

Using Alight Planning to Analyze Strategy



The Company: Sales Team Live

Sales Team Live (STL) is a web-based software and services company delivering tools, industry data and training to real estate investors. The company provides end-to-end marketing campaigns with targeted mailings to specialty homeowner segments.

The Voice: Gary Boomershine, CEO

The Problem

I needed a financial model to help me figure out the strategies and deal structures for working with customers.

As we entered the marketplace with new products, the feedback kept pointing to alternate approaches for pricing, bundling products and services, structuring referral fees, and working with resellers.

The deal structure choices were definable, but the underlying assumptions were all over the map. The software I was looking for needed to integrate strategic choices and assumptions with pure number crunching in a way I could understand.

I've worked with spreadsheets and am pretty articulate. But there's no way I could build a model in Excel that would give me the answers I needed.

Implementation

The Alight consultant walked me through a series of questions focusing on volumes and sales conversion rates when products and reseller channels are mature — that is, what the business would look like a couple of years out. This is one beginning point for Alight's process and architecture called Stage Based Planning. Build a model with target assumptions of where you want to go, then fill in the blanks of how to get there.

Within a day I was looking at a draft of a baseline revenue model. By the end of the week, we had a complete model — P&L, balance sheet and cash flow — going

out three years. The Alight expert understood planning and guided me through the process of defining the financial targets, rollup structures and activity drivers.

The process was amazingly fast in translating my strategic vision into manipulable assumptions with linked data relationships that I could test out in real time.

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An Alight feature that makes this easy is Key Measures — a special pane at the bottom of the screen where I can change the most sensitive input assumptions and see calculated metrics of the business in real time. In spreadsheets you have to jump back and forth between worksheets to change inputs and look at results.

The Result

I first chose Alight Planning to build a financial model. But I got a lot more — a planning tool that helps me guide my company through a complicated maze of financial and strategy decisions that are having an immediate top and bottom line impact including raising capital. That's invaluable.

I've been around enterprise and desktop software my whole career. There's no question that Alight Planning is setting new standards for financial software interfaces and analysis tools.