



# Project and Portfolio Management Category Comparison and Selection Guide

## Executive Summary

This white paper is a guide for decision makers who seek an appropriate Project and Portfolio Management (PPM) solution for their organizations. This guide identifies key factors to consider when selecting a PPM solution.

The guide provides an overview of PPM solution categories, describing their value, benefits, and shortcomings. The categories include: Traditional/Platform, Enterprise Resource Planning, Software-plus-Services and Alternative Tools.

Additionally, the guide presents the Microsoft Enterprise Project Management (EPM) solution and the benefits EPM provides to each PPM category. Also included is a comparison matrix of the capabilities across all PPM categories.

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## Introduction

While hundreds of project management tools exist in the market today, few are versatile enough to accommodate a wide range of customer needs. Even fewer have proven to consistently increase efficiencies at a portfolio level.

This guide outlines categories of Project and Portfolio Management (PPM) solutions, including guidance on how the Microsoft Enterprise Project Management (EPM) solution addresses the equivalent needs of each category and demonstrating the distinct benefits Microsoft offers.

## PPM Categories

The market today boasts hundreds of PPM solutions, each designed to meet different customer needs. This guide will review the following PPM categories:

- **Traditional/Platform:** Deliver core PPM functionality while offering platform capabilities that deliver rich extensibility.
- **Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP):** Enables organizations to manage key business functions such as financial management, project management, and customer relationship management.
- **Software-plus-Services:** Firms host the PPM solution online and provide technical operation, maintenance, and support for the customer.
- **Alternative Tools:** Point solutions that are not part of a broad PPM solution, but often are used for specific needs.

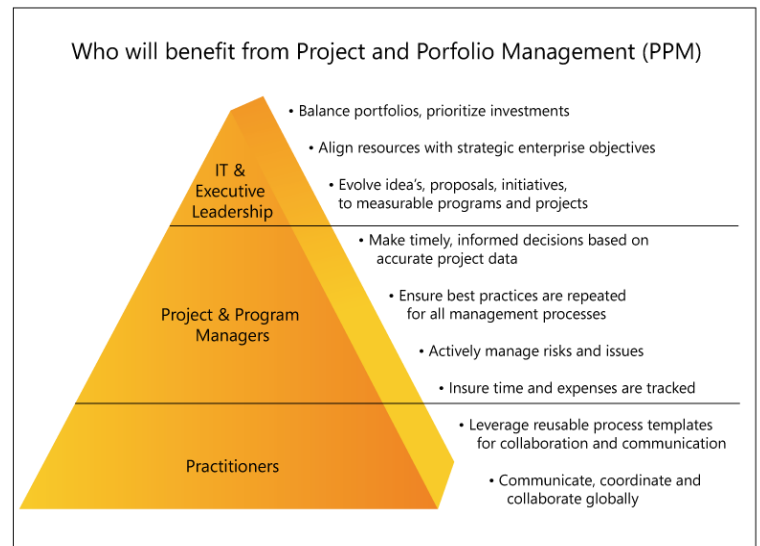
## Situation

Executives face the challenge of how best to manage the company's portfolio of projects and resources.

PPM solutions help organizations gain visibility, insight, and control across all work. The solutions provide the tools to properly align resources (people, hardware, and software), projects, and goals, optimizing business strategy and performance. A well-implemented PPM system can enhance decision-making, maximize resource utilization, and increase operational efficiency.

PPM tools enable executives to meet this challenge. These executives need a project management solution that will align with their project management organization methodology, to make their organization more efficient and allow executives more visibility into overall company processes.

The diagram (right) indicates how an organization benefits from PPM.



## PPM Selection

There are four major capability areas to consider when selecting a PPM solution. Below, the capability areas are listed with corresponding key functions.

### Portfolio Capability

- Demand Management: A solid project intake process enables work and project requests in an organized fashion.
- Project Prioritization and Selection: Projects are categorized as Run, Grow, or Transform based on strategic impact. Run projects are core internal projects to keep the existing IT infrastructure functioning. Grow projects enhance existing capabilities. Transform projects are those that deliver new core functionality that provide an advantage to an organization. A good PPM solution helps drive the strategic direction of an organization by applying 'what-if' scenarios.
- Portfolio Optimization: Ability to provide visibility into organizational activity across projects and information to inform portfolio's strategic direction and cost optimization.

