MERSEYSIDE POLICE

PUTTING BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE ON THE BEAT

HOW COGNOS HELPED MERSEYSIDE POLICE ENSURE FASTER, MORE UP TO DATE MANAGEMENT REPORTS

Working in the police force is a challenge, and Merseyside Police is no exception. Merseyside has a population of just under 1.5 million, and includes more than half a million households. Despite this, crime in the area is down—robbery is down 18%; burglary is down 14% and car crime down 8%. Improvements are occurring year on year.

THE CHALLENGE

One of the keys to the Force's success is its people—some of the UK's brightest, most dedicated talents choose a career in the police force. Currently the force employs just over 6600 people.

However, up until recently, the only way of monitoring Personnel was via Comma Separated File (CSV) imported into Microsoft Excel, and manipulated to produce both cross tab reports and visual charts and graphs. Moreover, these management systems were so cumbersome that only two people in the entire human resources team could use it with any sort of ease.

Gillian Blake at Merseyside Police takes up the story: "We didn't have any professional reporting capability. The kind of data we needed included reports on average length of service, organisational structure, rates of absenteeism and training requirements, but there was no way we could see all of this unless we were prepared to work on it for hours, if not days. This clearly has a negative impact on our strategic direction. Unless we have visibility of process, it's extremely difficult to make a fast, balanced decision."

Merseyside Police uses Cognos Impromptu (Administrator and Client), Cognos PowerPlay Client and Cognos PowerPlay for Web users.

THE SOLUTION

With that in mind, Gillian Blake attended the Reunion conference, a conference held bi-annually by Reunion Ltd, an independent group for customers of Northgate (RebusHR) Information Solutions. Cognos was demonstrating its range of solutions at the same conference and met with Gill.

"We were impressed with Cognos for several reasons. They appeared to answer a lot of our requirements. But we were also looking for an off-the-shelf solution that could be easily implemented into our existing system with minimum fuss, yet still had the flexibility to be fine-tuned to our needs," said Gillian Blake.

Merseyside Police worked with Strata Systems to implement Cognos PowerPlay Solutions.

Strata is a specialist in delivering reporting and analytic solutions to customers in a variety of industries, with a particular emphasis in Human Resources (HR) reporting.

Working alongside the Force, Strata took responsibility for the complete installation and subsequent skills transfer. This was a key element of Strata's involvement—in-house skills are obviously vital if the end-user is to gain maximum ROI.

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THE NEXT LEVEL OF PERFORMANCE™

THE RESULTS

Currently Cognos PowerPlay is used for the 'strategic analysis of absence data to assist in attendance management'. This means that the Force is now able to analyse headcount, (including FTE counts), working days lost to absence, monthly sick days per person, gender, rank, employment type, organisational structures, ethnicity, length of service, age, and short/medium and long-term absence.

Reports can now be drawn on a daily basis showing monthly, quarterly and annual figures and visual images can also be built to display data.

Merseyside Police now has the necessary tools to assist local management in decision making to support operational policing. Just as importantly, this can be done quickly, thus saving valuable resource time and allowing senior management and Chief Officers speedy access to management information to support their own strategic decision making. Going beyond that, it also allows for meaningful information to be collated for external reporting requirements, such as to the Police Authority.

Any anomalies in the management reporting—for example, peaks in absence—can now be spotted quickly and then actioned by either pulling more resources into one area of the organisation, or by looking at the potential underlying causes and taking the appropriate remedies.

"Cognos has enabled us to do things which we never thought possible. For example, before we couldn't do the most basic reporting, such as analyse historical data. With Cognos we can. It's these extremely practical elements of the solution that make the difference to our organisation."

GOING FORWARD

The work with Cognos doesn't stop there. There are already plans to incorporate other aspects of management reporting such as training analysis and performance appraisal into Cognos.

"For a solution with such high-tech specifications, it's surprisingly easy to use and very intuitive. It literally takes all of 30 minutes to get a new user up to speed on the new system. Under the old IT structure, we were inundated with requests for reports that only we in the Personnel Directorate could do, and which moreover, was extremely labour intensive. Now other users can pull out the information they might need, or, when we're asked for a particular report, it takes minutes, not hours or days," concluded Gillian Blake.

WHY COGNOS?

Only Cognos delivers a complete range of integrated, scalable software for corporate performance management. Cognos products let organisations drive performance with enterprise planning and budgeting, monitor it with scorecarding, and understand it with business intelligence reporting and analysis. Founded in 1969, Cognos now serves more than 22,000 customers in over 135 countries.