



Simplify and Manage Your Shared Services Cost Allocations

Acorn Shared Services Manager is a flexible business modeling and calculation engine that simplifies and manages your shared services cost allocations. Shared Services Manager is an easy-to-deploy and easy-to-use solution for your modeling, data collection and reporting needs.

DETERMINING THE VALUE OF SERVICE

Acorn Shared Services Manager is a web-based solution that simplifies and manages your shared services cost allocations. It is an easy-to-deploy and easy-to-use solution for modeling, data collection and reporting needs.

Shared services generate significant value to companies in all industries. They produce sustainable cost savings, increase process effectiveness and achieve operational excellence in many critical areas of business. Replacing manual and disjointed processes through shared services pays off quickly. A well-prepared transition of business functions, combined with ongoing automation of labor-intensive, high-frequency transactions, can give companies a significant competitive edge.

Shared Services Manager encapsulates best practice approaches into a sustainable and streamlined process, never delaying the month-end financial close. It elegantly handles the most complex allocations and scales to support the largest shared services organizations. Shared Services Manager gives complete transparency into shared services costs, allowing the understanding of the root cause of those costs, thus creating the ability to get a handle on how to better leverage shared services functions.

- Identify and measure the cost drivers behind shared services to align capacity with demand
- Measure shared service resource capacity
- Budget and plan based on actual business activity
- Describe shared services in business terms
- Connect cost allocations with level of service
- Connect shared service cost with products and customers supported
- Reduce year-end variances resulting in resource shift from producing to analyzing
- Reduce general ledger complexity

Accelerate Your Business Results

Many organizations find it difficult to explain shared service cost allocations to the business areas with clear visibility on what business services they are receiving for the cost that is allocated. One of the first areas where costs get slashed is back office operations because these costs are typically assigned to the front office as overhead using a flat percentage. Without defensible numbers, back office leaders are forced to comply with across-the-board cuts regardless of the demand for their services. This leads to further declines in the quality of services and even lower perceptions of their value. These leaders often face obstacles, such as lack of data and traceability, which makes cost transparency extremely complex and difficult to deliver. Back office leaders need a simple way to define the services they provide and relate them to the drivers of their expense without becoming cost management experts or creating complex workarounds with many manual steps.

MAKE SMARTER BUSINESS DECISIONS

Whether it is information technology or payroll, outsource providers all promise to lower costs through optimized operations. Organizations are often surprised when results are not what was expected. Most did not

have an accurate picture of their costs prior to outsourcing. Shared Services Manager makes it easy to identify how much you are paying for a specific service so you can compare unit costs against peer benchmarks or outsourcing rates to negotiate with knowledge and make smart decisions.

COMPLEXITY SIMPLIFIED

Organizational complexity is an unavoidable fact of life that creates problems for most tools used to determine service costs. The workarounds required to model multiple levels of service relationships and their interdependencies make it difficult, if not impossible, to determine anything but the origin and final destination of any cost. Shared Services Manager does not limit the number of levels or interdependent relationships your business requires. Only Shared Services Manager provides complete traceability whether it is from the origin, destination or any point in between.

NO DATA, NO PROBLEM

No one likes filling out time sheets, so often times it just simply doesn't get done. However, when it does, the data gathered is often inaccurate or incomplete, producing misleading results. Shared Services Manager's unique approach to data gathering eliminates guesswork and streamlines

the process with advanced policy management features that not only validate the required data but also handle cases where data is incomplete or missing entirely. Of course, all data is tracked throughout the process so there is never any question about its origin, satisfying even the most rigorous audit requirements. There are even notification capabilities to help manage the data gathering process.

ELIMINATES SPREADMARTS

Spread marts are a growing concern for many organizations. Efforts by IT organizations to rein in the use of spreadsheets are often met with stiff resistance from business users who rely on their flexibility and ease of use to get things done. SSM eliminates the need for spreadsheets by tracking all inbound and resultant data in a centrally located and secure database. Shared Services Manager delivers these benefits without sacrificing the flexibility business users require while maintaining a low total cost of ownership.

REMOVE WASTEFUL CONSUMPTION

Most charge-out systems for back office operations stop short of providing actual business value. Even the fairest of charge-out methodologies will not allow business users to better manage their services costs because they fail to link expenses to their business drivers. Imagine paying for a service where you have no idea how much it will cost until after you have used it. Shared Services Manager provides full visibility into service cost drivers allowing business users to more effectively control their consumption.

Acorn Shared Services Manager allocates shared services to business areas in an equitable and transparent manner, helping organizations become more efficient and cost effective.

CHARGE IT OR NOT

Some organizations have adopted a shared services cost control strategy focused on improved efficiency and capacity utilization, while others have adopted a strategy to charge out cost of services to the consumer using one of several unit pricing methods. Regardless of your cost control strategy, Shared Services Manager makes it easy to execute by supporting whatever method you need, including various hybrid methods.

