



MAERSK

Tempus Resource Case Study



Challenge

A.P. Moller - Maersk is an integrated logistics company working to connect and simplify its customers' supply chains. As a global leader in logistics services, the company operates in more than 130 countries and employs around 100,000 people.

Chris Thompson, Head of Implementation for North America, is part of the warehousing and transportation arm of the organization. He oversees a team of project managers who implement all new customers, facilities, and operations in the United States, Canada, and Mexico. Before implementing Tempus, Thompson was using Microsoft Project. When his original company was acquired by Maersk in 2020, his organization had a portfolio of projects that was quite small, typically conducting between five and eight projects each year. Upon being acquired by a global powerhouse in the logistics industry, Thompson recognized that his need for managing his resources and projects would grow exponentially. "I knew that being acquired by a company of that size meant that we were going to grow very rapidly. My team enables the revenue generation of the logistics operations because they can't run the operations until my team sets it up." Thompson described the complexity of their operations and what his team manages. "When you think about it, everything you touch or interact with in your daily life has gone through between 25 and 50 logistics operations. From the glasses on your face to the lip gloss on your lips, everything has gone through so many different supply chains. That's what we do, we set all of that up. There is an inherent complexity in that process that has to be made manageable. At the time, we had 15 projects, and I knew that it would grow. We have doubled every year since then. On average, we have between two and five facility or operations going live each week."

Thompson has spent his career in logistics, primarily in the transportation space. As a project manager, he had become an expert with Microsoft Project, but felt the software was limiting as its projects must have start and end dates. Thompson says, "I was using a product and I needed to go perpetually forward managing the portfolio with a product that was based on a start and an end. It didn't work well. I started researching other platforms. There were very few products whose focus is on the management of the portfolio and the resources within it."

Solution

Tempus Resource by ProSymmetry is a purpose-built, resource portfolio management solution providing many Fortune 500 companies with resource forecasting and capacity planning solutions to help make strategic decisions for their businesses. With capabilities including bulk resource forecasting, skills and talent management, portfolio and resource capacity reporting, and interactive scenario planning and What-If analysis, Tempus gives organizations actionable intelligence, cutting-edge analytics, and real-time scenario analysis.



Thompson says that when he discovered Tempus, he was excited about a program that focused more on resource management, not just project management. He continues, "I saw Tempus and I knew that it was an application that specifically manages the resources. It does project management and a lot of different things. It was based on managing of the resources that are on the project, so that we can plan two months out and see what we're going to need, and three months and so on. We can see the curve of the resource allocation. The terminology and the references from Microsoft Project were the same, so Tempus was very comfortable for me as a Microsoft Project user. We have expanded our use of Tempus as our project load has grown, and now many within our company refer to Tempus as 'the enterprise tracker.' If a project is not in Tempus, it does not exist. That's the way we look at it."

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In his research to find a new solution to help him with resource planning, Thompson came across multiple platforms that were good for collaboration or task planning, but only Tempus focused on his core need for resource management. He describes, "Tempus was the only product that, at its core, the reason it was created was for the management of project resources. That's why it's called Tempus Resource. There are competitors out there, they are called project management tools that also do resources. There are HR products that also do projects and resources. They are not project management resource management tools. I spent quality time looking for a platform like Tempus and Tempus is exactly what I needed."

Because the nature of Maersk's sales process is a shorter timeframe of two to three months, Tempus helps Thompson and his project management team with their short-term project planning. Implementation of new customers and new projects for Maersk is typically right away, not a year in advance. Thompson says that Tempus provides valuable insight into resource planning and allocation. "We can see the curve of the resources, and we can see the recent history. The most powerful use of Tempus is that everybody knows how busy they are today, and everybody knows how busy they were yesterday. When you can see the curve of the resource allocation in three weeks, doubling what's there today, Tempus tells you that you're not going to be able to meet that need. It tells you that you're going to have to flatten that out." Tempus's tools around bulk forecasting and project-level forecasting help Maersk's teams control the incoming project requests and manage resources so that they can be setting realistic goals for delivering on projects and know they have the available resources to make it happen.



Benefit

Tempus has helped Thompson's Implementation team manage both their resources and their project portfolio. Thompson describes, "Tempus is a great application. It's super-specific to the task that I use it for. My team in North America does more projects for Maersk than the rest of the world combined. We are the big project house, and we execute everything on time. Leaders internally asks us, 'How are you doing this? How do you execute these projects?' I respond, first of all, we give a date and we make it happen. The other thing is that we plan everything in Tempus. Tempus allows you to quickly and easily manage a portfolio of 15 projects or 500 projects. It's as extensive as I need it to be. It is fast."

