

Quick Tour



BlockSim

VERSION 2025

ReliaSoft

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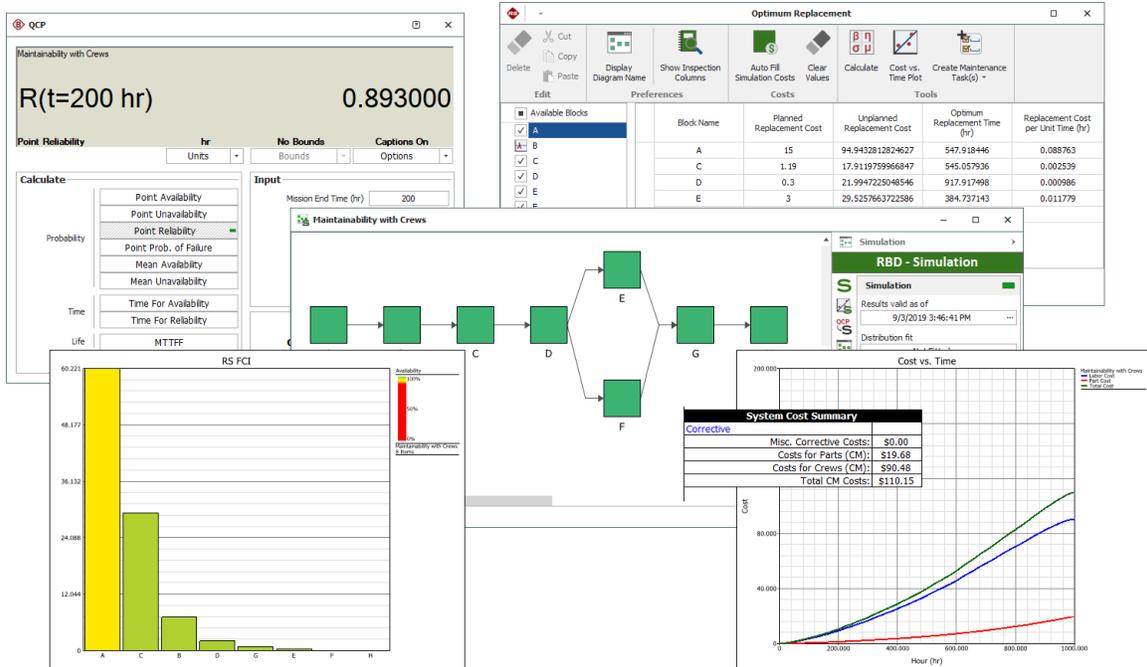
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Quick Tour of BlockSim

BlockSim supports a wide variety of system reliability, availability and related analyses using **reliability block diagrams (RBDs)**, **fault trees (FTA)** and/or **Markov analysis**. It's also packed with tools for related analyses, such as reliability allocation, optimum replacement and inspection, reliability importance measures and throughput analysis. In addition, BlockSim's **event analysis flowcharts** use Monte Carlo simulation to model and analyze even the most complex probabilistic or deterministic scenarios.

You can use this application to answer a wide variety of questions, such as:

- What is the expected reliability of the system? What are the most critical components? What component reliabilities are required to meet the system reliability goal?
- What is the expected availability (uptime) or throughput? Where are the critical components or bottlenecks? What changes are needed to meet the operational goals?
- What is the optimum maintenance strategy? When is the best time for scheduled maintenance? How many spares should we keep on hand? Is crew capacity sufficient?
- How much will it cost to operate the system? How will a change in the design or operating conditions affect costs? Which components are the most costly?
- What is the risk of catastrophic failure? Which components or failure modes pose the greatest risk? How will a change in the design or operating conditions affect safety?
- How does the system perform across different operational phases?
- What is the effect of variability on performance? How will the outcome be affected by changes in specific inputs? What are the probabilities of different possible outcomes?



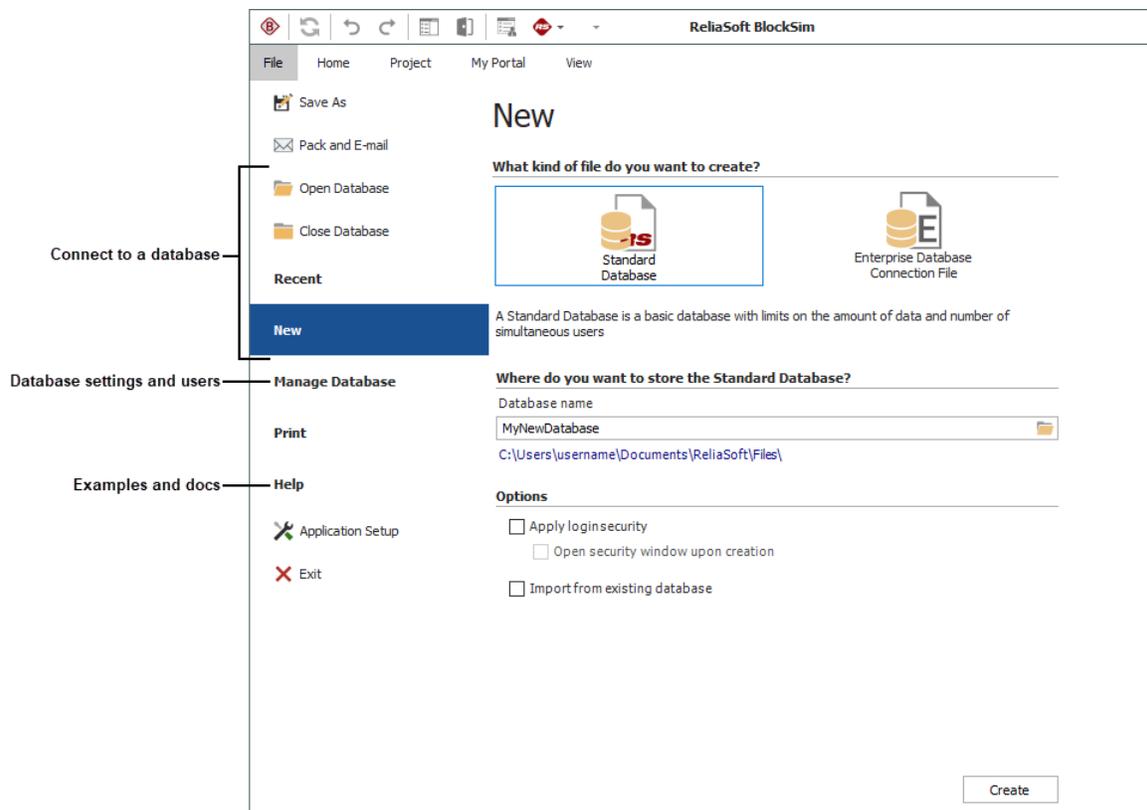
Using Databases and Projects

File Menu

Use commands on the **File** menu (**New**, **Recent** or **Open Database**) to create or open a database.

Each database supports simultaneous access by multiple users. If you have admin permissions, use **File > Manage Database** to control user access and manage configurable settings that apply throughout the database.

Use **File > Help** to access online help and shipped examples.

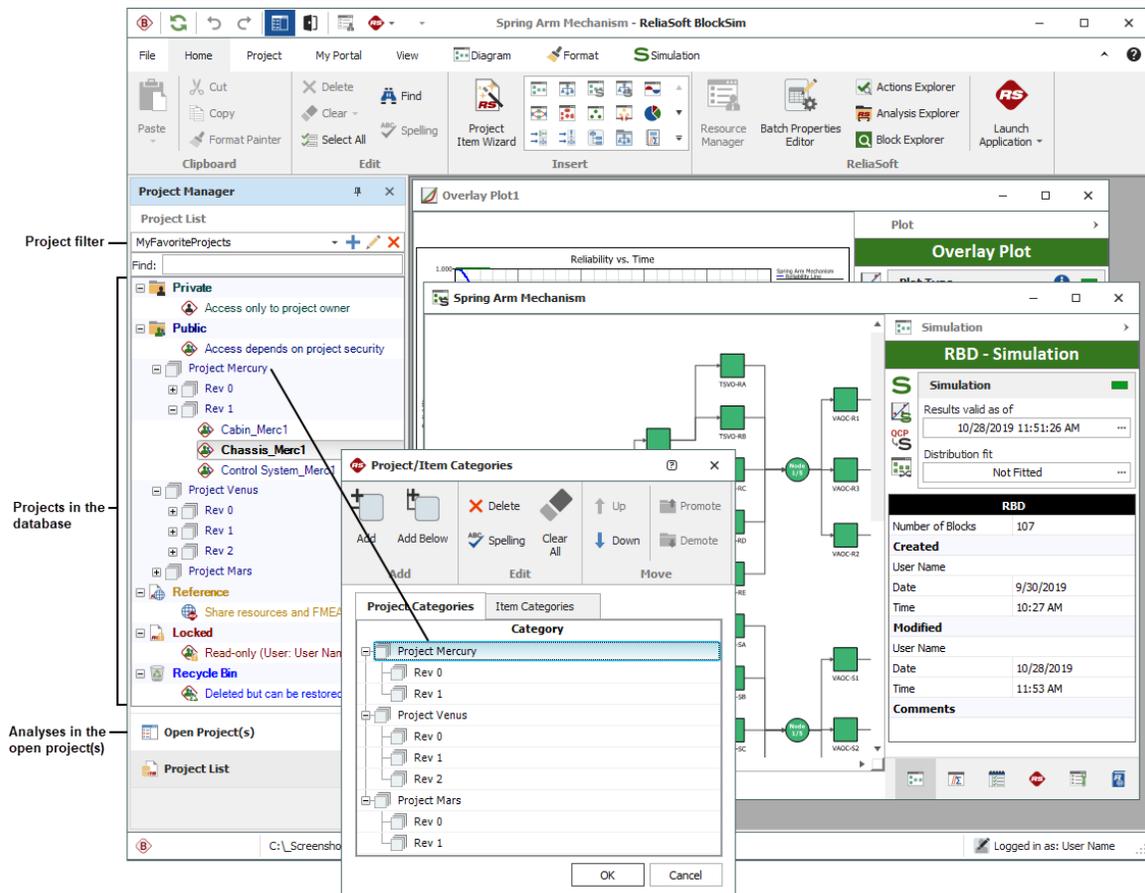


Project List

Each database can contain multiple projects. Use the **project list** to create or open a project.

If you have a lot of projects:

- Use the **project filter** to limit what's displayed.
- Use the **project category** to group projects within the list.



Current Project Explorer

Use the **current project explorer** to create or open analyses and reports.

You can open the same project in any ReliaSoft desktop application. Analyses and reports are visible only in the application(s) that can edit them:

- Life data folios are visible only in Weibull++
- Fault trees are visible only in BlockSim
- FMEAs are visible only in XFMEA/RCM++
- Etc.

Common features such as **resources** and **project attachments** are visible in all ReliaSoft desktop applications.

Using Fault Trees

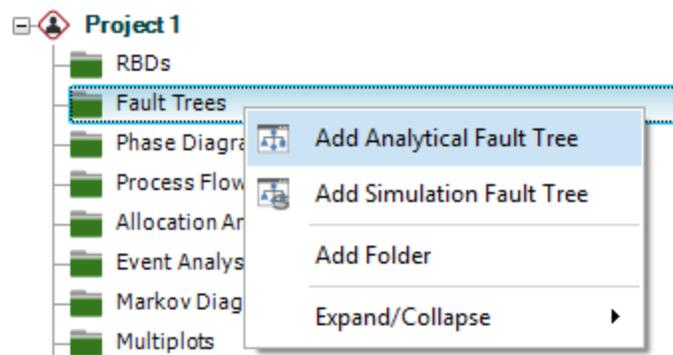
BlockSim's fault trees can be configured as analytical diagrams (which use the exact mathematical solution for the system model but impose limitations on what can be modeled and what results can be obtained) or simulation diagrams (which provide more modeling options and results but must be analyzed with discrete event simulation).

Fault trees and reliability block diagrams (RBDs) can be used together in the same analysis (e.g., a subdiagram block in a fault tree can point to an RBD and vice versa).