### Technical Capability

- API/Extensibility: Ability to provide a programming interface for other IT applications to integrate.
- Cloud Hosting: Ability to host the solution both in the cloud and on-premise.
- Integration: How well the solution integrates with complimentary software, such as schedulers (Microsoft Project), ERP applications, and e-mail systems.
- Implementation: Level of complexity with respect to resources, time, and technical systems.

### Project Capability

- Resource Management: Ability to enable efficient portfolio management, including reporting and optimization measures.
- Financial Management: Ability to deliver on cost controls, project accounting, and portfolio cost reporting.
- Reporting: Ability to provide relevant resource, schedule, and analytics.
- Collaboration: Integration mechanisms that enable team members to communicate better and work efficiently through sharing information.
- Risks and Issues: Identification of risks and issues supported by mitigation strategies.
- Schedule Development: Activity list, activity attributes, activity resource requirements, resource calendars, project schedule network diagrams, activity duration estimates, project management plan, project scope statement, work breakdown structures.

### Overarching Capability

- Ease of Use: Level of interface usability and ability to retrieve information.
- Ecosystem: Strength and depth of support network built around solution, including partners, technical community, and additional resources such as online tools.
- Presence and Investment: Strength of market presence and company experience, as well as ability to continue to invest and innovate around solution.
- Pricing: Primarily licensing and service costs; also includes maintenance and training.

## Section One: Project and Portfolio Management (PPM) Category Guide

### **Traditional/Platform Category**

The traditional/platform category solutions deliver core PPM functionality while offering platform capabilities that deliver rich extensibility. Offerings in this category are server-based solutions that have been refined over time to be enterprise-ready. Some examples of these types of solutions are: Primavera, Clarity, PlanView, Mercury, and SAP, to some extent.

#### **Value of Traditional/Platform Solutions**

Customers value the comprehensive, industry-specific functionality of traditional/platform solutions, as well as their extensibility.

#### *Benefits*

- Robust project planning, such as detailed time sheets, expansive resource reporting, and capacity to handle complex projects with many tasks and dependencies.
- Advanced analytics, such as ability to output cost simulations, resource utilization, and predictive time estimates.
- Horizontal as well as industry focused solutions that take the form of catered templates, intuitive processes, and pre-built workspaces to facilitate specialized solutions for the needs of certain industries.
- Integration capabilities throughout the technology platform, enabling valuable add-ons.
- Long-term investment in the technology platform, and thus the PPM product.
- Because of the sheer size of the platforms, support system of the platform solutions is usually extensive.

#### *Shortcomings*

- Implementations of traditional/platform solutions are substantial in terms of complexity and time.
- The steep learning curve of traditional/platform solutions involves training courses and often consultant expertise.

### **Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) Category**

ERP solutions provide software applications that typically focus on financial management of manufacturing and supply chain organizations. As such, there is often a customer relationship management (CRM) aspect of ERP solutions as well. SAP and Oracle are examples of ERP solutions.

#### **Value of ERP PPM Solutions**

The ERP PPM solution category focuses on resourcing (both human and material resources) and the implications on project and portfolio planning. Strong ERP systems are sophisticated in their ability to display and treat partial resources differently. ERP solutions can do more in terms of helping organizations increase operational efficiency, and less to manage capital expenditure projects. Often the overall solution requires a complex implementation.

#### *Benefits*

- Solutions exhibit synergies, streamlining company ERP information with the PPM solution. Using an ERP PPM solution enables companies to streamline workflows from various inputs throughout the organization.
- Focused ERP tools deliver deep project accounting. ERP solutions focus on resource accounting; ERP PPM solutions are robust in this area due to their seamless integration with the broader ERP solution.
- Project and portfolio efficiency increases through improved tracking and forecasting.

#### *Shortcomings*

- ERP solutions can be expensive to implement and maintain. ERP systems are often complex to implement and learn, and require costly consulting services.
- ERP solutions often limit customization options or make them expensive. They are often rigid in their requirements, making customer modifications to the system difficult.

