Magiq Performance

Computron’s budgeting solution Magiq Performance has been developed for the public sector and with its budgeting, planning and reporting modules allows you to radically improve not only the efficiency and accuracy of the preparation process, but also the way in which progress is continuously managed to plan across the organisation.

Mapping onto the Finance, Payroll, HR and other operational systems Magiq provides a powerful and easy to use budgeting solution that targets the needs of Local Government and other Public Sector organisations. It combines simple and sophisticated budget and modelling techniques, allowing the organisation to capture, consolidate, review and approve without reliance on a spaghetti of interwoven spreadsheets that is both high maintenance and high risk.

In addition to allowing the construction of Labour, Expense, Capital and other Fund budgets, Magiq enables the organisation to maintain multiple versions and support its strategic planning by modelling out long term projections into the future.

Budgeting is only half the story. More than at any other time, Local Authorities need to constantly manage within their budgets. The extensive Reporting and Dashboard capabilities of Magiq integrate with the underlying Finance Systems and other
databases to provide officers with clear positions on performance through interactive reports, charts and other graphics. The security matrix supports the wide distribution of key information to Budget Holders, Finance Officers and responsible Officials at all levels of the organisation, through interactive enquiries or reports enabling them to manage and control their areas of responsibility effectively.

**The Difficulties and Risks Magiq Encountered**

Financial budgeting and planning are vital activities for all public sector organisations yet they are often challenging and time-consuming. Typically, a disproportionate amount of time and effort is spent gathering and collating figures rather than analysing their meaning to support decision making.

- ERP's and Finance systems often have budgeting features, but they are not specialised and can compromise both the process efficiency and operational requirements of Public Sector budgeting. This leads to a heavy reliance on spreadsheets.
- An absence of a master database leads to a version control nightmare as the process grapples with numerous disparate spreadsheets.
- An uncontrolled network of complex interlinked spreadsheets develops where integrity is difficult to ensure and maintenance is time consuming.
- A dangerous overreliance on individual spreadsheet authors can develop creating difficulties when staff move on.
- With key data spread across multiple spreadsheets reporting options are limited.
- Spreadsheets compound the complexities of supporting different reporting structures that are required.
- Limited scope is available to integrate supporting documentation and explanations with budgets.
- The original budget submission will go through many review stages leading to difficulty in tracking changes and being able to explain whether changes have been made.

**Benefits of Performance**

The following summarises some of the benefits experienced by Organisations that use Magiq Performance to manage their budgeting processes.

**Efficiency & Productivity**

The core resources and artefacts of the budget are stored centrally and available to users according to their role and responsibility. This facilitates automation and the collaboration between the various stakeholders. The budget preparation and approval process is streamlined, reducing time, complexity and effort. A familiar Microsoft style user interface minimises training costs and helps Magiq be adopted across the organisation.

**Accuracy**

Magiq regains control over the spreadsheet mayhem that can typify budget processes. Supporting, detailed analyses and workings are automatically linked through to higher levels. It reduces error and simplifies collation by combining sources and workings into a single integrated budget and forecasting database, consolidated at all levels.

**Best Practice**

Magiq supports best practice budget principles.
Analyse, Review and Think
Magiq accelerates and strengthens the budget process. This wins time to allow staff to focus on the meaning behind the figures, develop scenarios and to explore and clearly present options. It empowers staff to quickly reforecast and project outcomes; to adapt and pro-actively manage.

Better and Faster Decision Making
Through its modelling and integrated reporting it makes transparent the consequences of different strategies, supporting better decision making on the financial management of essential services - helping deliver more for less.

Visibility & Control
Distributed interactive reporting ensures stakeholders are up to date with progress and can pro-actively manage exceptions, variances and trends. Its clear graphical style, charts and gauges provide management “at-a-glance” control and visibility over the funding and cost of essential and other services.

Maximise Return on Existing ERP System Investment
Magiq is a specialised solution that will enhance the budgeting, forecasting and reporting capabilities of existing finance, payroll and other systems. It can maximise the value, life and return from those investments without necessitating costly upgrades or replacements.

It can help fill the gap between the existing Finance Systems and what you need.

Align With Strategic Plans
Magiq can monitor progress and KPIs in terms of strategic, corporate and departmental plans by applying alternative reporting hierarchies (outside of the Finance System) mapping financial structures to those plans.