The basic steps for using an analytical fault tree are:

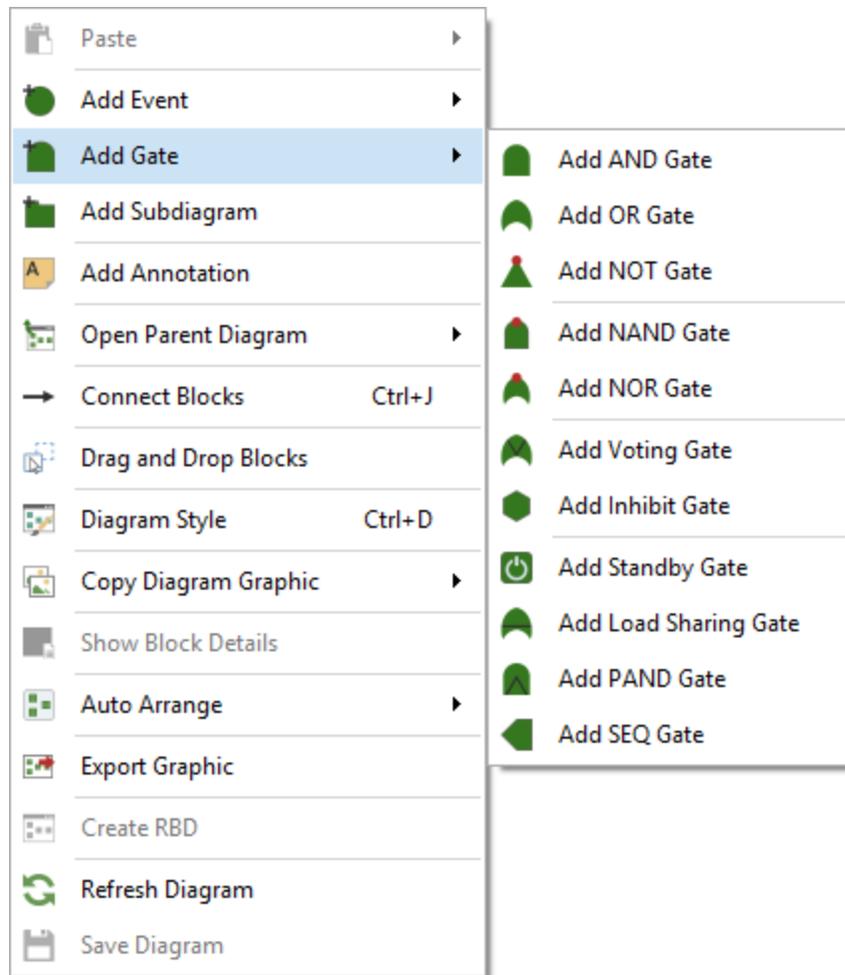
1. Add fault tree diagram

Right-click the Fault Trees folder in the current project explorer and choose **Add Analytical Fault Tree**.



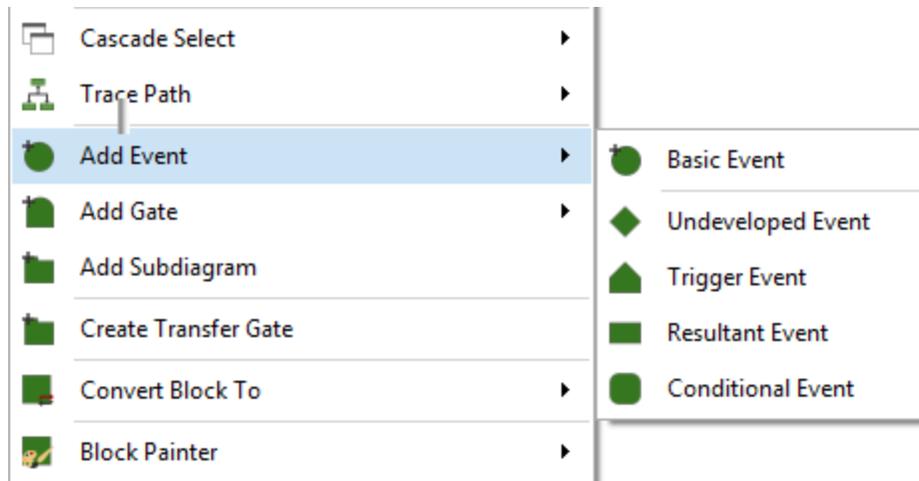
2. Add gates

Right-click inside the diagram and choose the type of gate to add.



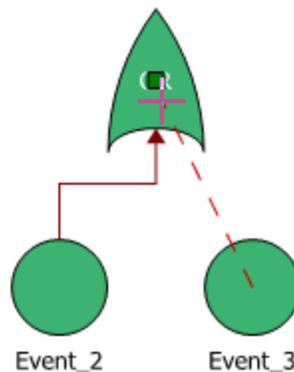
3. Add events

Right-click a gate and choose **Fault Tree > Add Event > [Type of Event]**. When a gate is selected, the event will be added below the gate, already connected.



4. Connect blocks (if applicable)

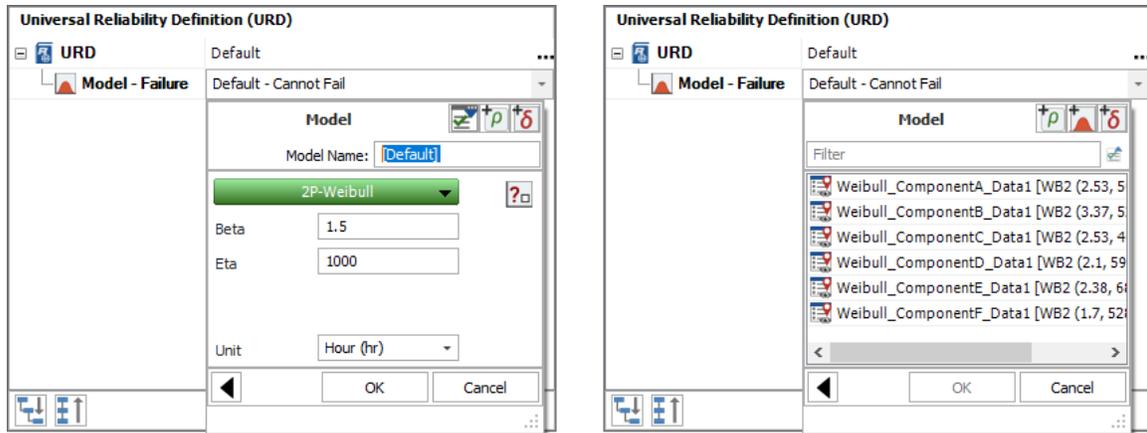
If you need to create a new connection, hold down the **ALT** key, click the source block and drag a line to the destination block.



5. Set block properties

To edit a block's properties, right-click it and choose **Block Properties**. For gate blocks, you can change the name and identifiers. For event blocks, specify any operational and cost properties and use *universal reliability definitions* (URDs) to specify the reliability properties.

- To select an existing URD, click inside the **URD** field.
- To create a new URD, click inside the **Model - Reliability** field and follow the wizard. You can create a new model (left) or select an existing model (right). Existing models may have been manually created, or may have been published from other analyses in BlockSim, Weibull++ or Lambda Predict.

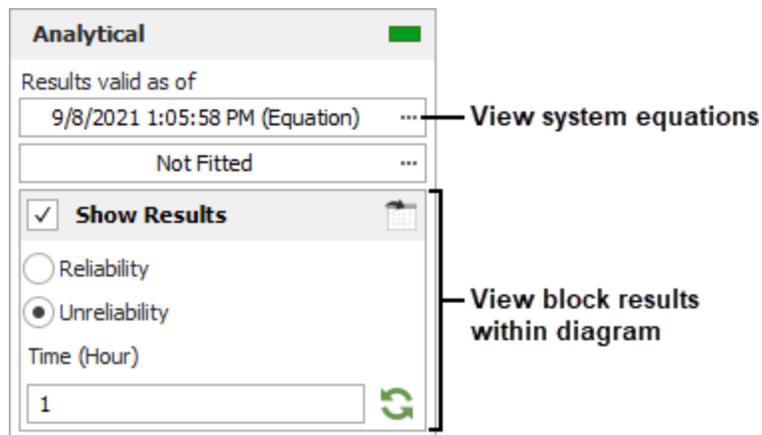


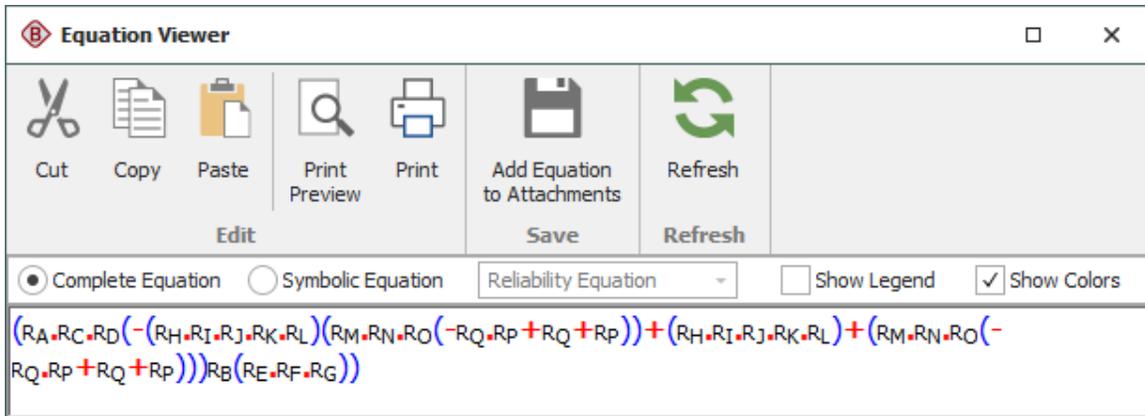
6. Analyze the diagram

Click the **Analyze** icon on the control panel.



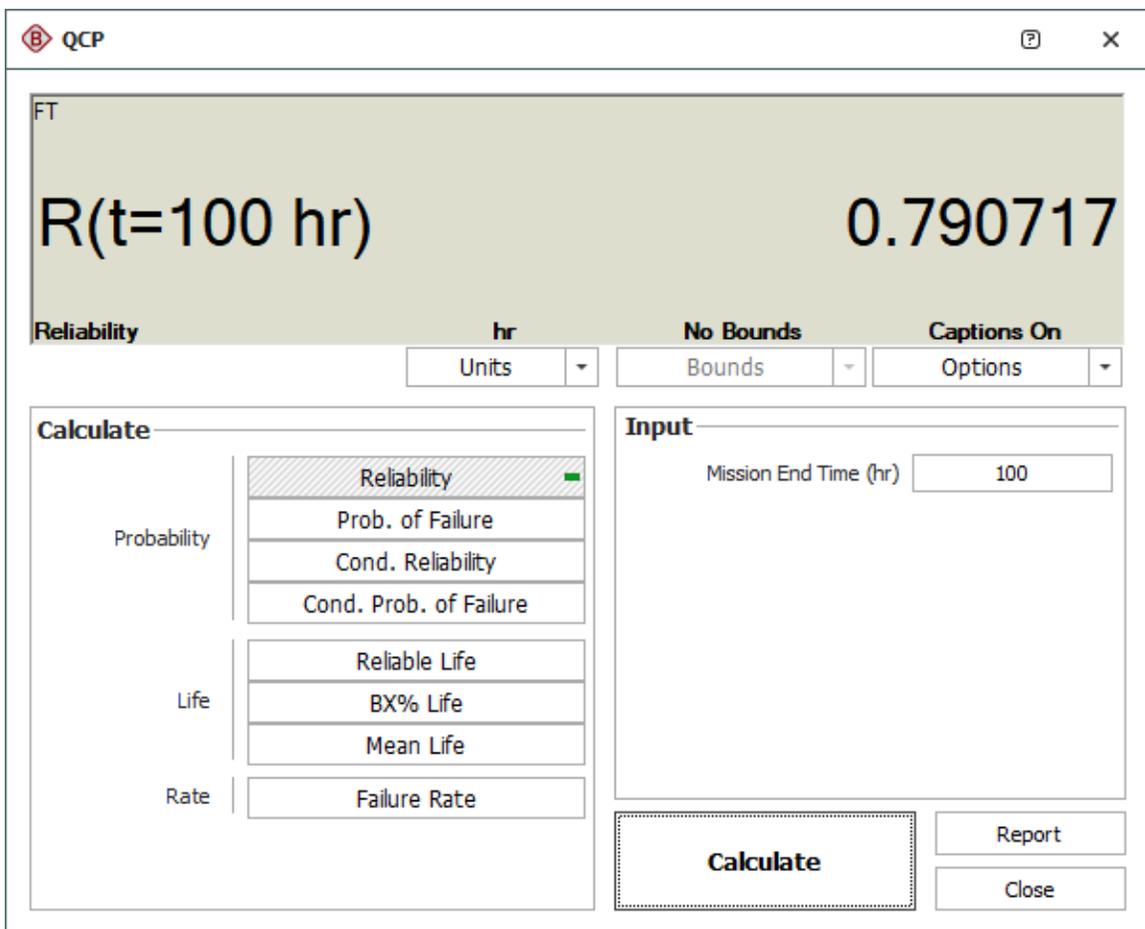
To view the calculated reliability or unreliability at a specific time for each block, select **Show Results** on the control panel and specify the time. To view the algebraic equations for the system reliability, *pdf* and failure rate, click the **Results valid as of** field on the control panel. Note that starting in Version 2022, you have a choice of analysis methods for analytical fault trees; algebraic equations are available only for the Equation analysis type, not for the new Binary Decision Diagram analysis types.





