



Experience Report: Intelligent Decision Support for Portfolio Planning at Siemens Corporate Technology

ReleasePlanner® arms IT and business decision makers with a prioritized portfolio of strategies they need in order to deliver maximum business value for the resources available.

Qualified and informed decisions are the key drivers for business success. Decision based on gut-feeling might be good on average, but may be completely wrong some time. The impact of wrong strategic decisions is hard to compensate. How to support the human expert to make more qualified decisions?

In case of complex decisions under uncertainty, human decision-making is supported by intelligent methods and techniques ranging from knowledge-based systems, simulation, optimization, analysis and reasoning. It is not intended to replace the human expert, but to

- facilitate understanding and structuring of the problem under investigation,
- bring relevant stakeholders together and allow them to contribute to decision-making,
- generate and evaluate solution alternatives, and
- explain solution alternatives.

ReleasePlanner® provides insight to solve complex prioritization challenges

ReleasePlanner® is a flexible internet-based tool that can be used by clients and all their stakeholders online. It allows to

determine the best possible prioritization, planning, and road-mapping strategies by

taking into account the entire scope of your business. This includes values and urgency perception of the different stakeholders as well as limitations on risks, necessary resources and budget available.

Information technology (IT) resource management planning and coordination across projects is of pivotal importance for the business success of an organization. Siemens Corporate Technology Software and Engineering (CT SE) is a creator and early adaptor of innovative technologies. Leading edge technologies in their early life-cycle stage are studied. IT products, services and solutions are evaluated, customized and transferred to then different Siemens business departments. With the great variety of emerging technologies and their dynamic change, strategic planning is of pivotal importance. The challenge is to determine best strategies to make the maximum business value out of the resources available.

To remain highly competitive in the market, companies are looking for optimized road-maps for planning of their product and services for the next three to five years in advance. Right strategies on that are enablers of comprehensive business success. “We need a road map of low inherent risk and high degree of feasibility with the resources and budgets available. The roadmap should reflect the priorities of the most valued customers and taking into consideration the opinions of various stakeholders” explained Ludger Meyer, Department head at Siemens CT SE. “As the market tends to become highly demanding and competitive” he added, “having a diversified portfolio of strategies reflecting different aspects of providing our offerings is the key parameter to making qualified decisions”.

Siemens CT SE was looking for a solution to proactively evaluate the impact of alternative strategies under varying scenarios. They needed a transparent and a rational approach to answer questions such as:

- What are the prioritized products, services, and solutions to concentrate on for the next years to achieve maximum business success with the resources necessary and available?
- How to balance different stakeholder expectations in a best possible way?
- What are possible scenarios in terms of additional resources needed to achieve predefined target levels of market share or customer satisfaction?
- Which strategy is offering minimum risk for its realization?
- How to optimally perform re-planning under changing resource, budget or technological parameters?

Release Planner® makes synergy between objectivity of facts and data and the human expertise to handle tacid knowledge. The strategies we get to choose from are maximally diversified portfolio of alternatives. This gives us maximum flexibility in making our decisions.

Ludger Meyer, Siemens CT SE

ReleasePlanner® provides powerful visualization tools to support analysis of “what-if” scenarios. Running scenarios becomes easy and is providing comprehensive insights into the impact of certain problem parameters. Varying importance of stakeholders, resource capacities, budgets capacities or acceptable risk level provide and comparing their impact with the baseline allows making more informed decisions. This is not only

useful for defining and evaluating new strategies, but also to re-plan existing ones.

“ReleasePlanner® is intuitive and easy to use. It provides a simple and transparent basis for making decisions by providing alternative strategies for each modeled problem instance,” observed Mr. Meyer. “We were particularly impressed by the web-based remote access for stakeholders anywhere in the world at anytime.”

ReleasePlanner® provides quick re-planning capabilities

When there are new services to be offered or changes/updates in the execution of existing services or changes in the available of resources or priority ranking of the customers, plans have to be updated. Using ReleasePlanner® intelligent platform, this can be achieved easily. “Re-planning for any changes would take us weeks and now it’s just a click away,” added Franz Kudorfer, project manager at Siemens for this project.

Choosing the right strategies is a key to success.

Most tools in the market today are designed simply to keep track of information and derive business intelligence just by data analysis and reporting or having tons of inbuilt best-practices templates which would require an army of consultants to customize for the organization’s purpose. But no other tool can offer hybrid Intelligent systems based prioritization, decision support and strategic planning capabilities which ReleasePlanner® delivers.

ReleasePlanner® platform also helps you to identify resource and financial bottlenecks for achieving proposed objectives. The plans generated from different scenarios are evaluated regarding their inherent risk. Thus, the proposed strategies are more likely to be realizable without major changes.



How to get it Started?

