supports any business planning or customizing of the *Allocations Blueprint*.
- Web-based deployment of models for process workflow, data collection, and consolidation.
  - Real-time workflow.
  - Real-time consolidation.
  - Real-time calculations in the browser for immediate results.
  - Industry-leading what-if features for the most accurate plans, budgets, and forecasts.
- Scalable architecture with proven deployments to thousands of users.
- Easy links to financial and operational plans facilitating cross-enterprise collaboration.
- Ensured accuracy of plans using form-based planning with selection boxes to drive application logic and calculations.

### REPRESENTATIVE WORKFLOW

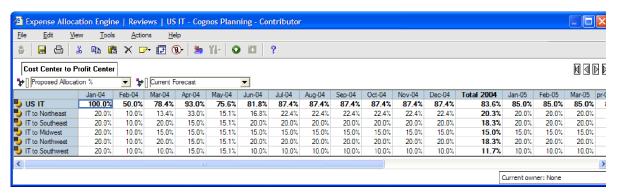
The *Allocations Blueprint* is designed to be used by cost-center managers and profit-center managers in a collaborative environment that enables equitable expense allocations based upon both historical patterns and user input.

The following sections of this document describe the basic workflows in which:

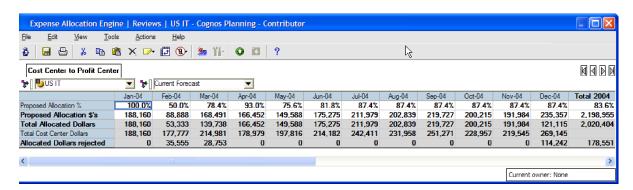
- A cost-center manager proposes a set of expense allocations to a profit center manager.
- The profit-center manager accepts or rejects expense allocation proposals.
- The cost-center manager reviews total expense forecasts net of allocations.
- The profit-center manager reviews total expense forecasts net of allocations.

#### Cost-Center-to-Profit-Center Allocations

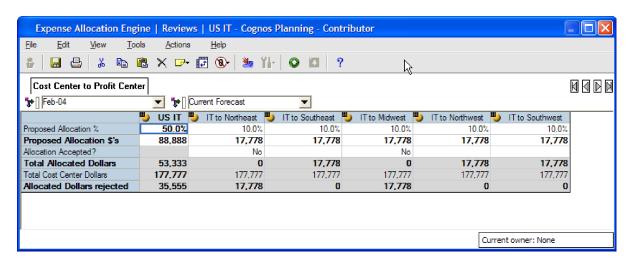
This workflow illustrates how a cost-center manager would propose a set of expense allocations to a variety of profit centers.



The Cost Center to Profit Center tab is where all the work is done within the Allocations Blueprint. The first step in working with the Blueprint is to have the cost-center manager log on and enter into the grid the percentages of cost-centers expenses assignable to each profit center. In the above example, US IT is allocating out 100 percent of their expenses across five profit centers in Jan-04, and 50 percent of their expenses in Feb-04. The Northeast Sales profit center, designated in the e-list as IT to Northeast, is allocated 20 percent of the cost center's expenses in January, 10 percent in February, 13.4 percent in March, etc. A Cognos Planning system link has been set up to allow the user to copy Proposed Allocation % from the Prior Forecast to the Current Forecast version. Modifications may then be made to the populated Current Forecast. Upon completion of this step, and following profit-center manager (receiver) input, the Total Allocated Dollars will be linked back into the Expense Planning and Control (2.0) model as Expense Allocated Out to Profit Centers on the Expense Detail and Expense Detail (by category) tabs.



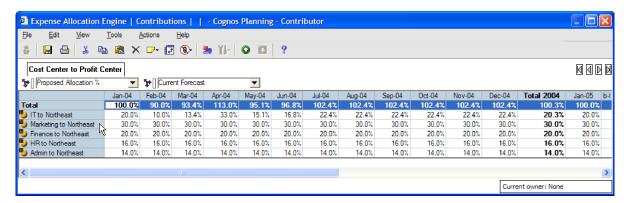
The above view is a re-orientation of the tab allowing the cost-center manager to see the percentages, proposed allocation dollars, and the results from the receiver's (profit-center manager's) actions. In February, this manager had proposed allocating 50 percent of expenses or \$88,888: Of that amount, \$53,333 has been accepted and \$35,555 has been rejected. The cost-center manager can investigate the \$35,555 further by simply re-orientating the tab.