- ERP solutions may compromise on portfolio reporting. A good PPM solution should be able to provide not only resource management, but also work breakdown creation, task and activity management, risks and issue reporting, assumptions and constraints identification, and change management.
- ERP solutions are not always straight-forward for project managers. Usually, midsize companies struggle with business integration, affordability, and usability of single-purpose tools. A mismatch generally exists between ERP terminology and business practices. As a result, oftentimes data needs to be exported from the ERP software to perform analysis, which requires patience and expertise.

## **Software-plus-Services Category**

PPM solutions in the Software-plus-Services (often called SaaS) category combine aspects of software with aspects of cloud-based services, offering a rich online experience of software and server capabilities. A Software-plus-Services provider or partner firm hosts the PPM software online and provides the technical operation, maintenance, and support for the customer. Strong Software-plus-Services PPM offerings have an on-premise solution as well. Examples of Software-plus-Services solutions are @Task, Daptiv, Clarizen, and Serena Mariner. Clarity and Primavera also have Software-plus-Services offerings.

## **Value of Software-plus-Services PPM Solutions**

Customers find value in the accessibility and simplicity of Software-plus-Services PPM solutions. Software-plus-Services solutions have the potential to offer users a robust experience, with a centralized source of data, and a fully integrated user experience. Solutions may provide a consistent experience, regardless of the access point, adapting well to the modern work environment, which includes a variety of work locations rather than one office. While not all Software-plus-Services solutions realize this potential, there are some solutions which are able to offer significant benefits.

### *Benefits*

- Solutions exhibit simplicity of design and ease of use. Software-plus-Services offerings enable users to access the functions they need quickly. They generate this effect through intuitive dashboard views and paring down the functionality offered to the user.
- Most up-to-date project information is always accessible to everyone online. To ensure the integrity of the information, Software-plus-Services solutions track recent changes and also implement version control to hosted project plans. These solutions also offer the option of allowing project plan access to authorized team members outside of the customer's company.
- Due to pre-configuration of the hosted Software-plus-Services solution, implementation time is fast. Hosting the single version of the product enables solution providers to provide centralized feature updating as improvements become available, rather than rely on users to download patches or wait for the next version of the product.
- Solutions support multiple integrations. There are a variety of users on different platforms interfacing with the Software-plus-Services products and the PPM solutions in this category enable integration.
- Software-plus-Services offer managed IT services. These allow companies to utilize a team of engaged IT professionals engrained in the solution rather than the internal IT team. The internal IT team can then focus on unique business priorities.
- Constant feature innovation prevails in the Software-plus-Services category. Software-plus-Services options enable the provider to rapidly test and implement new features such as mobile phone integrations and social media applications, such as wikis and blogs.

### *Shortcomings*

- Security is concerning, as typical solutions host outside the company network. Many companies are concerned about their proprietary data being held outside their intranet.
- Customers are limited to weak desktop planning tools when working offline. Users do not always have access to high speed internet, and many Software-plus-Services providers do not offer robust tools offline.

- Portfolio management capabilities are less developed on the whole than in Traditional/Platform and ERP categories. The Software-plus-Services category has neither the robust “top-down” reporting mechanisms nor the comparison tools that the other categories offer.
- Lack of maturity in all functionality, specifically IT integrations, such as ITSM and ALM, and issue routing and management.

## **Alternative Tools Category**

The Alternative Tools category consists of tools that the user already owns or is able to obtain inexpensively. A distinct difference exists between *leveraging* an existing tool as part of a broader solution (as other PPM categories may), and attempting to *use* a tool as a solution (which is characteristic of the Alternative Tools section). Examples of Alternative Tools include Microsoft Excel (on a standalone basis), Microsoft Office SharePoint Server (on a standalone basis), scheduling and gantt chart applications, and viewers.

### **The Value of Alternative Tools**

The Alternative Tools category attracts customers because the options are seemingly low-cost (because it is a free download or because the customer has already purchased the tool) and easy to use.

