

*Interviewer:* Welcome to an IBM Cognos Express mid-size business analytics success story video. In this video IBM and Aviana, an IBM premier business partner, speak to Mark Davidson, Applications Manager at Golden State Water Company. Golden State is a California public utility delivering high quality water to customers in the most cost effective manner. Recently Golden State needed to upgrade their budgeting and forecasting systems by implementing the IBM Cognos Express planner module and utilizing Aviana's consulting, training and implementation services. Mark discusses some of Golden State's challenges.

*Interviewee:* Well, I think our situation is like many others. We've been asked to do more with less resources and budgeting is no exception. So we have fewer people to support a larger number of users and they have to do more with less people and in many cases in a shorter period of time. So the budgeting piece was one that we need to do fairly quickly and with as few people as possible, but it also has to be accurate and flexible at the same time. So if we need to go back and make changes to it, the ease of making those changes is very important to the business.

And obviously if they're doing more activities with less people, it has to be an easier solution for them and more nimble for them to be able to make changes and send them up the line. The end users want more ownership of these applications and less involvement, less reliance on IT to make changes.

*Interviewer:* Mark goes on to discuss the objectives of this implementation.

*Interviewee:* Largely we were trying to consolidate as many activities as we could on fewer numbers of solutions. So the budgeting piece was done separate from the BIP so our goal was to move towards a fewer number of tools, fewer software pieces in the enterprise. And so Cognos Express offered not only the budgeting piece, it offered forecasting which largely we were doing in Excel before. And it also offered reporting and BI capabilities, which we have two other tools that do those.

So the goal is to eventually converge and do more activities on one platform. It makes it easier to support from the IT perspective was really what we wanted to provide to the end users is an easy way to enter their budgets and something that was familiar to them that we could leverage later for reporting and business intelligence.

*Interviewer:* With help from Aviana, Golden State purchased the IBM Cognos Express planner module. Let's hear why.

*Interviewee:* Yeah, well we also looked at some of the other big budgeting packages and one of the things that was attractive about Cognos Express was it was kind of geared towards a middle market company. So it's an enterprise class solution, but the price point for the express model really allowed us to get world class solution in a small to mid sized company like ours and I found it very easy to use. It was very easy to run updates. So when we wanted to sync up the source and the target systems it was very easy from our perspective to do that, much easier than our other solution that we used to have.

*Interviewer:* The Cognos Express planner module for budgeting and forecasting has reduced the time required by Golden State's IT department and business units to produce budgets considerably.

*Interviewee:* I would say at least 50 percent. Our old solution, there were many steps to make even the simplest changes, so I would say it was at least 50 percent less. Well, I think for sure the time required to input an individual cost center budget went down probably 30 – 40 percent. And we didn't do an ROI analysis. We didn't really try to put dollars to that, but obviously if you can save 30 – 40 percent of labor time to do a certain process there's value to the organization there. And with Cognos Express, I think from what we gained out of it was the ability to consolidate various tools onto the same platform and trim down the number of tools that we have to support.

*Interviewer:* Mark concludes with candid remarks about Golden State's business partnership with Aviana.

*Interviewee:* Yeah, I think Aviana did a great job helping us implement this solution. They have very good technical people. Their customer service was excellent. So we really consider them a trusted advisor along the way. They had some great suggestions. They had good examples of things that other customers have done that they've helped them do. And that really helped us brainstorm and come up with the solution that we ended up with.

I think going forward we plan to build out the BI in reporting and certainly Aviana would be our first go-to company to help us with that initiative.

*Interviewer:* That wraps up today's video. Thank you to Mark Davidson, Golden State Water Company and Aviana, an IBM premier business partner.

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