The Northeast sales manager (IT to Northeast) rejected IT's allocation proposal in February for \$17,778, while the Midwest manager (IT to Midwest) rejected IT's proposal for \$17,778 resulting in a total rejected amount of \$35,555. See how the Northeast sales manager went about rejecting this allocation:

#### **COST CENTER TO PROFIT CENTER**

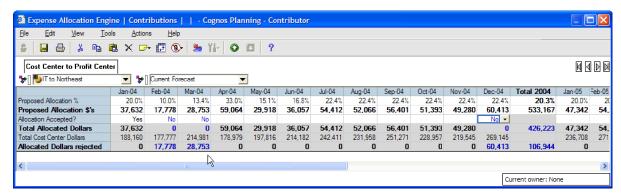
This workflow illustrates how a profit-center manager would review, accept, or reject the proposed expense allocations from a variety of cost centers that support the manager's requirements.



The profit-center managers view of the *Cost Center to Profit Center* tab shows the allocations made to that center by the assorted cost centers. Here the Northeast profit-center manager may view and reject allocations made to it by other cost-center managers. In the above view, the profit-center manager may see that the IT department manager is allocating 20 percent of their expenses to them in Jan-04 and 10 percent in Feb-04, etc. Likewise, the proposed allocations of other departments may be seen: Marketing is proposing to allocate 30 percent of expenses across the board and finance is looking to allocate 20 percent of expenses each month.

This *Allocation Blueprint* enables cost-center managers to assign percentages in the allocation process. It would be quite simple to allocate expenses based upon any available methodology such as headcount, revenue, square footage, etc. As an example, the number of PCs operated by each profit center could be linked in by month, and the cost-center expenses could be allocated or broken back on that basis.

By re-orientating the view of this tab, the profit-center manager may elect to reject any expenses allocated that seem inappropriate.



In the above view, the manager for the Northeast profit center has rejected the proposed allocations in Feb-04, Mar-04, and Dec-04 by selecting "No" from the drop-down list provided in the *Allocation Accepted?* field. In this model, not making a selection is the same as accepting the allocation. Therefore, the model requires no input from profit-center managers unless they wish to reject a proposed allocation.

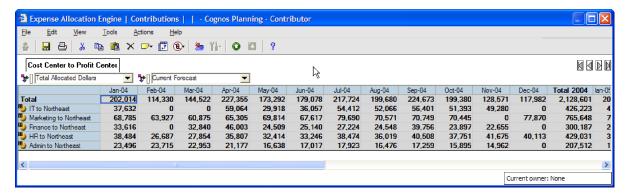
As changes are made, they are highlighted in BLUE fonts along with any cells affected by the change. When changes to this tab are made and saved, expense impacts are made automatically to the views of other users and, upon the running of a Cognos Planning Admin macro, will be reflected in the original *Expense Planning and Control* (2.0) Blueprint.

Fields in gray are non-editable. They provide read-only information or are linked over from other applications or sources. Fields in white are editable and—on this tab—the profit-center manager chooses whether or not to accept the *Proposed Allocation \$*. On the cost-center manager's view, the writable fields would be *Proposed Allocation %* or *Proposed Allocation \$*'s.

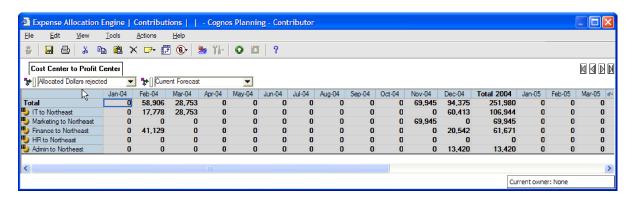
In the *Allocations Blueprint*, the cost-center manager may propose allocations by entering either a percentage or a dollar amount. Entering one will automatically calculate the other.

By making simple selection and entering minimum data, an *Allocations Blueprint* user allocates expenses from *Expense Planning and Controls* (2.0) to the appropriate centers and in the correct ratios.

As shown below, by again re-orientating the tab, a profit-center manager may view all the expenses being allocated to that center.



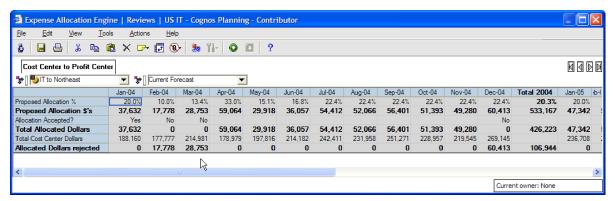
Or, conversely, a manager may orientate the tab to view the Allocated Dollars rejected.



Note that expenses are calculated in the local currency for each cost center. In the *Expense Planning and Control (2.0) Blueprint*, the local currency is converted into a corporate standard. In our *Blueprints* the standard is US dollars, but could be changed to accommodate any currency as the standard.