#### *Benefits*

- Alternative Tools are lower cost than typical PPM solutions. Many of these solutions are offered without license or service agreements. Others are technologies that users may already own.
- Solutions meet individual functionality needs of PPM. Alternative Tool products are focused around individual needs within PPM and serve as a “good enough” solution.
- Do not require extensive IT resources as these tools are not as complex as full PPM solutions. Customers can often implement the tools on their own.
- Tools are already implemented and in use by the organization.

#### *Shortcomings*

- Does not address true needs of the organization by giving limited functionality on one aspect of PPM. These tools offer insight into one piece of project management, and fail to deliver the benefits of an overall PPM solution.
- Lack of technical support for the tools is problematic when facing product issues. These tools do not have wide technical support because they are not broadly adopted solutions.
- Customers lose efficiencies in implementation and operation. Often, implementing stand-alone pieces of a solution take more resources to implement, modify and integrate to existing project plans.

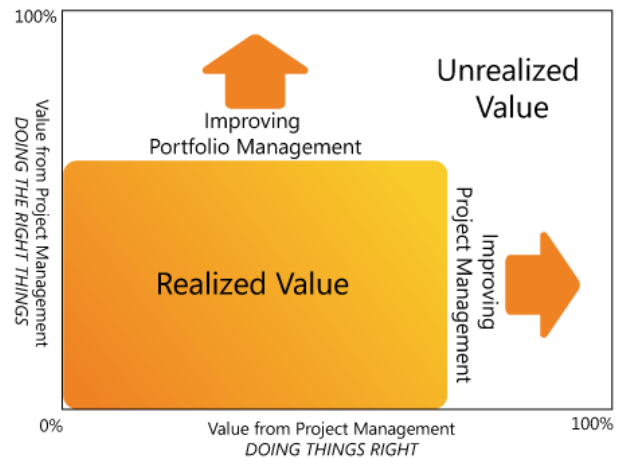
## Section Two: An Overview of Microsoft EPM and Its Benefits

### Microsoft EPM Product Overview

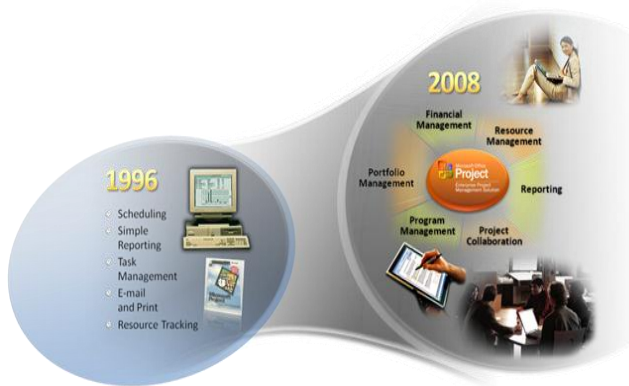
#### Value of Microsoft EPM

Microsoft EPM provides insight to clarify the complexity of aligning and managing investments, work, and resources. Microsoft EPM gives organizations visibility on a portfolio and project level, enables cost optimization, and gives a granular view of project operations such as schedules and resources.

Microsoft EPM provides an end-to-end collaborative project and portfolio environment. Microsoft EPM solution helps organizations gain visibility, insight and control across all work, enhancing decision-making, improving alignment with business strategy, maximizing resource utilization, and helping to increase operational efficiency. The diagram (right) highlights the realized value of EPM.



#### The EPM Solution



#### Vision

The Microsoft vision is of a world where organizations effectively manage investments and people in order to understand the past, control the present, and make informed decisions for the future. EPM provides IT organizations with visibility and control across their assets while aligning with business objectives—proving IT is more than merely a cost center. EPM also recognizes PPM’s potential and relevance beyond IT. Microsoft EPM is continuously evolving to provide a holistic monitoring and management system that supports other key solution areas (NPD/PLM and R&D, Governance, Capital Planning, Construction and Engineering), and vertical markets (Manufacturing, Life Sciences, Oil & Gas, Professional Services, Government).