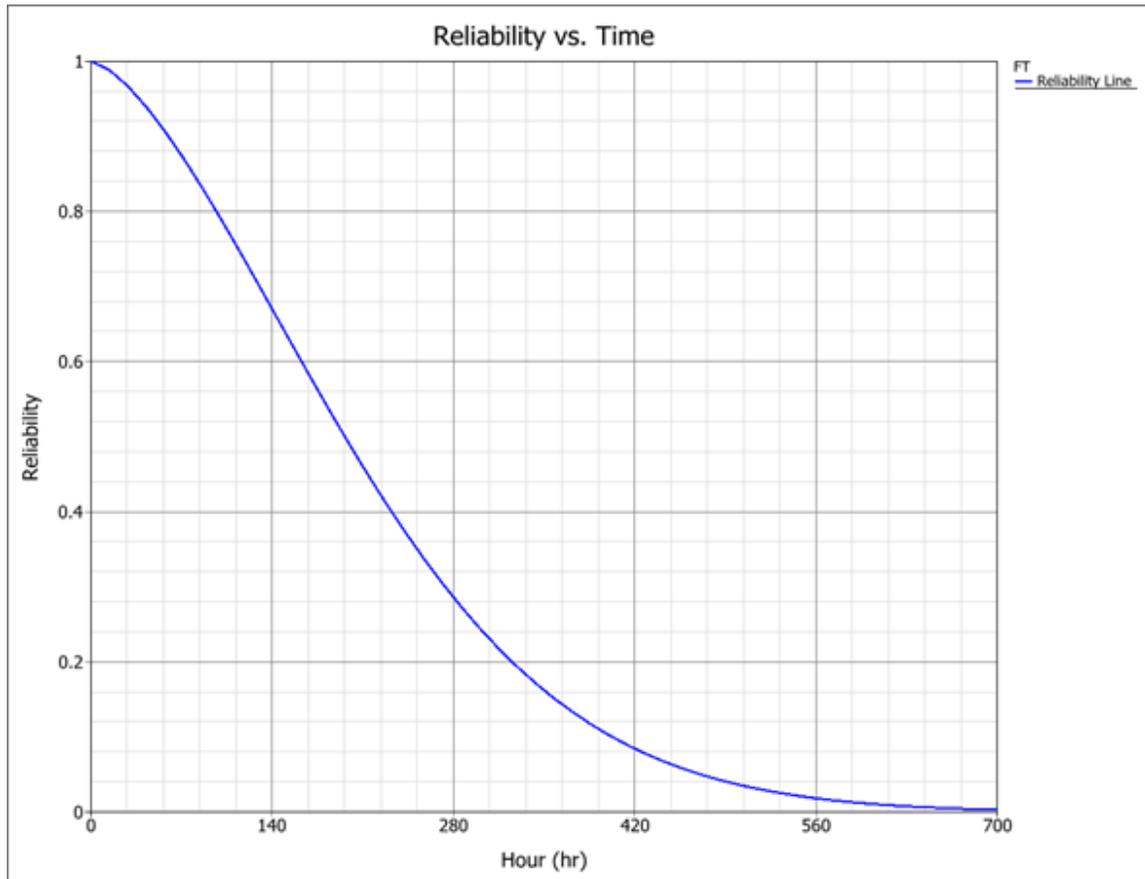
7. Calculate metrics

Click the **QCP** icon on the control panel to open the Quick Calculation Pad.



8. View plots

Click the **Plot** icon on the control panel to open the plot sheet.



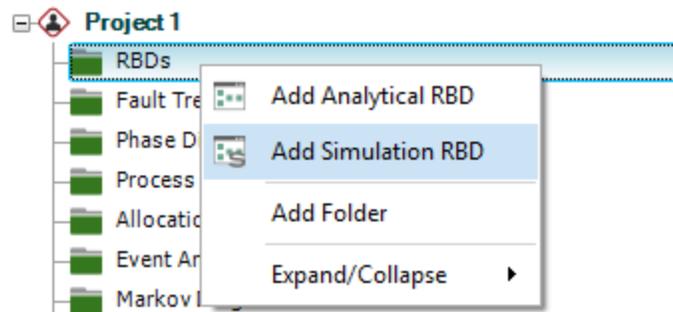
Using Simulation RBDs

A reliability block diagram (RBD) is a graphical representation of how the components of a system are reliability-wise connected. BlockSim's RBDs can be configured as analytical diagrams (which use the exact algebraic equation for the system model but impose limitations on what can be modeled and what results can be obtained) or simulation diagrams (which provide more modeling options and results but must be analyzed with discrete event simulation).

The basic steps for using a simulation RBD are:

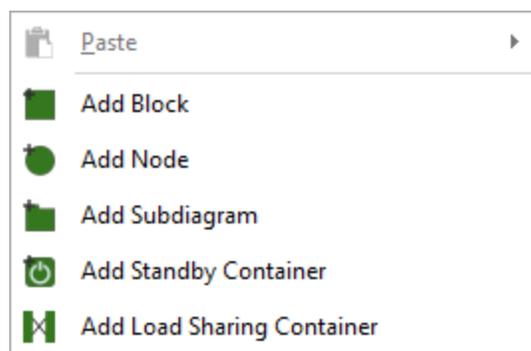
1. Add diagram

Right-click the RBDs folder in the current project explorer and choose **Add Simulation RBD**.



2. Add blocks

Right-click inside the diagram and choose the type of block to add.



3. Connect blocks

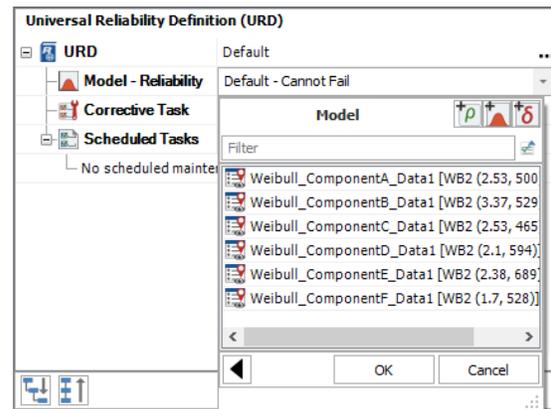
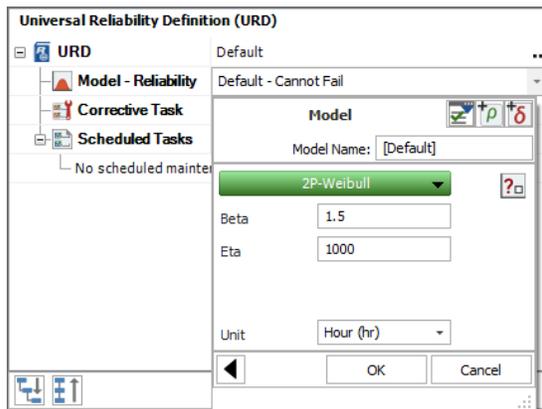
Hold down the **ALT** key, click the source block and drag a line to the destination block.



4. Set block properties

To edit a block's properties, right-click it and choose **Block Properties**. Use a *universal reliability definition* (URD) to specify the reliability properties.

- To select an existing URD, click inside the **URD** field.
- To create a new URD, click inside the **Model - Reliability** field and follow the wizard. You can create a new model (left) or select an existing model (right). Existing models may have been manually created, or may have been published from other analyses in BlockSim, Weibull++ or Lambda Predict.

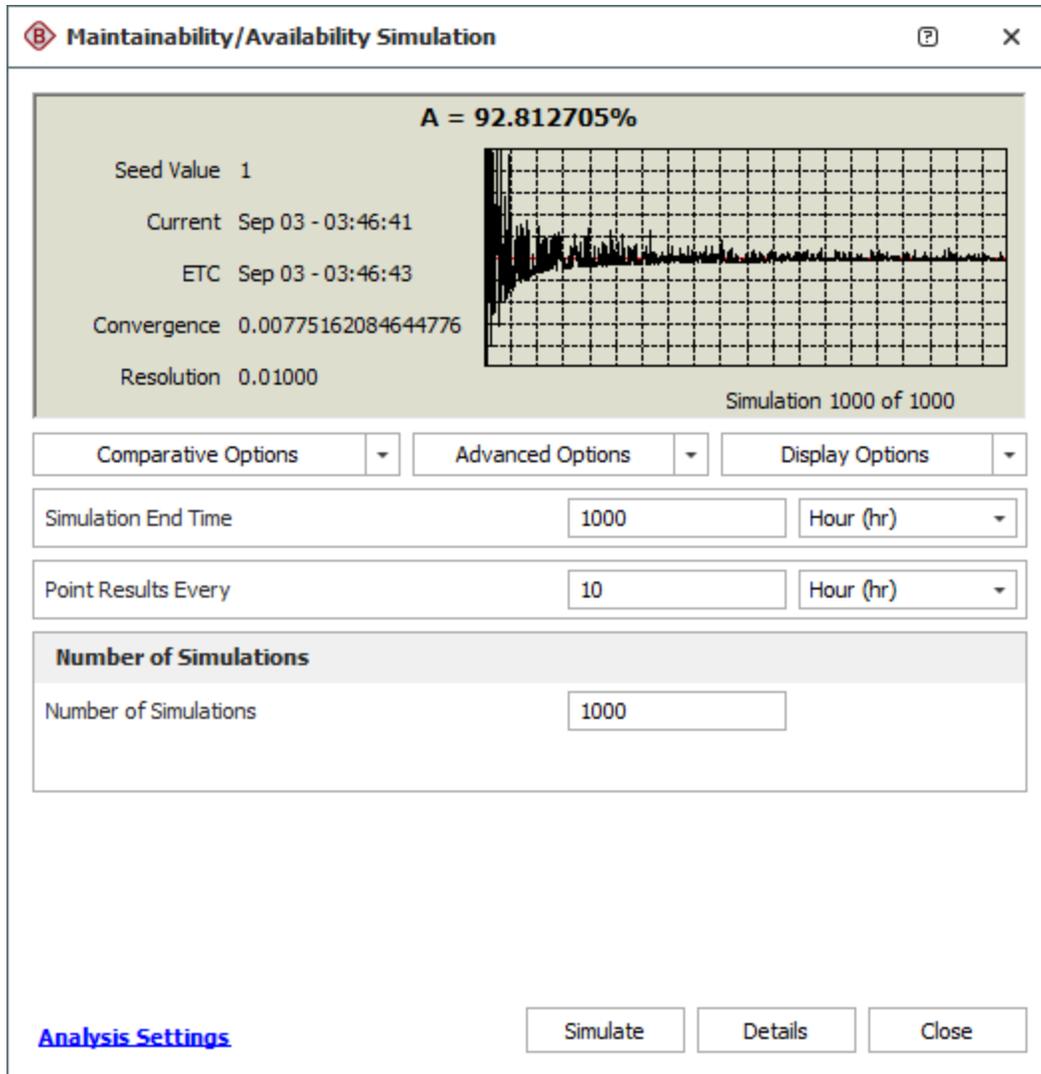


5. Simulate the diagram

Click the **Simulate** icon on the control panel.

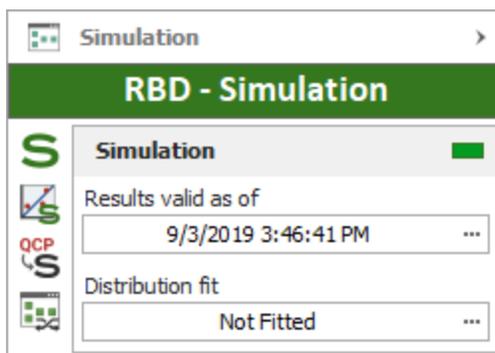


Specify the simulation settings and click **Simulate**.



6. View the simulation results

From within the Maintainability/Availability Simulation window, click **Details**. If you have closed the window, click the **Results valid as of** field on the control panel.



The screenshot shows the Simulation Results Explorer interface. On the left is a tree view with categories: General Summary, System (expanded), System Overview (selected), System Point Results, System Costs, Blocks, Crews, Spare Part Pools, Simulation, and Relevant Summaries. The main area displays a table with columns A, B, and C. The table is divided into sections: System Overview, Metrics, and Summary Metrics. The data is as follows:

	A	B	C
1	System Overview		
2	General		
3	Mean Availability (All Events):	0.9281	
4	Std Deviation (Mean Availability):	0.0778	
5	Mean Availability (w/o PM, OC & Inspection):	0.9281	
6	Point Availability (All Events) at 1000 hr:	0.899	
7	Reliability at 1000 hr:	0.161	
8	Uptime (hr):	928.1271	
9	Total Downtime (hr):	71.8729	
10	Metrics		
11	Summary Metrics		
12	MTFF (hr):	739.3237	
13	MTBF (Total Time) (hr):	754.1478	
14	MTBF (Uptime) (hr):	699.945	
15	MTBE (Total Time) (hr):	755.287	
16	MTBE (Uptime) (hr):	701.0023	
17	MTTM (hr):	54.2847	
18	MTTR (hr):	54.2028	

7. Calculate metrics

Click the **QCP** icon on the control panel to open the Quick Calculation Pad.