FIXED OR VARIABLE

What is considered a fixed cost and what is a variable cost is often a matter of considerable debate. Lack of agreement on what constitutes a fixed cost or variable cost can often distort planning scenarios because erroneous assumptions are made between the business drivers of cost and the consumption of back office capacity. As a result, potential strategic opportunities are missed because a cost assumed to be fixed is actually variable at some level.

For example, let's say you had the option to choose between two wireless plans: the first plan offers you unlimited call minutes for a fixed price, and the second plan includes a certain number of monthly call minutes after which you are charged at a certain rate per minute. At first glance, the unlimited plan sounds like a better value because it is fixed. However, after monitoring your actual consumption, you may find out that, while you occasionally exceed the included number of monthly call minutes, overall you would be paying less for the second plan. By linking your consumption to underlying capacity of both plans, you are able to intelligently determine the optimal level of fixed costs for your budget.

As in this example, one of the biggest opportunities for many shared services consumers to reduce costs is to examine their Service Level Agreements (SLAs) to compare the costs of different levels of service and to rationalize that with the needs of the business.



Financial Close Process



SSM automates step 1 in the financial close process to deliver the following benefits:

- **Efficient Processes:** Requires less time and resources
- **Accuracy:** System can leverage unique cost allocation facts for every shared service center without limits
- **Transparency:** Automated reporting that provides visibility to the origination of the cost, its final destination and any point in-between
- **Objectivity:** Allocations are fact-based and generated in correlation to how a business consumes shared services

Maximize Value and Quality While Keeping Costs in Check

SSM CAPABILITIES AND VALUE

Capability	Value
Distributed Data Gathering	Allows clients to leverage system-based or ad hoc data sources for drivers
Multi-User	Responsibility for maintaining cost assignments can be delegated to each area manager
Business User Driven	Application setup, maintenance and execution is built to minimize the need for IT
Recursive Cost Assignments	Costs can flow as they are actually consumed by the shared service and business areas
Scalable	Manages the complexity of cost center structures and services provided by large organizations
Cost Transparency	Minimizes the time spent defending assignments and focus on managing
Flexible	Cost assignment paths are tailored to the needs of the area being assigned

VALUE REALIZED BY OUR CLIENTS

Business Area	Impact	Value
Finance Managers	Reduce resources assigned to managing allocation process	More efficient processes at a lower cost
	Reduce year-end variances	Resource shift from producing results to analyzing
	Reduce general ledger complexity	
Shared Services Managers	Identify and measure the cost drivers behind shared services	Align shared service capacity with demand
	Measure shared service resource capacity	Leverage objective measures to drive more informed decisions
	Budget and plan based on actual business activity	
Business Area Managers	Describe shared services in business terms	
	Connect cost allocations with level of service	
	Connect shared service cost with products and customers supported	

Quick Facts: Acorn Shared Services Manager

PRODUCT SUMMARY

Acorn Shared Services Manager is a flexible business modeling and calculation engine that simplifies and manages your shared services cost allocations. Shared Services Manager is an easy-to-deploy and easy-to-use solution for your modeling, data collection and reporting needs. It elegantly handles even the most complex allocations and scales to support the largest shared services organizations. It provides complete transparency into shared services costs, allowing customers the ability to understand the root cause of those costs and creating the ability to get a handle on how to better leverage shared services functions.

KEY FEATURES

- Flexible business modeling capabilities that can be configured to support a variety of costing and recovery methodologies
- Web-based cost driver data gathering capabilities that streamline manual processes
- Data collection support for TXT, CSV, XLS and XLSX as well as ETL process
- Data collection monitoring and workflow with SMTP integration
- Integrated reporting, invoicing and OLAP cube generation
- Load single or multiple scenarios per cube
- Only unified solution to perform true recursive allocations to scale
- Review true cost to serve with standard price versus actual cost invoicing
- Analytical reports that provide key insights and benchmarks
- Verifiable results that are ready to post to financial systems
- Entitlements integrated with directory services that control which users can access data and use application features
- Rich slide-out navigation for a superior user experience

SOFTWARE REQUIREMENTS

Server:

- Windows Server 2008 or Windows Server 2008 R2
- Microsoft SQL Server 2008 R2 Enterprise or Microsoft SQL Server 2012 Enterprise
 - Analysis Services
 - Reporting Service

INTEGRATION

Shared Services Manager integrates into any environment. Our applications are based on open standards and leverage the capabilities of Microsoft SQL Server Integration Services (SSIS) and Microsoft SQL Server Analysis Services (SSAS) to get the required data into your model and back out — whatever your requirements, whatever disparate systems, whether vendor or homegrown.

Integration sources include:

- Flexible Business Modeling
- Platforms
- ERPs
- Performance Management
- Applications (CPM, BPM, EPM), CRM, SCM, core/departmental applications
- Spreadsheets
- BI Platforms
- Financial Systems
- Databases
- Data Warehouses

Vendor Integration:

- Microsoft
- SAP BusinessObjects
- IBM Cognos
- Oracle Hyperion

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Contact: success@ignitetech.com

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