#### Product Overview

The four Microsoft Project-based product offerings are:

1. For individuals in any size business—Project Standard 2007 or Project Professional 2007, which is offered in a stand-alone client desktop mode.
2. For medium to large enterprises—Project Professional desktop client, Project Server, and Project Portfolio Server. Both Server products are offered with Web front ends which must be purchased separately with Client Access Licenses (CALs).
3. For customers who wish to evaluate or run EPM in a hosted or Software-plus-Services environment—Microsoft offers a subscription model which allows customers to employ a “pay-as-you-go” user-based model. This model can help reduce risk and ease expense allocation. The EPM Software-plus-Services hosted service offering is provided by Microsoft and delivered via partners such as Project Hosts and EPM Live.

## Ecosystem

Microsoft has a tremendous global network of partners with deep expertise and product knowledge. These partners are able to implement custom solutions to fit organizations' needs as well as pre-configured solutions for fast implementations. A broad range of partner solution know-how, as well as partner-developed EPM extensions cover nearly every use case.

The Microsoft global partner network speaks over 19 languages and is local to wherever you are.

Additionally, Microsoft EPM has a strong technical community online which contains training webcasts, product developer blogs, and accessible events including conferences.

The diagram (right) showcases the entire Microsoft Project platform.



## How EPM Fits and Adds Value to Each PPM Category

### Traditional/Platform Category

*"Thanks to the Microsoft Office EPM Solution, project managers have cut time spent managing status reports at least in half."*

Joe Lockett  
Section Manager  
Procter and Gamble

#### **How Microsoft EPM fits the Traditional/Platform category**

EPM is built on the powerful Microsoft SharePoint platform. The SharePoint platform offers a packaged PPM solution, with SharePoint, Project, and Portfolio Server-enabled collaboration, communication, and document storage—in addition to the project management and portfolio reporting functionality. Also included is the complete dashboard functionality of Excel and SQL. Each product delivers a robust feature set while enabling a whole that is greater than the sum of its parts.

Microsoft has 20-plus years of software industry business experience, as well as an established user base for Microsoft Project of more than 20 million project managers around the world, making the EPM solution an extremely popular option.

#### **How Microsoft EPM adds more value than other options in the Traditional/Platform category**

- Scale and comprehensive collaboration with other key Microsoft products
- Expansive portfolio capabilities, four governance phases, reporting, solution areas
- Best practices project and portfolio management- activity sequencing
- Price point, best utilize existing Microsoft investment

Microsoft EPM is a strategic choice. The Microsoft platform offers both scale and comprehensive collaboration opportunities derived from integration with other key Microsoft products such as SharePoint, Project, Portfolio Server, Excel, and SQL. The integration across these products enables collaboration, document storage, reporting opportunities, and end-user customization. End users are able to easily create their own workspaces, share assets, and connect people with line-of-business data across teams, departments, and organizations.

From a functional perspective, the expansive portfolio management capabilities of EPM offer four discrete governance phases (create, select, plan, and manage) and a variety of pre-configured solutions. The portfolio management capabilities

include robust “top-down” reporting with custom reports, business strategy prioritization, evaluation of competing investments, investment maps, portfolio optimization and “what-if” analysis, and portfolio prioritization. Additionally, EPM offers a toolset of pre-configured industry solutions for customers, with emphasis on Project and Portfolio Management, Capital Planning and Investment Control, Innovation Process Management and Connecting Application Development with PPM. The extensive Microsoft partner network implements this toolset to fit the user’s organizational needs.

Microsoft EPM makes use of best practices for project and program management. For instance, others do not perform activity sequencing by using standard finish-to-start, start-to-finish or other typical dependency relationships. Migrating a project plan created in some solutions to any other file format is a challenge if an organization wants to take advantage of the real power of project and portfolio reporting, such as earned value reporting.

Lastly, EPM exhibits reasonable licensing and implementation costs. Compared to other traditional/platform solutions, the price point is often lower and the implementation time is shorter through its experienced partner network’s pre-configured solutions. Customers who are already using Microsoft technology can make the best of their existing investment by using the Microsoft platform.