The screenshot shows the QCP (Quality Control Panel) interface. At the top, the title bar reads "QCP" with a help icon and a close button. The main display area shows "Diagram1" and the calculated value "Am(t=1000) 0.928127". Below this, there are three dropdown menus: "Units" set to "hr", "Bounds" set to "No Bounds", and "Options" set to "Captions On".

The interface is divided into two main sections: "Calculate" and "Input".

Calculate Section:

Probability	Point Availability
	Point Unavailability
	Point Reliability
	Point Prob. of Failure
	Mean Availability <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Mean Unavailability
Time	Time For Availability
	Time For Reliability
Life	MTTF

Input Section:

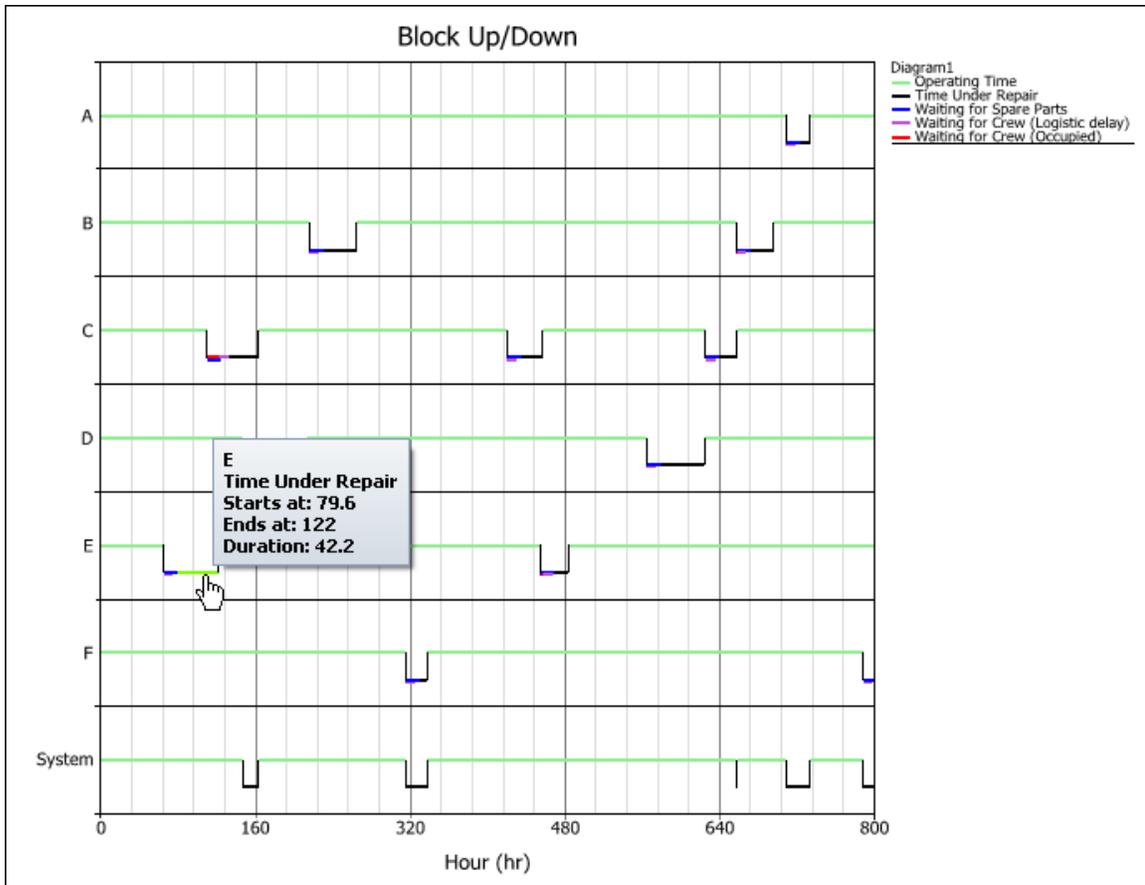
Mission End Time (hr)

Buttons: Calculate, Report, Details, Close

8. View plots

Click the **Plot** icon on the control panel to open the plot sheet.





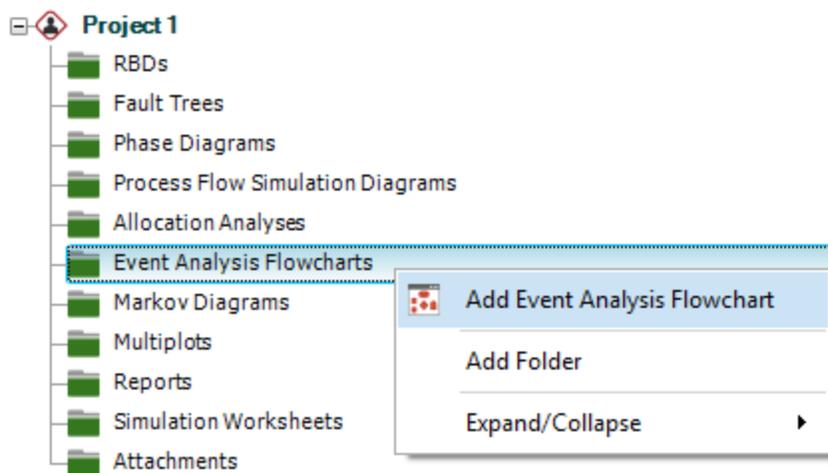
Using Event Analysis Flowcharts

Event analysis flowcharts (formerly RENO flowcharts) are used to build models of probabilistic or deterministic problems, processes or scenarios in order to help you understand and/or quantify them. The flowchart is a graphical representation of the mathematical process of predicting an outcome.

The example that follows demonstrates some of the basic techniques used in working with event analysis flowcharts. This simple flowchart generates failure times for 10 items.

1. Add diagram

Right-click the Event Analysis Flowcharts folder in the current project explorer and choose **Add Event Analysis Flowchart**.



2. Define resources

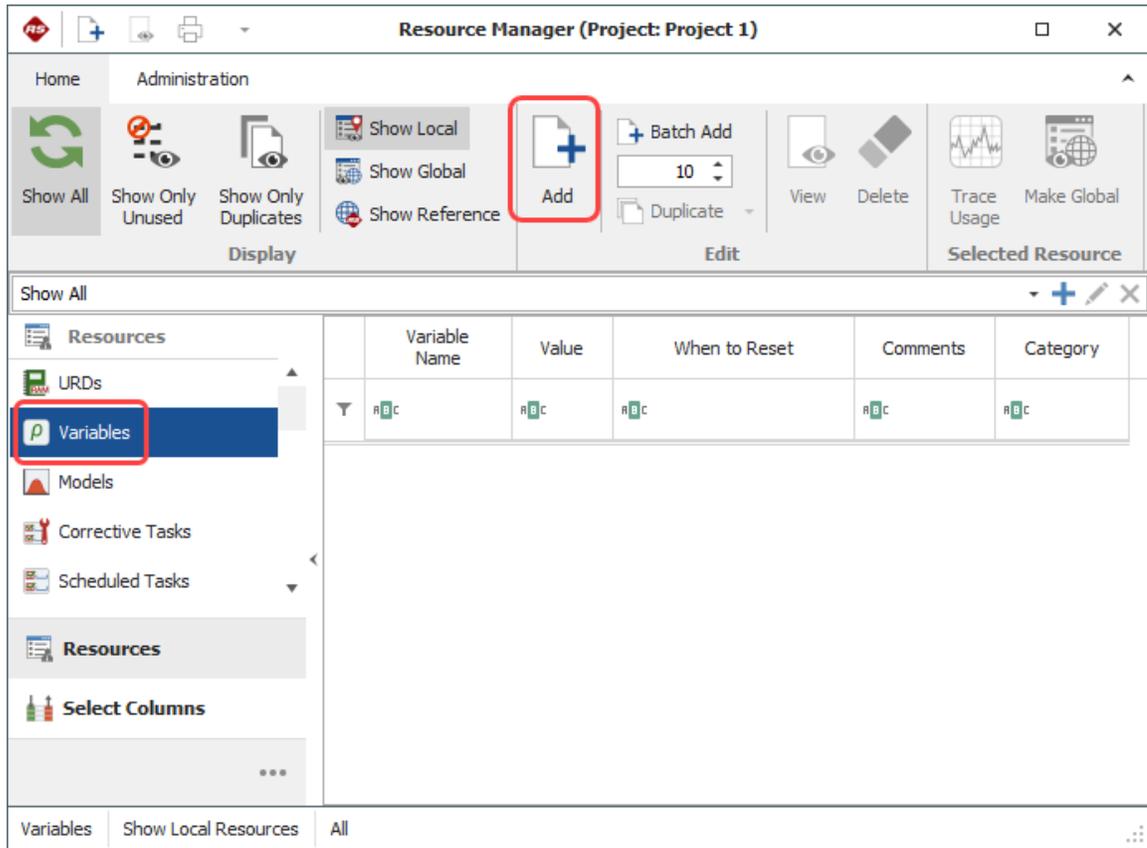
a. Create a variable

This resource will control the number of items to generate failure times for.

Choose **Home > ReliaSoft > Resource Manager**.



In the Resource Manager, choose **Variables** and then choose **Home > Edit > Add**.



Define the variable properties.

The screenshot shows a 'Variable' dialog box with the following fields and options:

- Variable Name:** Number_of_Items
- Initial Value:** 0
- Event Analysis Flowchart Simulation Only:** When to Reset: Reset After Analysis
- Category:** No Category
- Comments:** (Empty text area)

Buttons: OK, Cancel

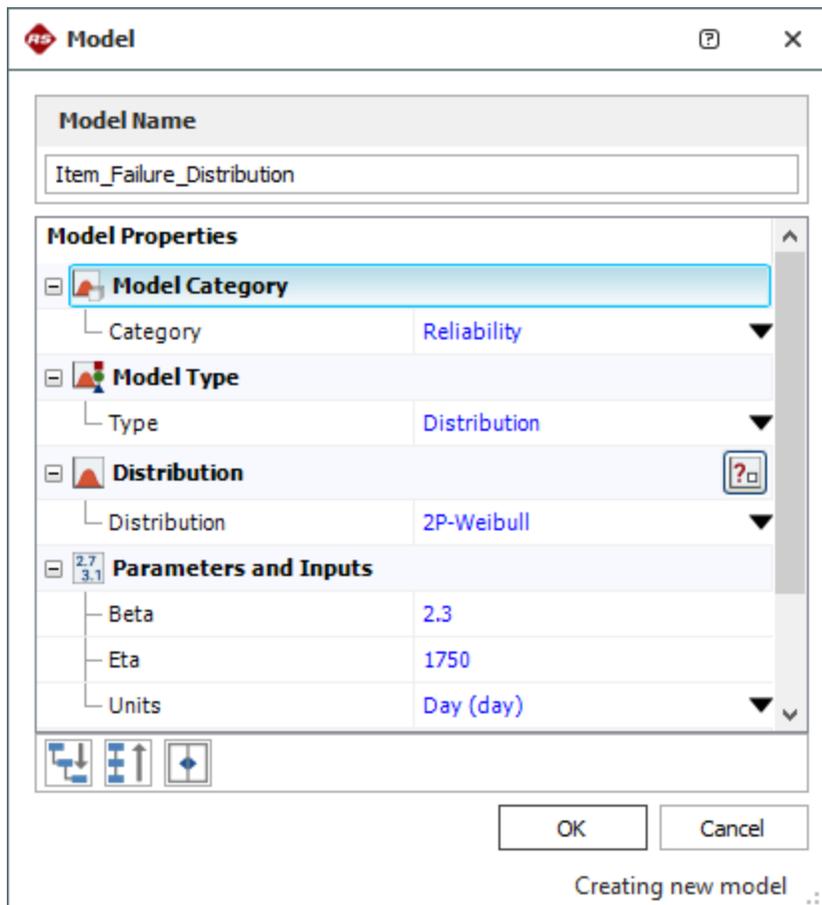
Status bar: Creating new variable

- b. Create a model

This resource will define the model used to generate the failure times.

In the Resource Manager, choose **Models** and then choose **Home > Edit > Add**.

Define the model properties.