Thompson's Implementation team has better insight for their planning with Tempus. Every week, they export data to help review both the entire portfolio and individual projects' progress. To achieve that insight, Thompson's team takes advantage of Tempus's demand planning features. To assist project managers, all new projects are implemented as a generic resource called IMO (implementation management office). All new projects are inputted into Tempus and allocated under IMO so that Thompson's team of project managers can oversee what new work is coming in. When the IMO line turns red, Thompson's team understands that they have gone over their scheduled limit of people who are going to be available at that time. Additionally, the actual project managers are named individuals in Tempus so Thompson and his team can review everybody's combined allocation for FTE (full time equivalent), as one project manager will oversee two to five projects at a time. When the team meets weekly, Thompson says, "We go through and we plan new projects coming in, projects that are ending, and who we are going to put on a project because not all project managers are created equal and not all projects are created equal. You have to fit the right project with the right project manager based on skill and based on availability."

As Maersk is a global steamship line, Thompson and his team immediately feel the effects of situations that arise around the globe and affect shipping channels in Asia and Europe. Thompson explains, "We have done huge operations on the East Coast and we're setting everything up and then suddenly we can't send ships through the Suez Canal for whatever reason, and have to go around to the west coast of the U.S. Now we need to shift resourcing over to the West Coast, put in emergency projects, streamlining customers' containers to an inland destination. Because we're part of the steamship line, global trade directly impacts us immediately." Having a platform like Tempus to help his team quickly change resource allocation and plans has helped keep them running efficiently and on time.

Tempus's built-in graphs help Thompson show Maersk leadership how his organization is progressing on their portfolio. He uses these reports to demonstrate "where we were at yesterday, where we are today, and where we're going to be next month. Everybody knows what they're doing today. It's hard for people who are not associated with project management to grasp what tomorrow looks like as tomorrow is not here yet and those projects are not realized yet and people are not yet working on them. Some people think, 'If you're doing 50 projects today, you can do 50 projects tomorrow, right?' No, because not all projects are the same. Tempus helps to illustrate that."



Tempus's bulk allocation flat grid shows Thompson his project managers, projects that are coming up, and what they are allocated on, including projects coming up that are not yet allocated. He elaborates, "Many of these are sales prospects. We use a combination of values, including the proposal feature in combination with a project status to determine if projects are still in sales status or if they are workable. It's super handy."

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Results

Having Tempus to manage his project portfolio and having data to help plan and allocate resources more efficiently with shorter timeframes has helped Thompson support his team and justify their resource curve to management. Thompson explains, "Because of our sales profile, we're selling between two weeks and three months out. We have noticed that, if you go five weeks out from today at any given time, there is a precipitous drop-off of projects because of the way that they are sold. Very often, management would say, 'We need to get rid of people because in five weeks, there's not going to be anything to do, or we should bring in contractors that we can phase out.' We are able to push back and explain that is due to the sales curve. What will happen is that the following week, that will start to bump up. It ends up looking like a curve. The closer the data gets to today, the projects that maybe did not close their sale will move out, and this drop-off curve never occurs. That's something that the higher levels of management did not realize, that it was going to get busier. They would ask if we have enough coming up to support the staffing levels that we currently have." With Tempus forecasting and reporting, Thompson can show leadership how his forecasts for resources and upcoming projects are not really a downward trend, but an ongoing curve.

With the large operation that Thompson oversees, his operations encompass a vast pool of resources including various transportation management systems, support teams, warehouse management systems, technical operations, and developers. Thompson describes his role of resource management as, "It's all the project management you can do with your hands in your pockets because you're not going to go out and spin up servers and plug in forklifts. You're making sure the forklifts got plugged in and making sure the servers got created. You've got all of these different teams you have to manage, but all of these teams have to resource correctly and there is a big landscape behind this. We're able to illustrate that based on our estimates."



Thompson has had a positive experience with the Customer Success team at ProSymmetry. He likes that Tempus is simple to implement and use and has had very few questions for ProSymmetry. He enjoys having the team to help him improve his use of the platform. "I will ask ProSymmetry team about how other people do a particular task. I know how I'm doing it, but am I doing it in the best way? I don't know. I'll ask the ProSymmetry team and then I'm able to get whatever setup configured I need. ProSymmetry is a great company to work with." Thompson also appreciates ProSymmetry's personalized approach to helping customers and having a point of contact for questions. "The attention I get is immediate and pertinent to what I'm asking. If I try to ask Microsoft how to tweak my product environment, I'm going to get a help script that has no bearing whatsoever on what I'm doing. The approach is great. ProSymmetry's responses are always quick, and I know that they know me personally, and there is a value to that versus some of the bigger companies I deal with."