### **ERP Category**

*“After implementing the EPM Solution, we are now able to provide the leadership at BD with deeper visibility into our \$400 million R&D fund.”*

Jeff DiPasquale  
Global IT Portfolio Manager  
Becton, Dickinson and Company

#### **How Microsoft EPM fits the ERP category**

EPM reduces or maximizes staff levels by providing a complete (both detailed and consolidated) view of resource requirements and actual effort. With this information, management may staff at the appropriate levels for current and anticipated work. Microsoft EPM functions as a resource center for managers to view or analyze availability, assignments, and attributes. Fueling this capability are resource plans and team resources, which help assess needs at a high level, manage estimates, and assign the right people to a project. The EPM solution allows “assignment owners” to input individual data on resources, both human and material. Specific functionality involves capacity, demand, and utilization, as well as ensuring project managers and resource managers can quickly search and identify resources with the right skills and availability to work on the project and assign work to the right team members.

In project accounting, EPM helps project managers assign cost in a variety of ways, enabling cost and benefit and forecasting estimates. Project managers can choose from rate-based cost, per-use costs, fixed costs, cost resource (an arbitrary cost, not set based on hours), and budget resource (allows allocation to budgets).

The Microsoft EPM solution creates complete financial accountability by integrating with common and small ERP tools that can provide an accurate cost picture instead of having to invest in large ERP solutions. Various systems may contain information relevant to communicating the results of programmatic spending. With Microsoft EPM, users can pull information into a central repository and collect other data manually, then use built-in analytic capabilities to slice and dice and analyze the information to support decision-making. This process allow a shift in focus from being the “scorekeeper” toward being a strategic advisor.

### **How Microsoft EPM adds more value than other options in the ERP category**

- User friendly
- Certified partner integration with SAP
- Manage projects and resources more effectively
- Quick and efficient implementation

EPM is very easy to use, and thus is accepted by many users, seemingly more so than other ERP solutions. EPM is based on the SharePoint platform and Microsoft Project planning tools, which are widespread, easy-to-use, universal tools in the project-manager realm. Users are engaged with the EPM solutions because they can get what they need easily and immediately. SharePoint Server enables portal views and easy-to-navigate workspaces. Users can easily activate SharePoint Server functions, such as document management or business work flows. With top-down portfolio reports and bottom-up project reports, users can easily retrieve data as well.

Additionally, more and more EPM user organizations make use of its capabilities to integrate with leading ERP software. Specialized Microsoft partners are experienced in integrating seamlessly with core ERP software.

Microsoft EPM helps organizations manage projects and resources more effectively resulting in efficiencies that drive cost reductions, improved alignment with strategic priorities, and a reduced risk of failed projects and programs. By adopting both Project and Portfolio Management techniques, organizations can objectively eliminate redundant or low-value investments, as well as successfully execute the projects and realize the forecasted benefits. PPM helps maximize resource utilization, provides collaboration tools to connect geographically dispersed teams, while maintaining visibility and control across the project portfolio through reporting and dashboards.

In contrast with other ERP solutions, EPM offers a quick and efficient implementation through Microsoft partners. Microsoft partners are able to shorten implementation time significantly through their own preconfigured EPM solutions or standard EPM extensions. Further, partners are available worldwide to implement a custom EPM solution. Microsoft partners play a critical role in selecting, implementing, and mentoring the right EPM solution by providing full integration and customization services within an organization's culture and processes. These globally available partners work directly with Microsoft. They extend beyond a typical systems integrator by helping an organization champion the EPM solution, avoiding the road blocks and common pitfalls of adoption, proliferation, and utilization of Microsoft EPM.

### **Software-plus-Services Category**

#### **How Microsoft EPM fits the Software-plus-Services category**

EPM offers a strong online PPM solution hosted by Microsoft partners with a network of online support tools, matching the functional capabilities of other Software-plus-Services PPM solutions. Additionally, EPM is able to deliver fast implementation time through pre-configured solutions of Microsoft partners.