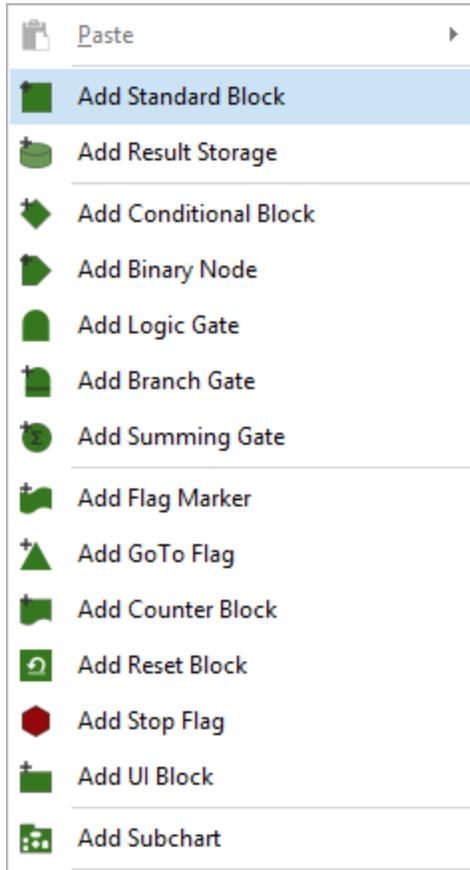


3. Add blocks

- a. Add a standard block (to increment the variable)

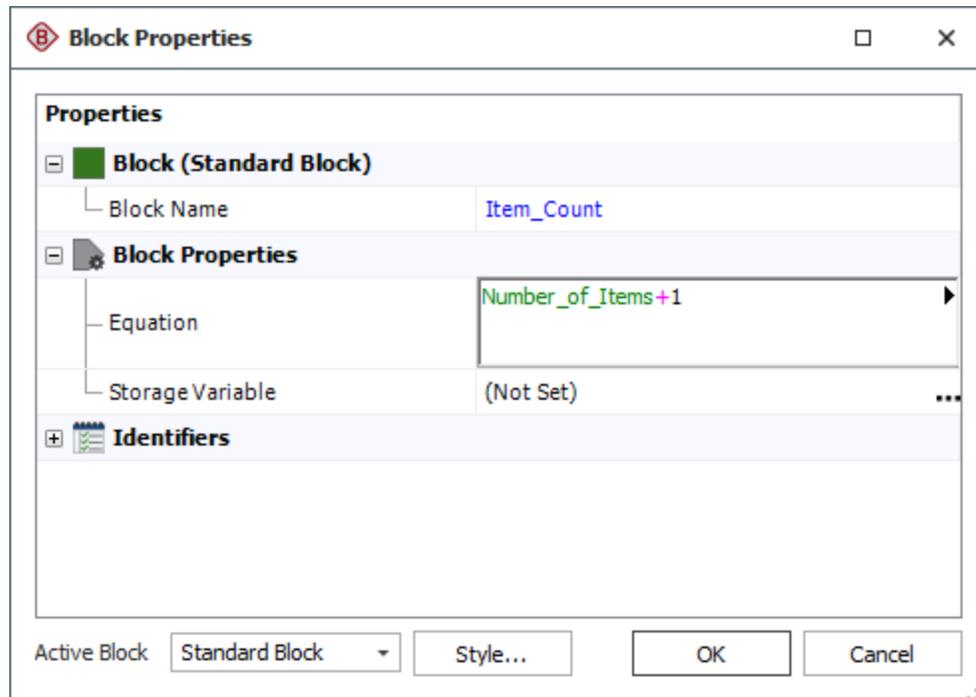
This block will increment the value of the Number_of_Items variable.

Right-click inside the diagram and choose to add a standard block.

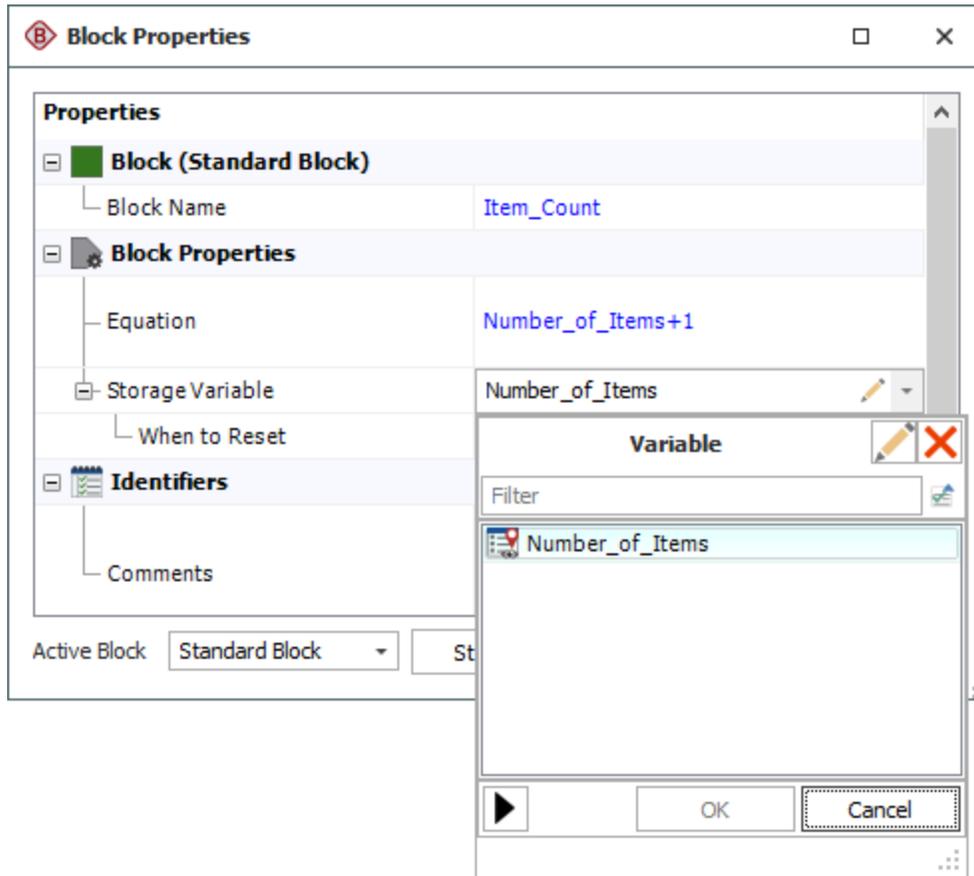


To edit the block's properties, right-click it and choose **Block Properties**.

Click inside the **Equation** field and type **Number_of_Items + 1**.



Click inside the **Storage Variable** field and select the **Number_of_Items** variable.

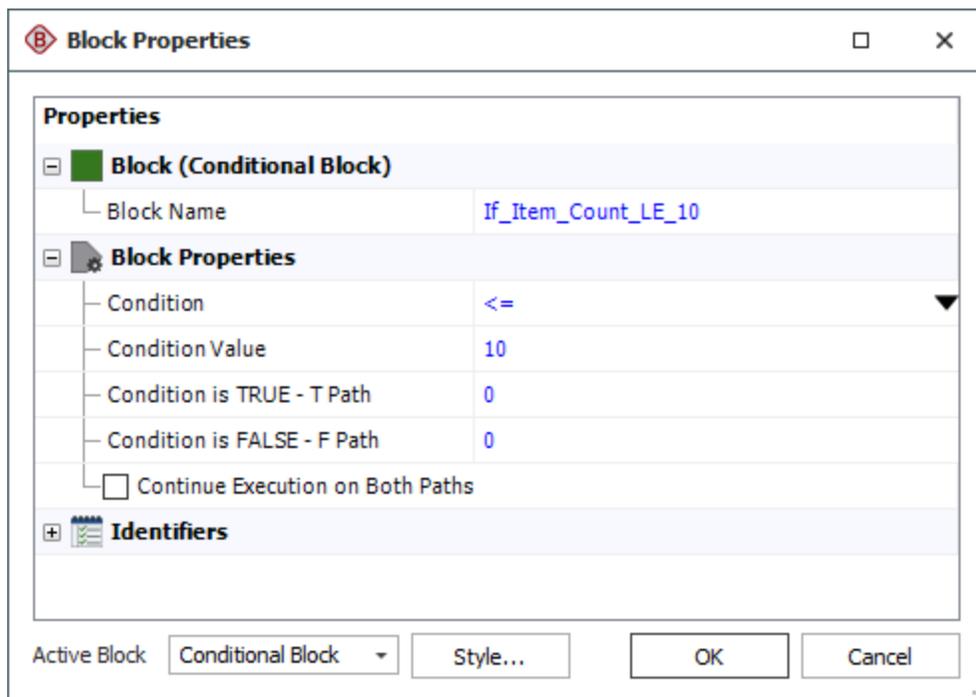


- b. Add a conditional block (i.e., create an IF statement)

This block will determine the simulation path based on whether the item count has reached 10.

Right-click inside the diagram and choose to add a conditional block.

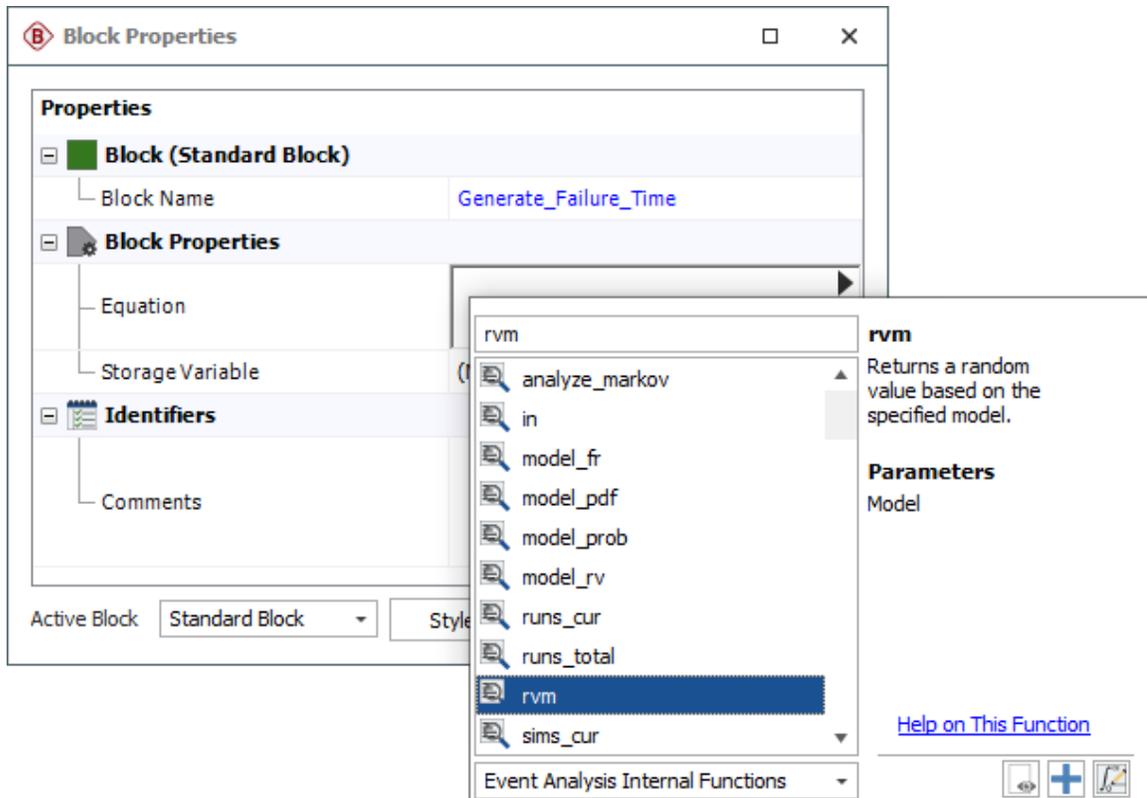
In the block's properties window, specify that if the incoming value is less than or equal to 10, a value of 0 will be passed on the "true" path. Otherwise, a value of 0 will be passed on the "false" path.



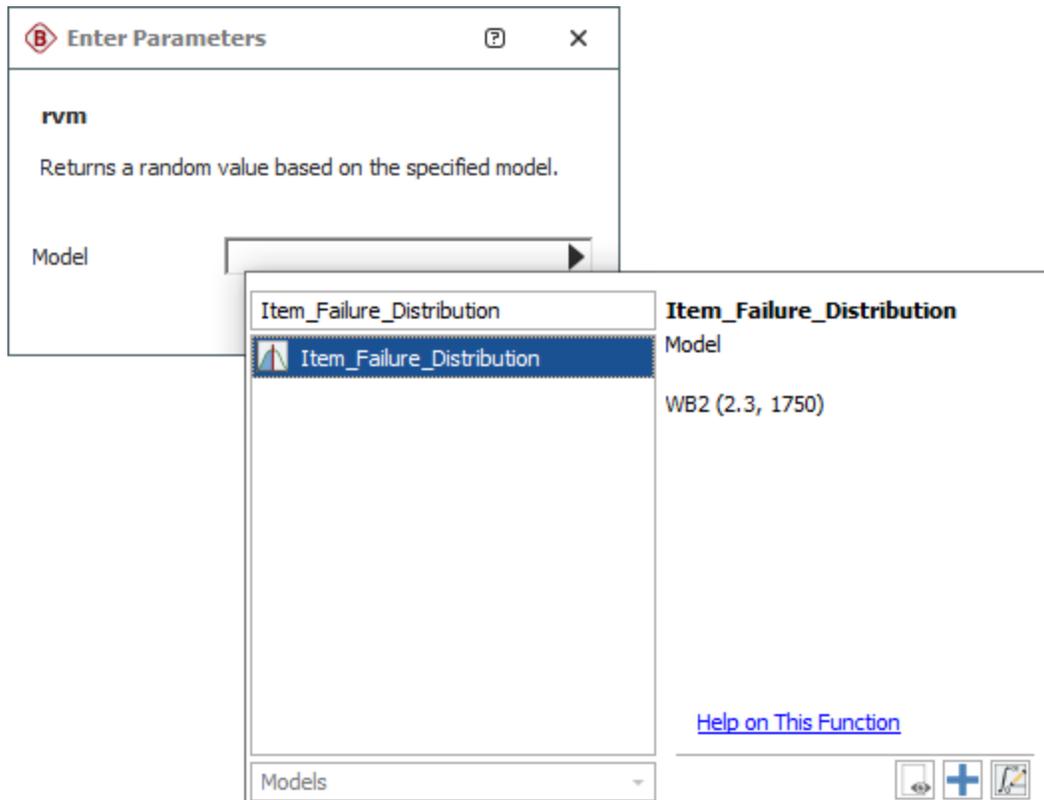
- c. Add a standard block (to generate the failure times)

This block will generate a failure time by returning a random value based on the Item_Failure_Distribution model.

