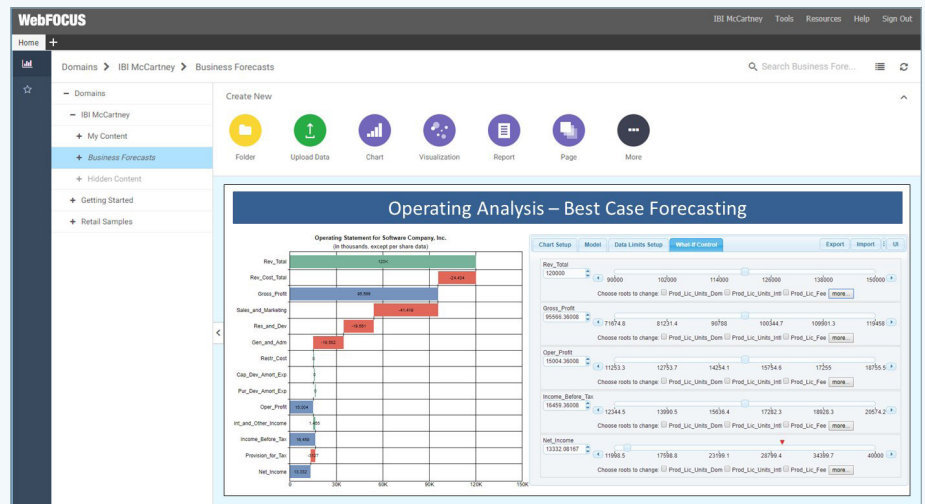


WebFOCUS What-If Assist

WebFOCUS Extension Provides 'What-If' Functionality for Analysts and Everyday Users

Highlights

- Brainstorm with data
- Experiment with performance measures and calculations
- Access multiple predefined scenarios
- Change variables
- Set upper and lower limits (goals)
- Calculate and project results
- Try out different scenarios and save them for later use



What Is What-If Analysis?

Also defined as sensitivity analysis, what-if analysis is a brainstorming technique used to determine how projected performance is affected by changes in the assumptions that those projections are based upon. What-if analysis is often used to compare different scenarios and their potential outcomes based on changing conditions.

Introducing What-If Assist

WebFOCUS, Information Builders' business intelligence (BI) and analytics platform, contains multiple capabilities for creating and delivering BI and analytics content. Two of its main authoring tools are App Studio and InfoAssist.

App Studio is typically used by IT and BI specialists to create advanced reporting systems and information applications (InfoApps™). InfoAssist is a self-service reporting, charting, and data discovery tool that can be used by non-technical business users. With WebFOCUS What-If Assist, you can now extend both of these tools to support the creation of what-if models and simulations.

Prior to this, What-If capability was usually delivered as part of a larger and much more complex budgeting and planning solution. With What-If Assist, you can deliver this capability to all your analytics consumers, alongside your BI and analytics.

Information Builders helps organizations transform data into business value. Our business intelligence, integration, and data integrity solutions enable smarter decision-making, strengthen customer relationships, improve performance, and drive growth.