*"With the EPM Solution, we can request the precise amount of capital we need from the start of a project. This solves a myriad of problems for us."*

Jason Carlisle  
Senior Property Accountant  
Coca-Cola Bottling Company

*"Comparatively speaking, the Microsoft Office EPM Solution is economical, extremely easy to deploy, and an industry standard."*

Joe Lockett  
Section Manager  
Procter and Gamble

**How Microsoft EPM adds more value than other options in the Software-plus-Services category**

- Long term strategy
- Flexibility and choice
- Value
- A deep and extensible platform
- Robust portfolio management and project planning
- Unique SharePoint collaboration

Microsoft's Software-plus-Services strategy is built from years of experience in software development, specifically Microsoft Project, and a profound understanding of cloud computing. Microsoft has developed their strategy to meet customer needs.

The long-term EPM Software-plus-Services strategy offers customers flexibility and choice. By offering its Software-plus-Services offering through its global partner network, Microsoft gives customers the flexibility to choose a solution that caters to their needs. Microsoft has a website ([www.epmconnect.com](http://www.epmconnect.com)) dedicated to the different types of partner solutions available by industry vertical and user need. Microsoft also gives customers flexibility and choice in how to implement the solution. Partners are able to transform between online and on-premise solutions at the customer's request while keeping all the data within the system. Microsoft's localization features allow customers to choose between 19 languages to implement

their solution in as well.

Overall, Microsoft EPM's partner hosted Software-plus-Services offering is a better value than other solutions. EPM offers flexibility in payment that costs the customer less. The monthly expenses of subscriptions for other Software-plus-Services offerings can amount to more than the EPM license costs each year (estimated \$600 annual subscription fees for other Software-plus-Services offerings). Microsoft has many competitive licensing options. In fact, as part of the client access license (CAL), customers can view a project plan online through Microsoft Office Web Access.

Additionally, Microsoft has a deep and extensible technology platform. EPM enables secure in-network hosting and individual account access permissions on a per-user basis. The Microsoft API enables easy integration with third party/legacy applications, independent of programming language or technology platform. The Project Server Interface (PSI) lowers the costs of developing PPM solutions and also supports rapid application development by using Microsoft Visual Studio 2005.

Considering product capabilities, EPM's portfolio management is robust. The solution is focused on four key governance phases: Create (capture all project requests across the organization), select (prioritize, optimize, analyze), plan (effectively assign resources and develop schedule), manage (execute and measure project and portfolio performance). Through Microsoft Portfolio Server, users gain visibility across all projects in "top-down" reports. As previously mentioned, EPM's mature vertical focus offers a variety of pre-configured industry solutions for customers, with emphasis on Project and Portfolio Management, Capital Planning and Investment Control, Innovation Process Management and Connecting Application Development with PPM.

EPM also offers robust capabilities through project planning, primarily in usability, reporting, and scheduling. Reporting is conducted via a dedicated reporting database, ensuring access to near real-time operational data, enhanced reporting cubes, and integration with Excel services. EPM enables deep time-schedule reporting, resource utilization, and project

accounting through the creation of work breakdown structures and detailed project schedules. It also provides the ability for project managers to plan and schedule lightweight, Web-based project schedules. Through Microsoft Project Server, users gain a granular “bottom-up” view into timelines, budgets, and resources across projects.

Finally, Microsoft SharePoint collaboration enables seamless communication and alignment throughout the project lifecycle, primarily through project workspaces, which hold documents, issues, risks, deliverables, and contacts. Project workspaces feature built-in version control which users can access and search via intranet or extranet. Microsoft also offers community collaboration methods such as blogs and wikis.

## Alternative Tools Category

*“The EPM Solution enhances the efficiency and effectiveness of our matrix operating model by providing timely information needed to make optimal product, portfolio, and capacity-planning decisions.”*

Chris Beck  
Vice President, Program Resources  
and Decision Support  
Shire Pharmaceuticals

### **How Microsoft EPM fits the Alternative Tools category**

While EPM is not a member of the Alternative Tools category, it offers capabilities and flexibility to match the benefits of the products in the Alternative Tools category.

### **How Microsoft EPM adds more value than other options in the Alternative Tools category**

EPM offers both the benefits of the Alternative Tools category, plus synergies which make the solution a better value.