In the block's properties window, right-click inside the **Equation** field, choose **Show Function Selector** then choose **Event Analysis Internal Functions** from the drop-down list. Double-click the **rvm** function.



In the Enter Parameters window that appears, right-click in the **Model** field and open the Function Selector. Double-click the **Item_Failure_Distribution** model.

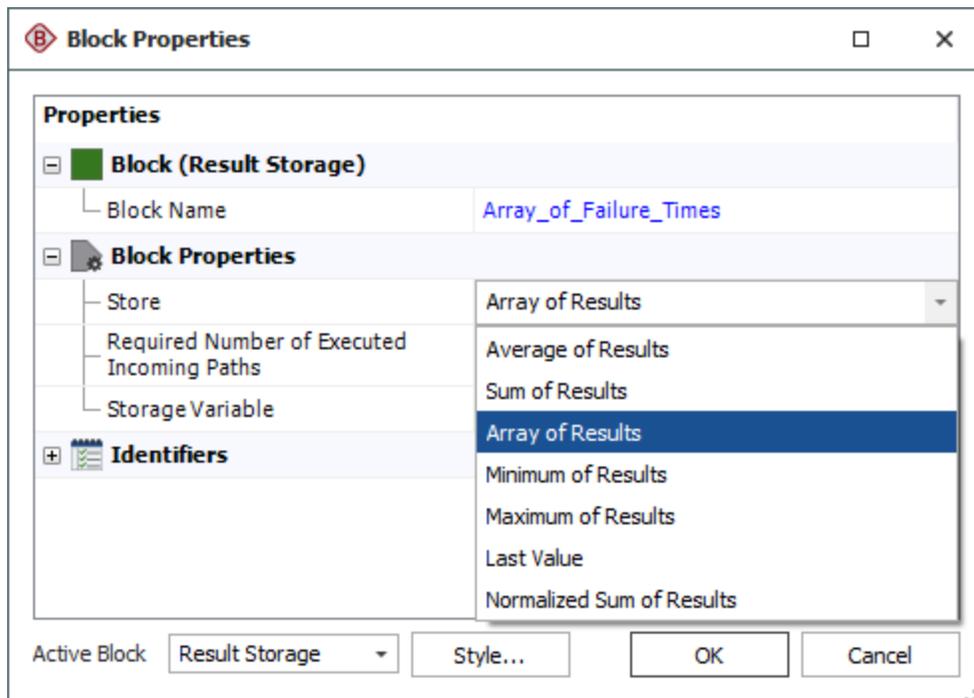


- d. Add a result storage block

This block will store an array of the failure times generated by the standard block.

Right-click inside the diagram and choose to add a result storage block.

In the block's properties window, specify that it will store an array of results.

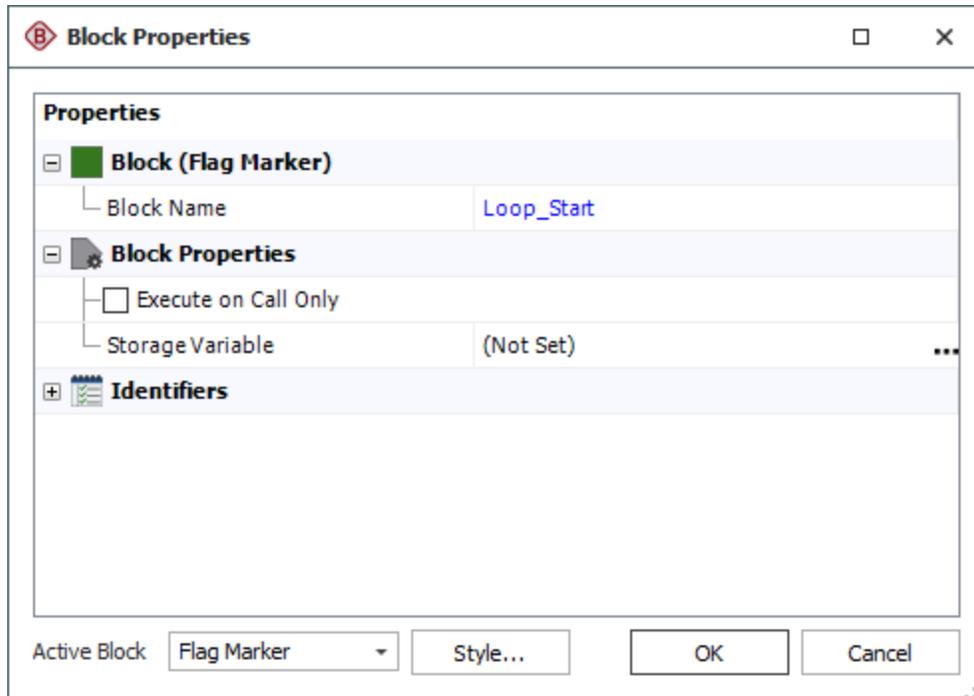


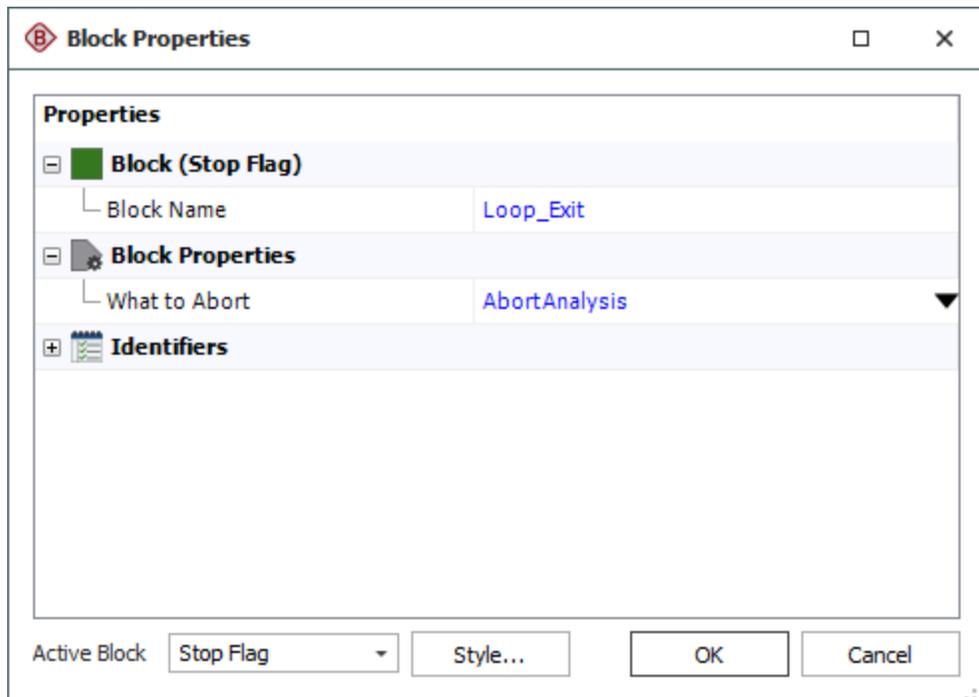
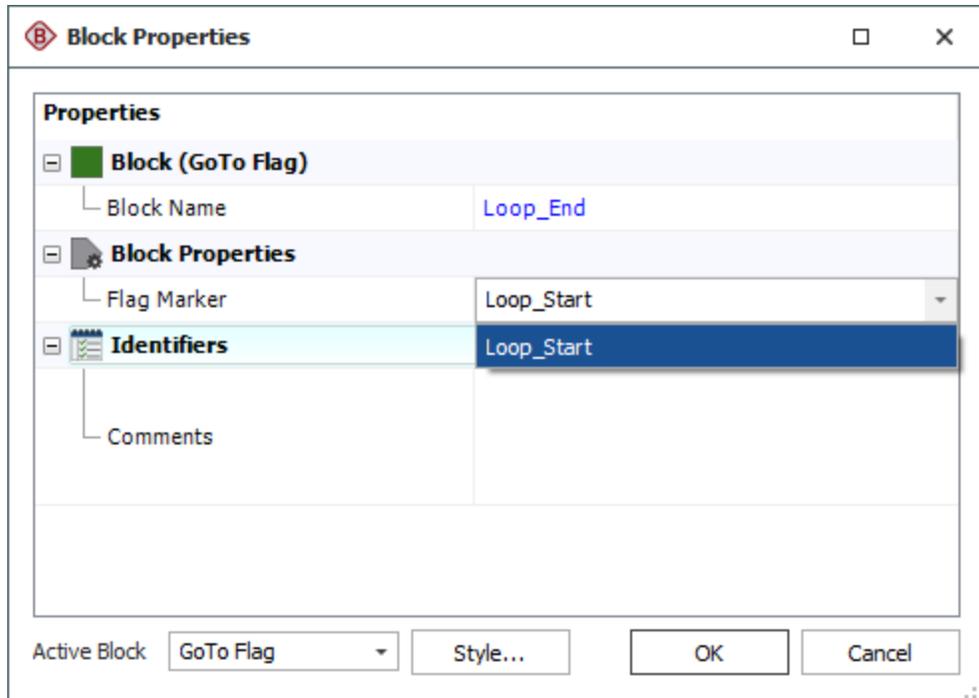
- e. Create a FOR loop

These blocks will form a loop that will cycle through the flowchart until the variable value reaches 10.

Add a flag marker block, a go-to-flag block and a stop flag.

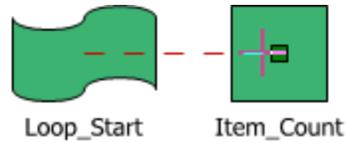
Define the properties.



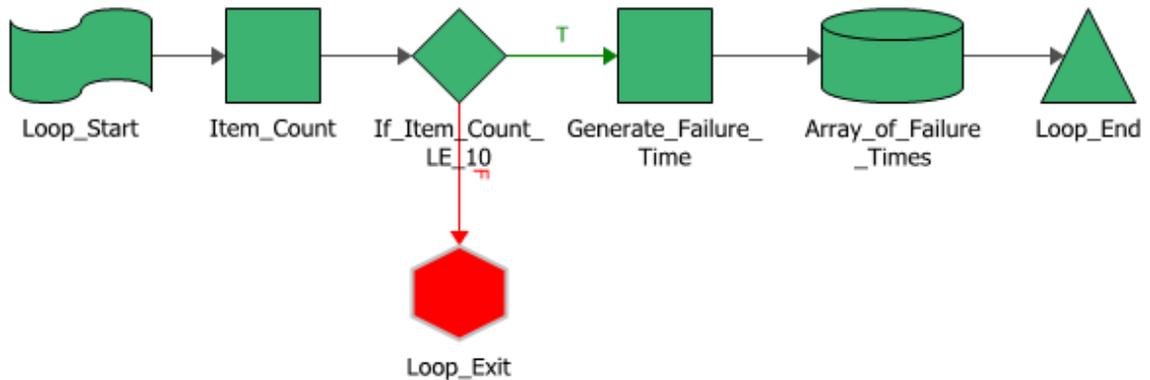


4. Connect blocks

Connect the blocks as shown below. To create each connection, hold down the **ALT** key, click the source block and drag a line to the destination block.



The first connector you create from the conditional block will be marked as the "true" path and the second as the "false" path. If necessary, you can switch these designations by right-clicking the connector and choosing **Set to Failure** or **Set to Success** on the shortcut menu.