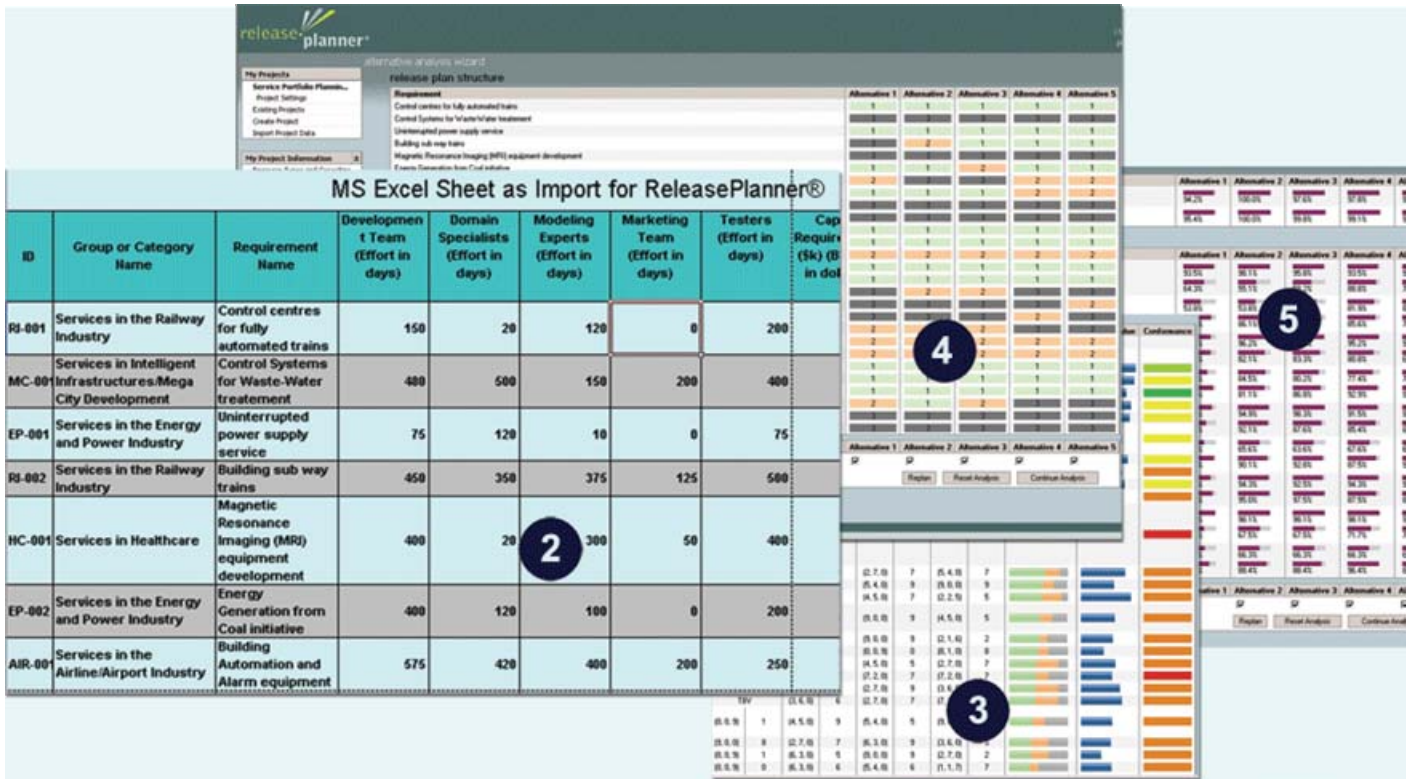
Support as offered by ReleasePlanner® adds intelligence and computational power on top of your existing processes (see Figure). All what you have to do is to provide your planning data (list of items to be planned, estimates of effort, risk and financial estimates) into an existing template based on MS Excel. These data can be import to ReleasePlanner® to allow the assigned stakeholders to prioritize in terms of urgency and value. With all this information, ReleasePlanner® provides optimized alternative solutions. They can be supplemented by further information such as their resource consumption or visualization of stakeholder preference analysis. With all the insights gained, the human decision-maker can make the most qualified decision bringing together all the explicit quantitative data with tacid knowledge only available from the human expert.

Siemens CT SE has leveraged ReleasePlanner® platform as an essential step to further improve

their strategic planning of products, services, and solutions. This is made possible by the architecture of the ReleasePlanner® platform which allows you to integrate into your existing IT infrastructure and offers interoperability and compatibility with leading databases and tools like MS-Project and MS-Excel. The tool suite also offers extensive reporting capabilities that are customizable to facilitate human involvement in decision making.

For more information, please contact:





- 1 Actual business processes
- 2 Project data
- 3 Analysis of prioritizations done by stakeholders
- 4 Qualified and diversified roadmaps
- 5 Impact-analysis of strategies
- 6 Hybrid intelligence for decision-making