Budgeting
Manage your Organisation’s entire budget process from distributed budget creation through consolidation, modelling scenarios, reviews and approvals.

Magiq simplifies the budgeting process to allow Finance Officers to focus on real analysis of the organisation, its cost and revenue drivers, financial challenges and options rather than being swamped with the clerical tasks of managing and controlling an excel intensive process
Above, a Salaries & Wages figure is updated in the Budget Worksheet at the Cost Centre level from the detailed employee level analysis and computation within the Budget Pop-Up.

Budget entry worksheets are set up to suit your processes. The starting point for a forthcoming budget model can be any financial position available in the ERP/Finance System such as Year to date plus remaining forecast, projected Annual Outturn or Current Year Budget for example. These can be presented as guidance only, or as the active basis for a further calculation and the application of adjustments and rules.

A “zero based” approach can be taken where resources and activities are justified and specific budget models can be set up for certain cost types where financial values are derived from the provision of Activity, Occurrences or Volumes.

Whatever style or combination of styles of budgeting is favoured, Magiq has it covered:

- Annual Budgets,
- 5-10 + year & long term projections
- Labour Budgets,
- Fee & Charges Budgets,
- Forecasts,
- Rolling Budgets,
- Resource (Capital) Budgets,
- Target Budgets,
- “Top Down”, “Bottom Up”
- Budget Approvals Process
- Multi Layer Budget
- Activity Based Budgets

Public Sector labour budgets can be particularly demanding especially for the more complex Local Authorities with a number of different pay agreements.

Meeting this requirement, Magiq operates supporting worksheets or “pop-ups” within which the details of the payroll budget are maintained. These allow the modelling of components such as Grades, Rates, Allowances, Overtime, Pension costs, NI, Shifts etc. Base data can be populated from the payroll/HR system and then enriched and modelled within Magiq. These operate in a familiar spreadsheet fashion but are incorporated within the Magiq budget database, with summary totals linked up into higher levels of the organisation's budget. Such pop-ups can be supported by look ups and other cross references to support more complex calculations and validations.

**Simple Process for End Users**

Magiq presents a simple, easy to use solution for budgeting and forecasting that end users quickly understand and are eager to work with. Finance can establish budget templates and budget rules within Magiq that bring standardisation, conformity and visibility to the budget process. The rules are wide ranging, involving capabilities such as the application of drivers and variables, trigger relationships between cost elements, derivation of cost from activity and numerous profiling techniques. Rules can be applied selectively, as appropriate to the nature of the service being budgeted.
Example showing Target Budget

Above, a higher level “target” budget has been agreed and this is then being allocated out to lower level headings.

Monitoring the Process

A workflow monitor maintains track of process steps as budget managers seek Manager Approval before say, Program and Executive approval.

The Navigation Tree has alternative modes. On the left it illustrates the status of the budget process with icons indicating: Not Started, In Progress, Compete, Approved. On the right, facilitating variance investigation, we see a Red, Amber, Green representation indicating where each node of the tree stands against predetermined budget variance tolerances.
Budget Modelling

Having established a first cut budget it is likely that various scenarios will need to be played out testing the impact of different assumptions and drivers. These can be quickly generated from any financial or budget baseline, either as a direct copy for further manipulation or with the immediate application of adjustment factors.

The scenarios you create can be “dragged and dropped” into Magiq’s interactive reports and their impact immediately reviewed at all levels of the organisation. Competing scenarios can be compared to facilitate decision making. Magiq allows for unlimited budgets, forecasts and scenarios.

Toward Paperless Budgeting

When it comes to having all of the information supporting a budget or a particular scenario, budget managers can use comments, pop-ups, spreadsheets and attachments. These handy tools mean interested parties can see the make-up of the budget and the justification underpinning it.
Budget Working Papers

In addition to day to day interactive reports and enquiries Magiq supports the budget process by producing polished reports and output that can be incorporated in management submissions.

Simple examples showing spreadsheet detail at account level, Recommended Budget and Adopted Budget.
Interactive Reports and Enquiries

Magiq is a powerful, simple and easy to use solution for end users and financial decision makers. With complete security, it will share the ongoing and projected performance of the organisation with all who need to know.