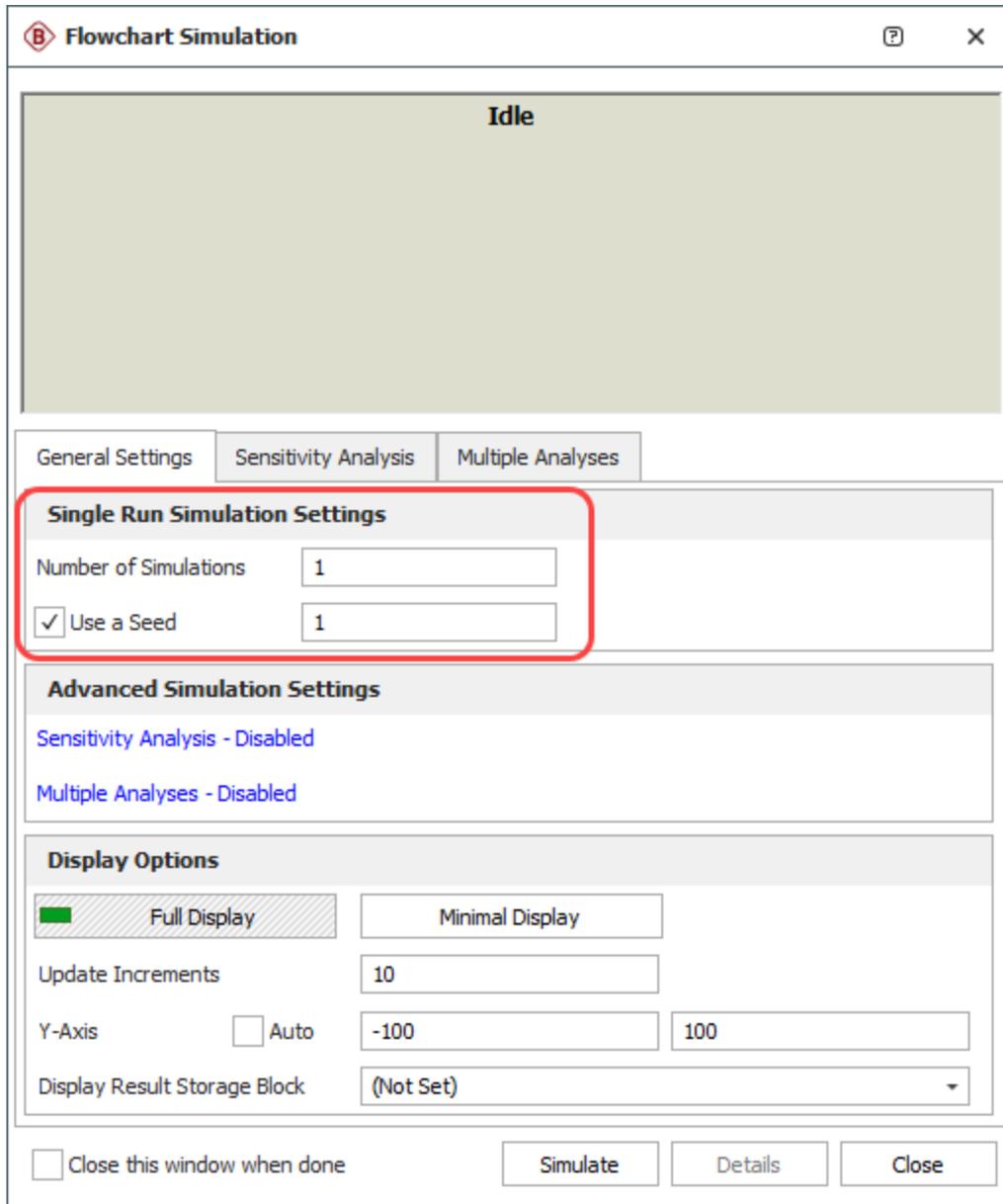


5. Simulate the flowchart

Click the **Simulate** icon on the control panel.

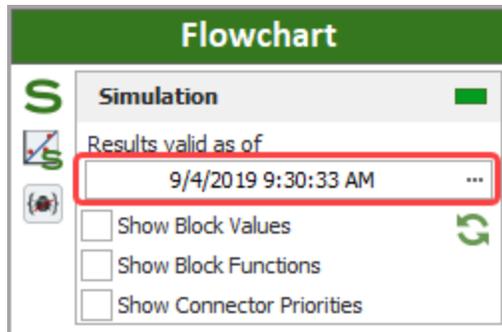


Specify to run a single simulation with a seed of 1 and click **Simulate**.



6. View the simulation results

From within the Flowchart Simulation Window, click **Details**. If you have closed the window, click the **Results valid as of** field on the diagram control panel.



To view the failure times generated during the simulation, click the result storage block in the navigation panel.

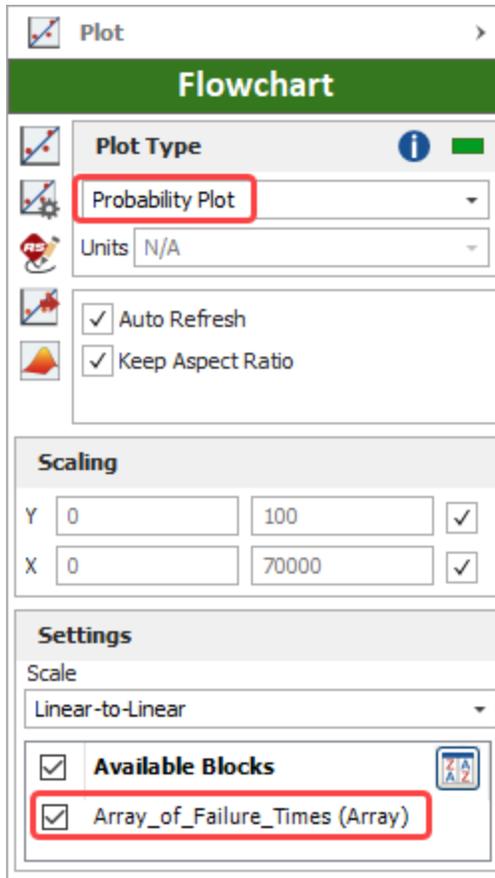
Result #	Array_of_Failure_Times
1	1930.926056
2	2008.575072
3	2546.727667
4	1291.008805
5	647.42902
6	2164.346878
7	1562.131953
8	525.730922
9	2397.02994
10	1653.12614

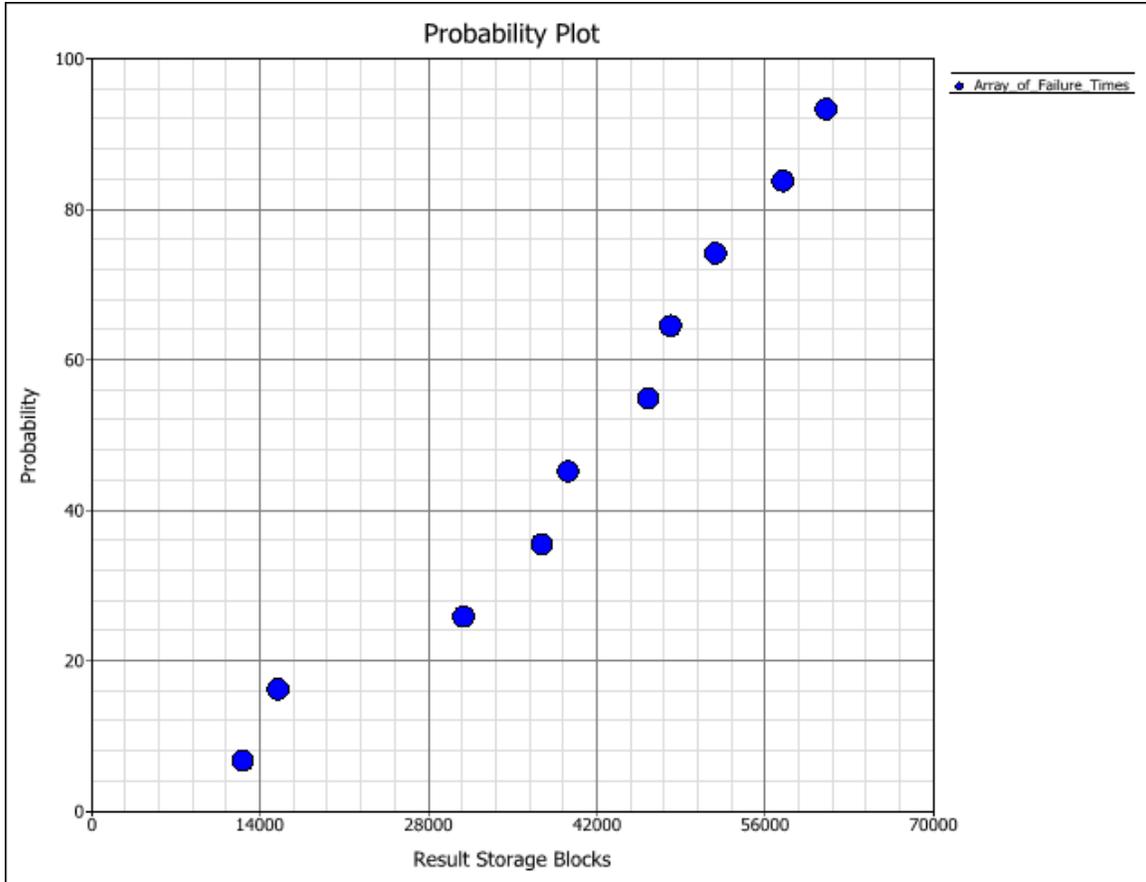
7. View plots

Click the **Plot** icon on the diagram control panel to open the plot sheet.



On the plot sheet control panel, choose the plot type, then select the result storage block(s) to show in the plot.

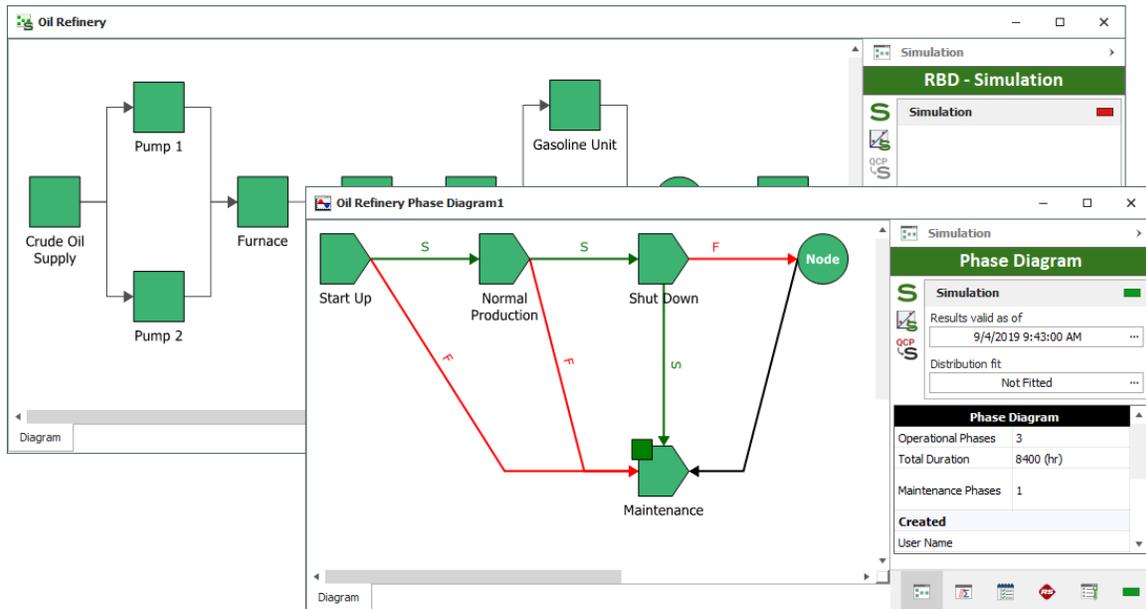




More Analyses and Tools

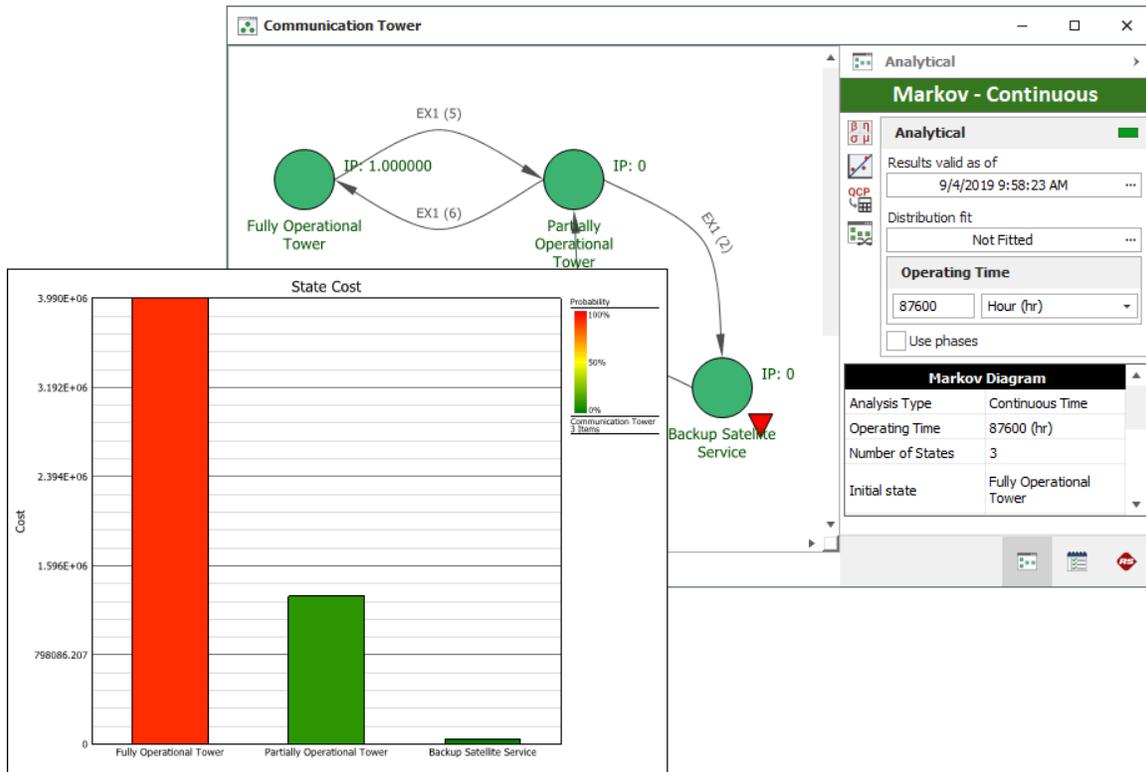
Phase Diagrams

Reliability phase diagrams represent scenarios in which a system may undergo changes over time.



