

# **FSN Reprint**

## **Feature Article**

**“Tagetik takes collaboration to new heights”**

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## Tagetik takes collaboration to new heights

Mankind is a gregarious species. Communication and social behaviour are part of our DNA. Our need and willingness to communicate permeate all aspects of our personal lives, but what about our business activities? Despite the rising complexity of doing business, for example, the credit crunch, internationalisation, compliance and accounting regulation there is much evidence to suggest that we communicate inefficiently and use the wrong tools.

During the last two decades our approach to transaction processing has been to automate as much as possible, i.e. eliminate human interaction in order to drive down the cost of business operations. But experience suggests that the same thinking does not work nearly so well when it comes to the more imprecise discipline of managing information, gaining business insight and knowledge sharing.

**The average knowledge worker spends 25 percent of his time each day simply looking for information.** Furthermore, **the cost of processing an erroneous transaction is more than 80 percent higher than a transaction that is processed first time** – why? It is because business problems and decision making require human interaction – collaboration – often lots of it.

It is an issue very familiar to [Tagetik](#) an innovative leader in the performance management space (see [Gartner's CPM Suites Magic Quadrant 2009](#)). Performance management is a prime example of a collection of processes crying out for improved communication and collaboration. In fact Tagetik are so committed to improving business communication in this area that they have coined the phrase “**collaborative performance management**” to capture the essence of what is required, replacing what they see as the outdated concept of mere Corporate Performance Management.

## Beyond performance management

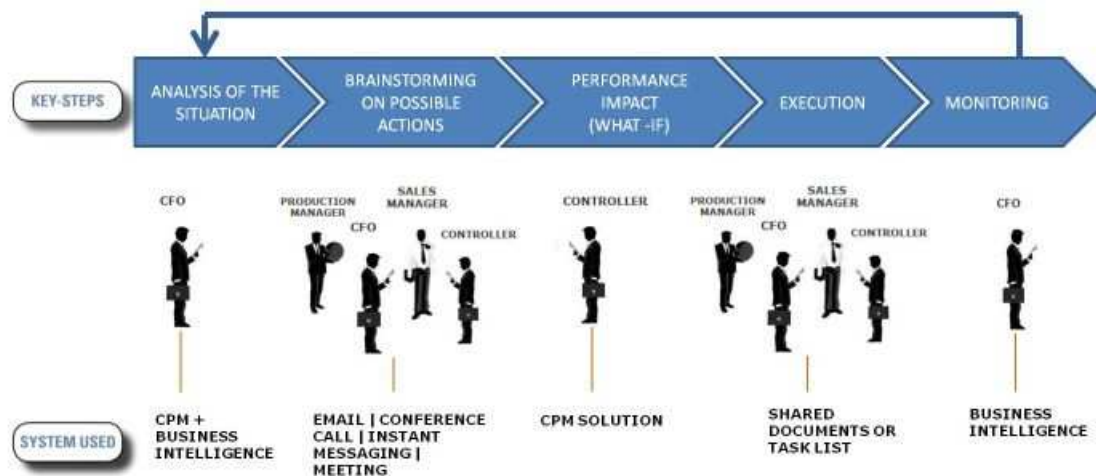
Performance management encapsulates a broad range of management processes such as budgeting, planning, forecasting, financial consolidation and reporting. At the core of these processes is normally a multidimensional business model. (Unlike most other performance management vendors, Tagetik is recognised for its ability to support all of these processes from a single, unified database). So if business has to be managed in multiple dimensions it follows that any problems that arise are likely to be multidimensional as well. In practice this means that performance management has to transcend functional boundaries.