- Ability to grow as PPM needs evolve
- Robust project and portfolio capabilities
- Communication and collaboration tools
- Implementation efficiency of a single solution

Above all, EPM demonstrates the ability to grow as PPM needs evolve. Microsoft offers Microsoft Project as a stand-alone project planning tool for organizations that want to master deep project managing capability. For organizations that are mature enough to want broader visibility into their portfolio of projects and perform analytics on the effectiveness of projects, Microsoft EPM is available. Organizations can start with a Microsoft Project practice and build into an EPM practice as their organization becomes more sophisticated in its evaluation methods.

From a functional perspective, Microsoft platform and tools offer robust capabilities which offer more functionality than separate project management products. EPM provides visibility that alternative tools such as schedulers, viewers, and task lists do not offer. EPM achieves this visibility through the tight integration of Microsoft Project, Project Server, and Portfolio Server. Together, these tools are able to offer comprehensive reporting and touch-of-a-button analytics, as well as facilitate forecasting and budgeting.

EPM also offers tools for easy communication of the project plans. As mentioned earlier, CAL enables online project plan sharing. Microsoft Projects save-as-.pdf option enables any user to view the project status and other information.

Finally, EPM achieves the implementation efficiency of a single EPM solution. Alternative Tools products require multiple implementations, unclear maintenance, and extensive work to integrate. The Microsoft partner network is experienced in implementing the EPM solution quickly and cost-efficiently.

## Conclusion

**Capability Comparison** The following capability matrix compiles the benefits and shortcomings discussed previously.

Capabilities	PPM Solution Categories				Microsoft EPM	Microsoft Project
	Traditional/ Platform	ERP	Software-plus-Services	Alternative Tools		
<b>Portfolio Capability</b>						
Demand Management	■	■	■	■	■	■
Project Prioritization and Selection	■	■	■	■	■	■
Portfolio Optimization	■	■	■	■	■	■
<b>Project Capability</b>						
Resource Management	■	■	■	■	■	■
Financial Management	■	■	■	■	■	■
Reporting	■	■	■	■	■	■
Collaboration	■	■	■	■	■	■
Risks and Issues	■	■	■	■	■	■
Schedule Development	■	■	■	■	■	■
<b>Technical Capability</b>						
API/Extensibility	■	■	■	■	■	■
Cloud Hosting Flexibility	■	■	■	■	■ <sup>1</sup>	■
Integration	■	■	■	■	■	■
Implementation	■	■	■	■	■	■
<b>Overarching Capability</b>						
Ease of Use	■	■	■	■	■	■
Ecosystem	■	■	■	■	■	■
Presence and Investment	■	■	■	■	■	■
Pricing	■	■	■	■	■	■

**Key:** ■ Highly Capable ■ Somewhat Capable ■ Not Capable

1. Key certified partners offer hosting in the cloud.

When selecting a PPM solution, it is important to consider PPM categories, and the benefits products in each category can offer. This guide presents the value of each of the four PPM solution categories, as well as the specific value of EPM for each category.

The EPM solution is robust in its capabilities, offering organizations visibility and control across their assets. Furthermore, the strength of the Microsoft ecosystem supports this solution—with over 20 years experience in software, a global network of experienced partners, and a continued investment in new technology development.

All PPM solutions offer benefits; however, the Microsoft EPM solution best addresses organizational needs across all PPM categories. Microsoft EPM delivers the optimal set of process support, no matter which PPM maturity level your organization is in today or is targeting for tomorrow.

### **Further Information**

EPM Industry Specific Solutions and Partner Network

[www.epmconnect.com](http://www.epmconnect.com)

Webcasts, training and events

[www.epmconnect.com](http://www.epmconnect.com)

EPM FAQ, Product Specifics

<http://office.microsoft.com/en-us/epmsolution/FX101935291033.aspx>

Microsoft Project specific information

<http://office.microsoft.com/en-us/project/default.aspx>

Product specifics, developer information

[www.msdn.com](http://www.msdn.com)

Microsoft EPM Blogs

<http://www.epmconnect.com/US/Pages/ProjectNews.aspx>

Developer Information

<http://technet.microsoft.com>

Case Studies

[www.microsoft.com/casestudies/](http://www.microsoft.com/casestudies/)