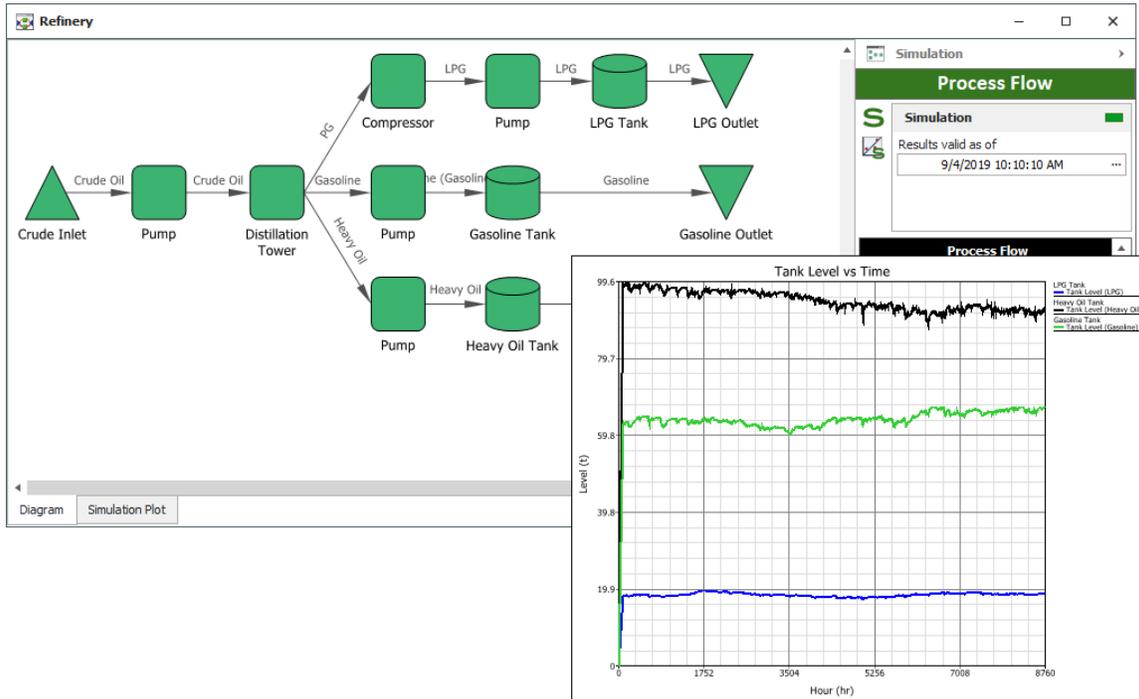
Markov Diagrams

Markov diagrams model the behavior of systems based on memoryless transitions between states, allowing you to look at partial or degraded working states, and to start analysis in varying states.



Process Flow Simulation Diagrams

A process flow simulation diagram is used to model a continuous process flow, typically a fluid flow, using a diagram in which the components are connected in flow-wise configuration. The simulation can be used to estimate the amount of raw material consumed by the process, as well as the amount of finished product and waste generated by the process in a given time frame.



Reliability Allocation

The allocation analysis tool helps determine the reliability requirements for individual components/assemblies that would be needed to achieve an overall reliability goal.

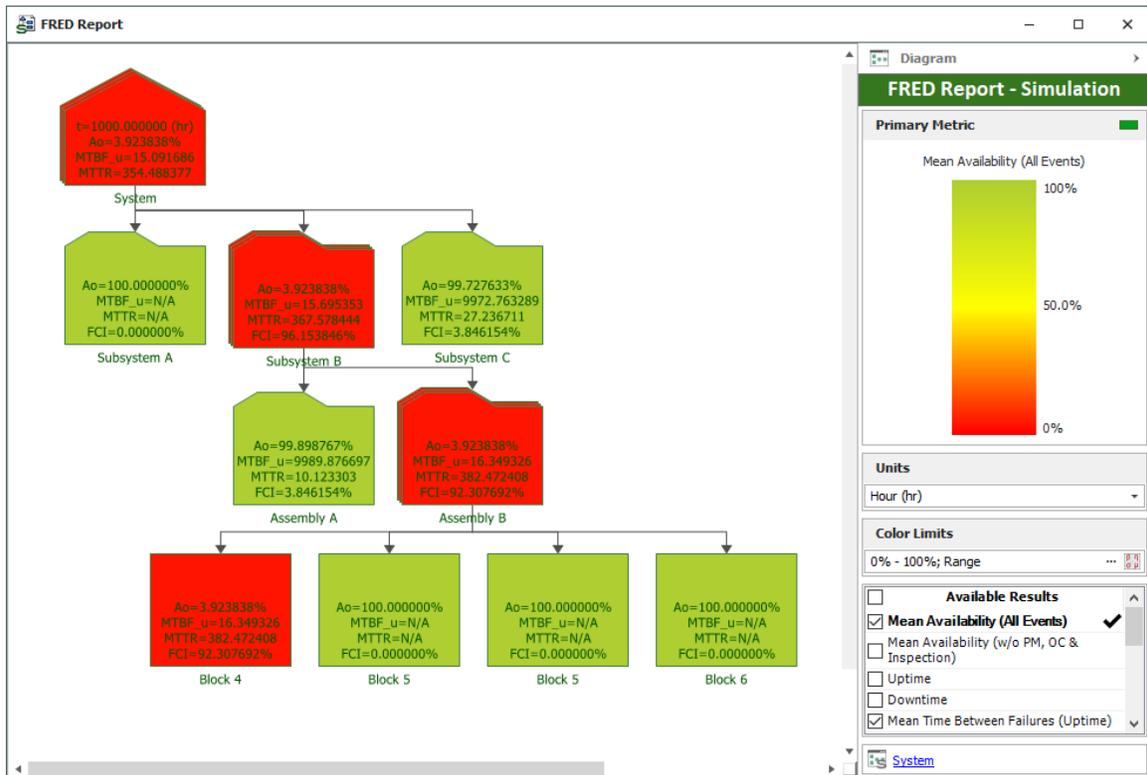
The screenshot displays the Allocation Analysis tool interface. It features a main table with columns for Block Name, Reliability Importance, Current Reliability, Maximum Achievable Reliability, Feasibility, Target Reliability, Equivalent Parallel Units, and Comments. A sidebar on the right contains sections for Allocation Type (set to Cost Optimized), Inputs (Target Reliability: 0.968431, Time: 500, Units: Hour (hr), Iterations: 50), Outputs (Current Reliability: 0.952914, System Reliability: 0.968431), and Color Limits (0.00% - 100.00% Range). A red arrow points from the Subsystem A row in the top table to the Asmbly A row in the bottom table.

Block Name	Reliability Importance	Current Reliability	Maximum Achievable Reliability	Feasibility	Target Reliability	Equivalent Parallel Units	Comments
Subsystem A	0.980968	0.952914	1	Easy (1)	0.968431	1.130834	
Subsystem B	0.952914	0.980968	1	Hard (9.9)	0.980968	1.000000	

Block Name	Reliability Importance	Current Reliability	Maximum Achievable Reliability	Feasibility	Target Reliability	Equivalent Parallel Units	Comments
Asmbly A	0.998807	0.954052	1	Moderate (5)	0.969342	1.131355	
Asmbly B	0.037541	0.979923	1	Moderate (5)	0.986369	1.099088	
Asmbly B	0.037541	0.979923	1	Moderate (5)	0.979923	1.000000	
Asmbly B	0.037541	0.979923	1	Moderate (5)	0.979923	1.000000	

FRED Reports

FRED reports provide a graphical demonstration of the reliability and maintainability/availability characteristics of the components in a system and help to identify the components that may require improvement.



Optimum Replacement

The Optimum Replacement tool helps to determine the best time to inspect and/or replace components, based on the costs for planned and unplanned maintenance.

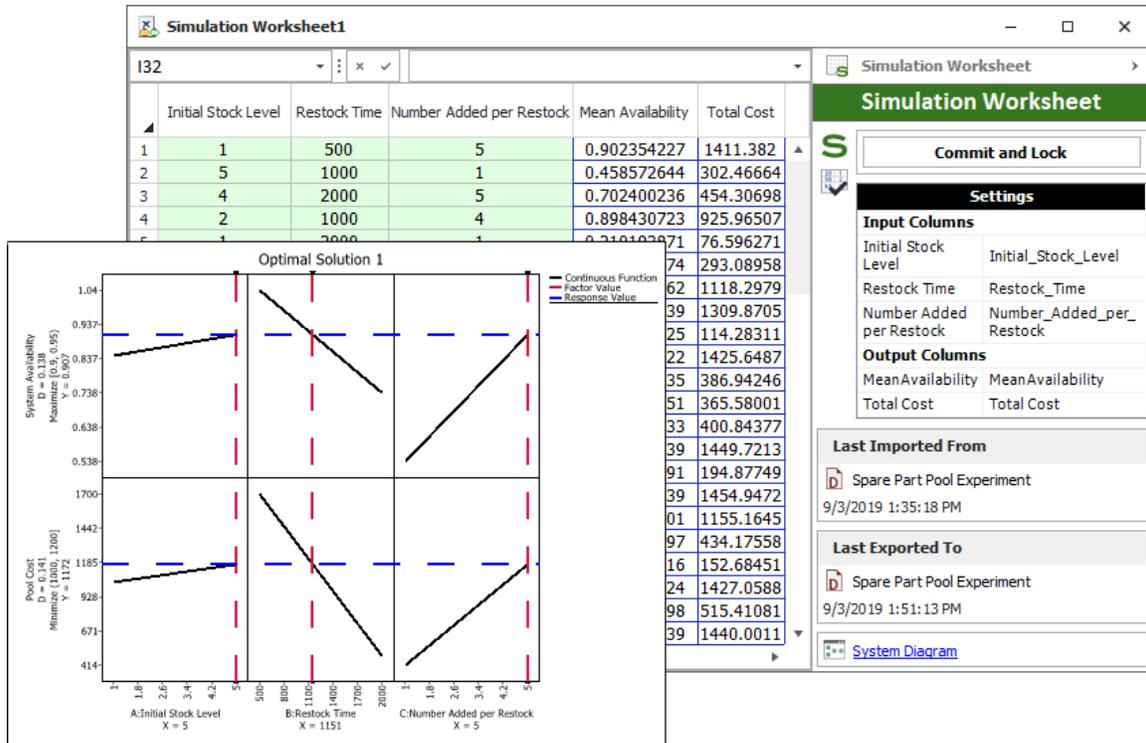
The screenshot shows the 'Optimum Replacement' window with a toolbar and a data table. The toolbar includes options for Edit (Delete, Copy, Paste), Preferences (Display Diagram Name, Show Inspection Columns), Costs (Auto Fill Simulation Costs, Clear Values), and Tools (Calculate, Cost vs. Time Plot, Create Maintenance Task(s)).

Block Name	Planned Replacement Cost	Unplanned Replacement Cost	Optimum Replacement Time (hr)	Replacement Cost per Unit Time (hr)
Oil & Filter	30	5000	3196.434610	0.011045
Water Pump	700	4000	37209.829755	0.038682
Timing Belt	800	4500	37209.829755	0.036619
Air Filter	25	1500	3196.434610	0.012295
Spark Plugs	80	250	37209.829755	0.008932
Fuel Filter	70	800	10920.363780	0.009673

Replacement Cost Per Unit Time (hr)

Simulation Worksheets

Simulation worksheets can vary values that are used when simulating an RBD or a flowchart, allowing you to investigate the effect of various factors on the simulation results (e.g., how the restocking interval and initial quantity in a spare part pool affect the cost of maintaining a system). The values can be entered manually, or can be transferred from an experiment design folio in Weibull++. After simulation, you can transfer the results into the design folio in Weibull++ for analysis and/or optimization.



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