Magiq either integrates directly with existing Finance, Payroll and other operational systems and databases or uses its toolset to extract key information from the appropriate databases. It brings this data together to drive the budget process and the ongoing reporting of actuals, commitments, virements and so on, across the organisation.

New incremental functionality and value can be extracted from incumbent ERP and Financial systems without necessitating costly upgrades or replacements.

A basic display includes:

A. Tab strip to select the “data set” for inquiry. This could be one, or many Financial views or other third party or in-house data sources such as Payroll, HR, Billing, CRM.

B. Navigation Tree – intuitive, easy to use and MS Explorer style – assumes the structures, hierarchies and relationships defined within your Financials enabling reporting and operational structures to be portrayed and navigated in familiar terms.

C. Data Browser – one or more tabular data browsers to display descriptions and columns of data, combined with symbols like trends or ticks and crosses to make data more meaningful.

D. Chart Area – one or more charts from a library of charts to graphically display the meaning of the Browser data.

E. Power Board – a selection of dials and gauges to draw attention to performance trends of simple variances or more complex KPIs from a variety of sources.

With simple drag and drop techniques, users can establish “favourite” screens and reports to run on demand or via the scheduler in support of month end routines.
Drill to Source Transactions

Individuals can change and manage the reporting layouts to suit their specific needs.

A top down experience can be created with drill down to source transactions – including secondary drills to different revenue or assets systems. Individuals can have data access in an easy to use and standardised format.

Magiq will present a consistent display and reporting front end over the variety of different systems that large organisations operate.
Refined Enquiries, Filtering and Analysis

Magiq allows you to slice and dice your data with powerful reporting tools to explore variances and exceptions and gain a precise picture of your organisation’s performance. Genuinely simple to use, refined inquiries functionality can bring the focus on the performance of particular directorates, departments, areas, teams, cost centres, expense types or line items to quickly pinpoint variances and explore trends.

Smart search facilities will find pertinent results at any layer of data loaded even if the data is in background layers of multi layered reports.

Producing graphic report output from the screen content or rendering it together with underlying formulas in Excel is simply, two clicks of a mouse button.

Excel reports are ready for immediate use and hold all the formatting and presentation displayed on the screen, including subtotalling and totalling formulas.

“Customise” provides a structured level of control over presentation of data including the ability to display and print commentary.

Filters and locks help you specify conditions to zero in on complex business requirements.
The sample reports that follow indicate the use of filters and show exactly the filters in use. These simple safety devices assist with user confidence and data integrity.
Reports – Monthly. Designed in PowerExcel

Integrated as a separate tab within Magiq, PowerExcel offers an easy-to-use Excel reporting tool combining the benefits of ad-hoc freehand report building, Excel functionality, Tree navigation and business intelligence capabilities.
Analysis

Strategic and Long Term Financial Plans and Forecasts

Rolling forecasts can be created combining ‘actual to date’ and latest estimates for the remaining year.

Forecast Trend

Magiq manages virtually unlimited forward planning years. As you enter your next budget, the Performance administrator can set rules, drivers and factors to automate the process for immediately generating future years’ projected budgets as you go.

Any such projected data can immediately be dragged into reports and enquiries.

Intelligence

Dashboards

Individual interest Dashboards are easy to create promoting “at a glance” feedback on the performance of key financial summaries and performance indicators. Users can add to screen layouts from a Dashboard Selection panel or simply drag and drop reports, enquiries, charts etc from any dataset to form a combined Dashboard.
Above - components being dragged into a sample dashboard combining financial and other business applications.

Dashboard Example – General Manager
**Portals**

Within Magiq, a tab can be defined as an organisational portal presenting information from different sources in a unified way. With client intranets and different enterprise systems promoting web access to information, the Magiq Portal has the potential to bring these different sources together combining seamless access to financial management and relevant content.

![Portal Page](image)

This portal page is presenting a web link to the Australian Government’s GrantsLINK and a page of exception reporting **Alerts**. In the example above, the Big Variance alert indicates there are 18 cost centers more than 20% over budget. By clicking the hyperlink, the Manager can immediately see the offending Cost Centers.

![Alerts Table](image)
Find Out More
Computron specialises in a number of Business Solutions serving both Local Government and Commercial Enterprises. To find out more please go to our website www.avolin.com.