One manifestation of this is the increasing trend towards the convergence of operational and financial planning, reflecting the need to improve forecast accuracy by collaborating across functional boundaries. Take for example the simple relationship between ‘revenue’ in the financial plan, ‘sales by product’ in the sales plan and ‘sales force headcount’ in the HR plan. Total sales by product should of course accord with revenue in the financial plan but the HR plan should confirm that there are sufficient sales personnel either employed or to be recruited that can deliver the projected sales activity. In the absence of this three-way planning involving all three departments the resulting financial forecast and any subsequent revisions are likely to be inaccurate. So collaboration isn’t just a feature of correcting something that has gone wrong but is a key plank to getting things right in the first place.

So how do you build **collaboration** into performance management? Well to a certain extent Tagetik has always had the ability to share information in a collaborative fashion. Taking the budgeting cycle as an example the native Tagetik 3.0 application incorporates workflow for managing budget creation, submissions, approvals, and rejections supported by integrated email routing and alerts. Furthermore, observations recorded as comments at the entity or cell level can be retained and shared by all contributors to a plan. But is this enough? Surely, collaboration is more than a collection of shared processes, issues and tasks.

And what happens to events arising outside of the pre-planned workflow when communications and collaboration necessarily become more informal? In most case users have to rely on an assortment of ad-hoc emails, conference calls and meetings. It is as though performance management is forced to occupy two separate universes, i.e. formal workflow-based communications supported by email on the one hand and informal communications leveraging a variety of tools on the other. The challenge that Tagetik posed for itself is **how do you take collaboration to a higher plane? How do you more effectively support real-life decision making and problem solving?**

*Tagetik's CPM platform (now enabled by Microsoft SharePoint) is infused with collaborative elements that encourage brainstorming, shared execution and responsibility for delivering superior performance.*



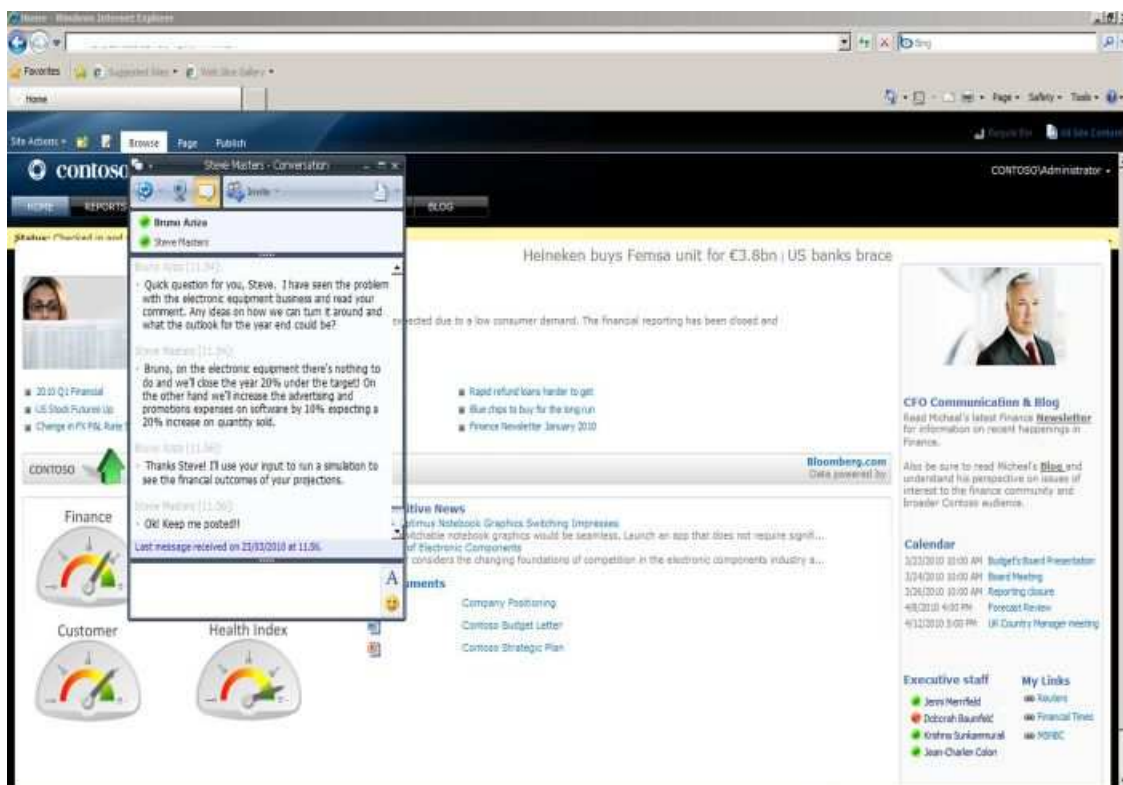
### Solving real life dilemmas with Tagetik 3.0 Enabled by Microsoft SharePoint