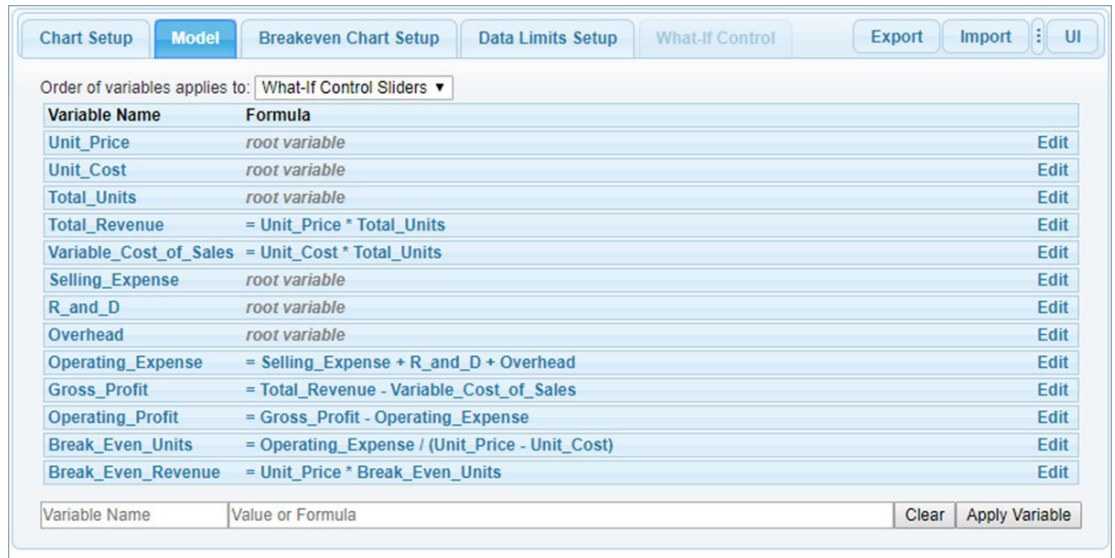


Fig. 1. The What-If Assist Extension in WebFOCUS InfoAssist.

Use Cases

You can use What-If Assist to set up and deploy, in minutes, three scenarios that would otherwise require considerable development:

- **Break-Even Analysis** – Determine how pricing and costs interact over volume, so you can vary pricing, volume, and costs to figure out the point at which you'll break even on product production
- **Operating Analysis** – Analyze costs, expenses, and income factors to examine the bottom line for a department or company
- **Budget Planning and Forecasting:** Vary dependent and independent factors to determine how such variation affects the material capabilities and outcomes of your project

Example: Authoring a Break-Even Model in What-If Assist

Let's take a look at the authoring environment first and how you create a what-if model. If you create and design analytics and BI apps, you may be creating a what-if model for yourself, but you might also be in IT or a BI specialist creating a what-if application for non-technical business users. It is important to note the difference between authors and consumers here, as the experience will differ greatly.

In Fig. 1, an author has WebFOCUS InfoAssist open and has selected the What-If Assist extension, having preselected the relevant measures.

The What-If Assist tool opens and the author is then able to establish the variables and settings for the model. For example, the user can define new roots (independent fields that affect dependent calculations) and/or adjust formulas that impact this break-even model. The underlying data is supplied by WebFOCUS, so new calculations and fields can be defined at the WebFOCUS metadata layer and applied as needed.

The author can further configure the model via the Break-Even Chart Setup tab (See Fig. 2), which is used to assign user-specific variables to metrics that are required to perform the break-even analysis. The author can define limits (min/max) for each root variable, and define goal values for non-root variables.

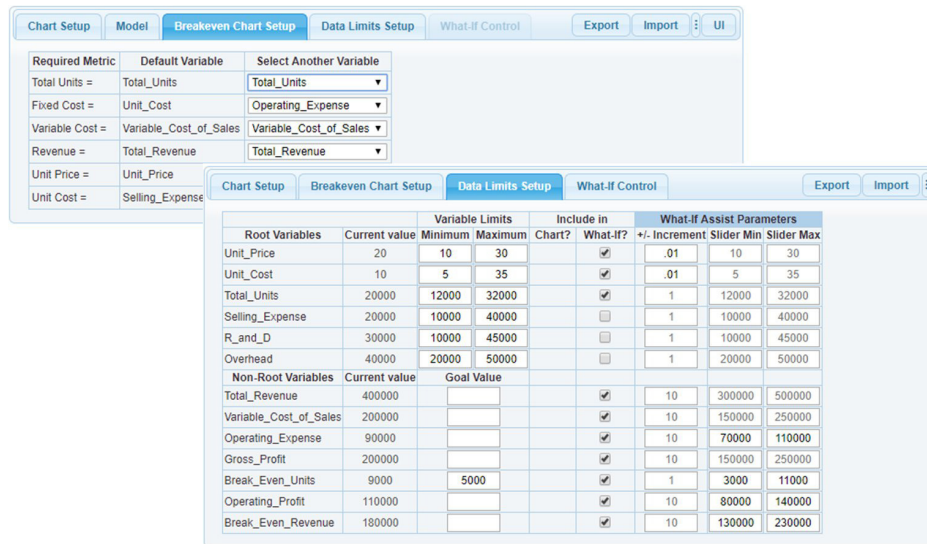


Fig. 2. Assign user-specific variables to metrics to perform break-even analysis.

