

# On-time and Cost Effective Corporate IT Project Management Optimization



## Vertical

Manufacturing | Pharmaceutical | Healthcare | Portfolio | **Logistics** | Financial | Government | Business

## Genre

Case Study | **Project Review:** | White Paper | Technology Overview

## Client

# HOT TOPIC



## Situation

The on-time delivery of an integrated retail technology project costing \$3 million was essential to the success of Hot Topic and stood to affect the backbone of the company's operations. With an expanding national retail network of 800 stores, Hot Topic attempted to ensure projects like the integrated retail technology project were on time and within budget. But a history of constraints in the IT project management and supporting IT functions meant resources were often unavailable to assist last minute or complex projects. Consequently, a significant number of IT projects were completed late and over budget, costing millions of dollars in revenue and savings.

The ability to forecast and assign IT resources would prove a better way to identify the challenges. In planning future projects, Hot Topic's Director of IT was charged to change the situation, and to improve the on-time delivery rate of IT projects. The key to improving project delivery was the ability to assign the right resources at the right time. This proved difficult given multiple specialist classes, projects, tasks, priorities, and the uncertainty that comes with all project-based work. The Director of IT knew that if he could determine which resources were needed, by task in each project, he would be able to identify and resolve shortfalls. By identifying these problem issues in advance, he could shift project starts, enforce delays, plan hiring or contracting schedules, etc., to prevent them.

## Objective

- To achieve 80 percent completion of all IT projects on-time and within budget.
- Develop a reusable tool with the capability to visualize, analyze and optimize multiple project plans within one enterprise project environment.

## Results

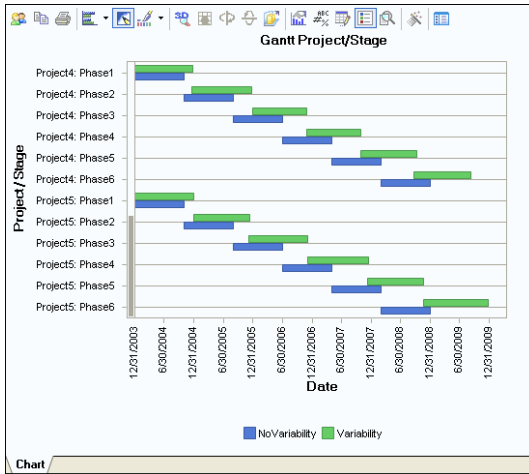
The results of the first shift in project planning and resource assignment was very dramatic. Based on the ProModel solution, Hot Topic completed over 90% of all their projects on-time, 10% higher than their objective. Among those completed were Hot Topic's most significant projects, including the integrated retail technology project, two weeks ahead of schedule.

In addition, Hot Topic has reported savings of over \$1 million dollars stemming from resourcing decisions formulated by ProModel solutions. They continue to examine the impact of additional resources on timing and financial performance measures in order to accelerate project completions and contribute to the business expansion and new store openings.

*"Using ProModel's Project and Portfolio Simulator has enabled us to improve our on time project completion rate to over 90%, exceeding our goal of 80%. In addition, our recent resourcing decisions have saved us over \$1 million dollars."*

*- Leonard Yip  
Hot Topic IT Director*

**Solution**



**Comparative Gantt Chart**

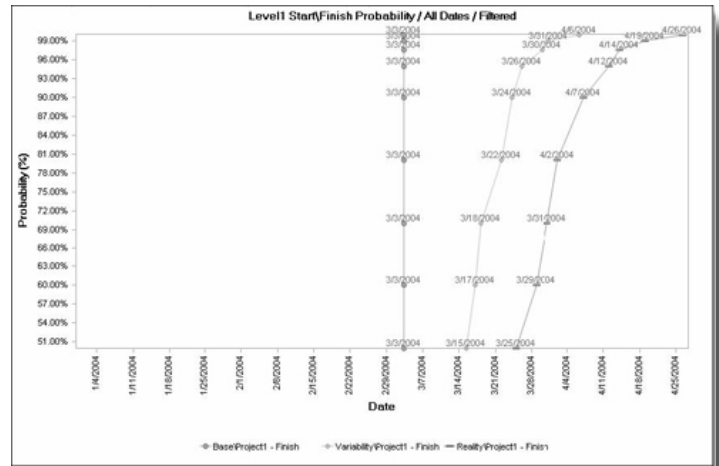
Hot Topic's IT project management was assisted dramatically by Portfolio Simulator's ability to both delay unresourced task completions and also predict the impact as if these projects were resourced. The information allowed Hot Topic to detect bottlenecks, critical path, and inter-dependency among multiple tasks. Hot Topic was able to build parallel process and contingency plans into their present and future project plans.

**Unique Integration**

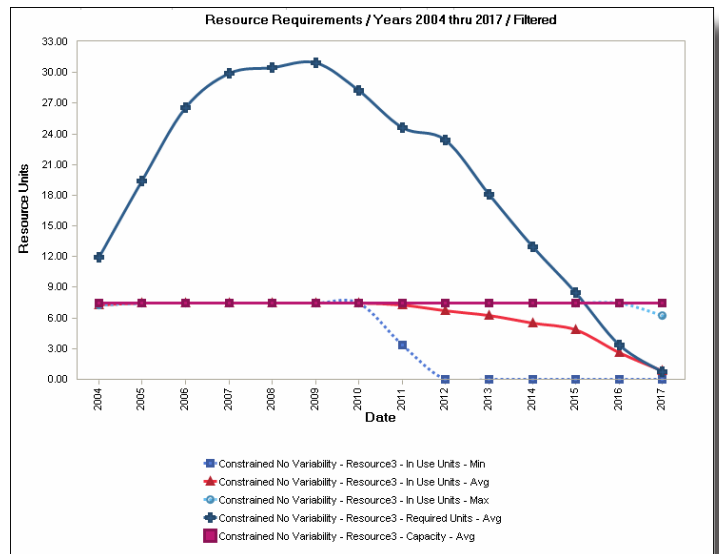
From the early stages of improving the project management process it became clear that what Hot Topic required was a better way to combine their new decision making tools with their existing enterprise project management application – Microsoft Project Server. This improved solution is a unique integration of tools that serves not only to better plan projects and predict their requirements, but also to manage and re-evaluate those projects during execution, as resources and priorities change, to still finish on time and within budget.

The unique integration works as follows. Individual project plans with more accurate completion dates and resource requirements over time are developed in Project Simulator, ProModel's plug-in to Microsoft Project. These individual enhanced project plans are then rolled up into ProModel's Portfolio Simulator where all of the projects are analyzed simultaneously in order to produce an optimized project portfolio. Finally, the optimized project plans are then transferred into Hot Topic's Microsoft Project Server for company wide communication and improved execution, tracking and reporting.

Hot Topic selected ProModel's Portfolio Simulator as the top-level resource requirements predictor and timing platform. The tool generated comparative Gantt charts, resource requirements charts, and start/finish probability charts that visualized timing and resourcing.



**Start/Finish Probability Chart**



**Resource Requirements Chart**