To deliver answers to these needs Tagetik turned to its **relationship with Microsoft** to leverage the advanced communications, collaboration and business intelligence capability within the popular Microsoft SharePoint 2010 and Microsoft Office 2010, [deeply embedding these technologies within the Tagetik 3.0 platform](#). The new product – Tagetik 3.0 Enabled by Microsoft SharePoint is the latest instalment in Tagetik’s rapid progress on the international stage. (For those that have allegiances to other technology platforms, such as Oracle, Tagetik continues to develop and maintain

its open platform in parallel). Taking advantage of Microsoft's technology stack makes sense since a wide range of mid-sized to very large enterprises make use of the capability. Furthermore, in the current tougher economy, organisations will welcome the opportunity to build on their existing platform.

What SharePoint does at a stroke is to reconnect users to the underlying processes by unifying informal and formal communications in one environment. Tasks and alerts generated by the workflow in Tagetik 3.0 can be surfaced in a familiar Microsoft Outlook environment where most users start their business day. Furthermore, deadlines and activities generated by, say a budget revision, can be incorporated automatically in the Outlook calendar. Tagetik 3.0 processes such as the opening of a data entry form can be invoked from within the SharePoint environment or vice versa. One of the advantages of SharePoint is that it can also be used to build additional company specific processes that may be beyond the normal scope of a budgeting process. In this way the solution caters for idiosyncratic processes whilst maintaining a unified environment.

***Tagetik 3.0 Enabled by Microsoft SharePoint encourages collaboration with Instant Messenger functionality twinned with a home page that places relevant information, such as KPI's and relevant deadlines at everyone's fingertips.***



There are several options for handling informal communications within SharePoint integrated to Tagetik 3.0. Blogging and Instant Messenger (IM) capability provide opportunities for finance staff and other departments to work collaboratively to resolve performance issues and share best practice, dipping into the Tagetik 3.0 environment where necessary. Additionally, Microsoft's Unified Communications highlights which members of the team are available to 'speak' in an IM or web conference session at any particular point in time.



**Tagetik leverages Microsoft Business Intelligence capability to readily analyse data in an intuitive and revealing way.**



Furthermore, Excel 2010 taking advantage of PowerPivot and Sparklines provides additional creative and illuminating ways of surfacing information in the SharePoint environment without compromising the integrity of the underlying Tagetik 3.0 application.

Whilst the rest of the market is focussed on task management at a very granular level Tagetik has taken the high ground. Leveraging commonplace Microsoft tools it has built a singular environment that respects the need for formal communications but also allows humans to do what they do best – **work together in teams.**

## **About FSN**

FSN Publishing Limited is an independent research, news and publishing organisation catering for the needs of the finance function. This feature article is written by Gary Simon, Group Publisher of FSN and Managing Editor of FSN Newswire. He is a graduate of London University, a Chartered Accountant and a Fellow of the British Computer Society with more than 23 years experience of implementing management and financial reporting systems. Formerly a partner in Deloitte for more than 16 years, he has led some of the most complex information management assignments for global enterprises in the private and public sector. His bestselling book, "Fast Close to the MAX" was published in 2008.

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