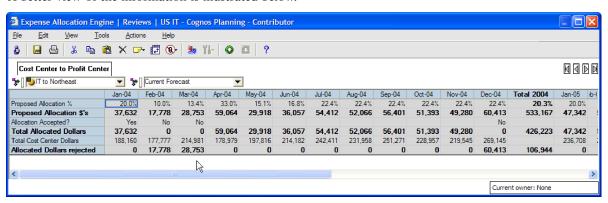
#### **COST CENTER TO PROFIT CENTER**

This workflow illustrates how a cost-center manager might review the response from the profit-center managers to the original proposed expense allocations.

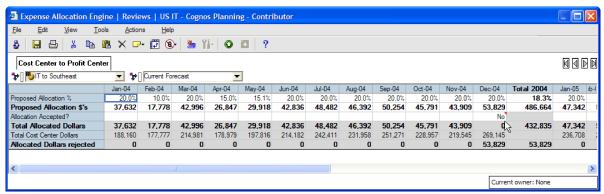


A cost-center manager returning to the application after profit-center managers have made their entries will be able to review the results of proposed allocations. In the above example, the manager notices that the Northeast's manager rejected the proposed allocations in Feb-04, Mar-04, and Dec-04. The profit-center manager could have annotated the cells to provide a reason for the rejections if desired. Note below (on page 12) how the allocated dollars are viewable in the *Expense Planning and Control (2.0) Blueprint*. The tab above is where a cost-center manager would see exactly who rejected what expense amounts when.

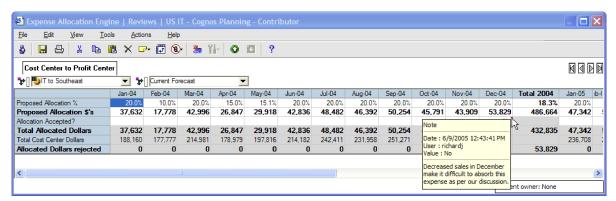
A better view of the information is illustrated below.



It is clear—by profit center—who rejected the allocations and when.

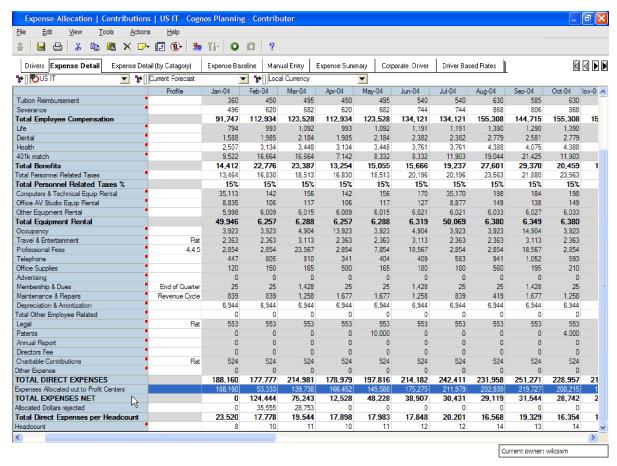


Looking at the IT to Southeast page, note that the profit-center manager has entered an annotation explaining why the Dec-04 allocation was rejected. By mousing over the allocation's red note symbol, the annotation is displayed.



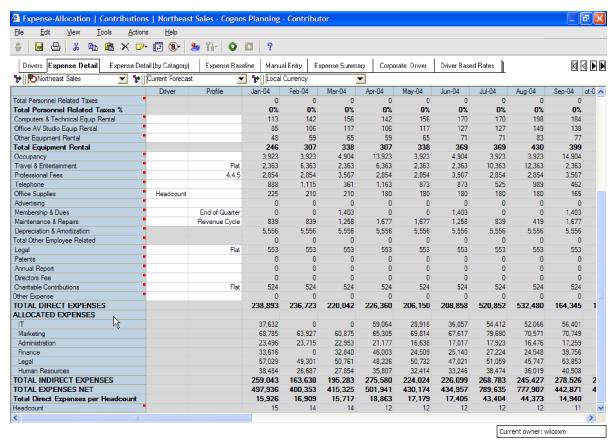
Returning to the *Expense Planning and Control (2.0) Blueprint* after having run the Cognos Planning Admin macro in the *Allocations Blueprint*, it is possible to view the cost-center and profit-center managers' expense forecasts net of allocations.

# From a cost-center manager's view:



Note within the blue highlighted row those expenses allocated out of this cost center to the appropriate profit centers. Two rows below that line are allocated dollars that were rejected by their allocation targets.

# From a profit center's view:



Beginning at the *ALLOCATED EXPENSES* row all the expenses that have been allocated to the profit center by various cost centers are displayed. Note that the Feb-04 and Mar-04 IT allocations are zero, because the profit-center manager rejected these allocations within the *Allocations Blueprint*.

# **ABOUT THE COGNOS INNOVATION CENTER** FOR PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT The Cognos Innovation Center is dedicated to transforming routine performance management practices into "next practices" that help cut costs, minimize risk, streamline processes, boost productivity, enable rapid response to opportunity, and increase management visibility.