Some analysts might turn to Excel to do analyses like these. One differentiating element of What-if Assist from Excel is the Attainable Goal achieved by confining root values to their practical limits. These limits are also known as objective coefficients.

The BI author now can see the chart instantly update as break even sliders and variables are changed.

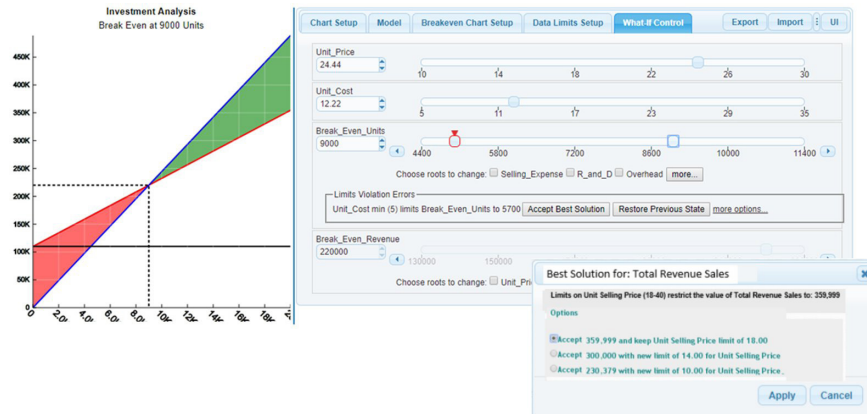


Fig. 3. BI authors can see real-time chart updates as break-even sliders and variables are modified.

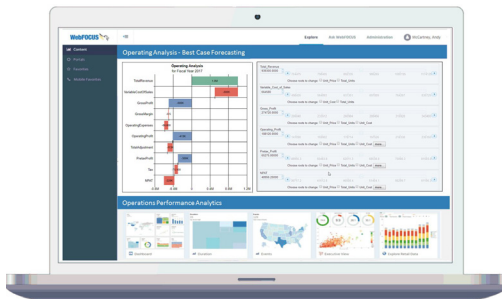
What if competitive expectations limit the range of a planned price change? What if the minimum cost of sales can be affected by weather conditions at the projected period of launch? These are dynamics that need to be taken into account when planning or forecasting. And when defined limits are breached, What-if Assist offers a range of best solutions. The bottom line: experiment with the variables, manage the practical limits, and reach the best conclusion.

Who Usually Conducts What-If Analysis?

- Finance Managers and Executives – Operating statement outcomes and budgeting and forecasting
- Product and Project Portfolio Managers – Determining probable costs and ROI break-even
- Operational Managers – Planning staffing needs, determining department budgets, managing analysts that support the above

Delivering What-If Assist to the Masses

What-If assist can be deployed in runtime mode; this mode hides configuration and model setup, and simply lets less technical consumers experiment with the models that authors create, and determine the best course of action. WebFOCUS manages data governance, user access, and lets authors control deployment of What-If models to hundreds or even thousands of users. This easily expands the power of What-If Assist to any area of your enterprise.



What-If analysis can be applicable to virtually any activity or system. For example, if you're planning a family vacation, you might consider the cost of driving versus flying. But, what if the cost of gas goes up between now and then? What if competition heats up between airlines? These factors might affect your costs and your ultimate decision. By using What-If Assist, you can explore a variety of business scenarios and make superior decisions.

This Operating Analysis app and associated chart lets consumers explore operational efficiencies, alongside other objectives, such as financial value, revenue opportunity and growth, and risk management. The What-If Operating Analysis is then deployed, with other BI and analytics, to the operations team.

Find Out More

We can help you succeed. Talk to your local Information Builders representative to learn how. Visit us at informationbuilders.com, e-mail askinfo@informationbuilders.com, or call **(800) 969-4636** in the U.S. and Canada. To improve your skills, visit education.ibi.com.



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