

# Liberty Media Corporation takes advantage of IBM Cognos Professional Services to streamline implementation of IBM Cognos software

## Overview

### ■ Challenge

*Automate data consolidation process to help the company move from a quarterly to a monthly close in a timely and cost effective manner*

### ■ Why IBM?

*IBM Cognos offered step-by-step, personalized assistance throughout the implementation process to make deployment faster and easier*

### ■ Solution

*An end-to-end IBM Cognos 8 Controller and services solution for streamlining the monthly reporting process*

### ■ Benefits

- *A seamless migration to IBM Cognos*
- *No need to change business processes or models*
- *Positive user experience*
- *Automated reporting structure*



Liberty Media Corporation (Liberty Media) owns interests in a broad range of electronic retailing, media, communications and entertainment businesses. Those interests are attributed to a number of tracking stock groups holding interests in individual, wholly-owned and partially-owned affiliated operating companies.

### Challenges Faced

Liberty Media has a number of disparate subsidiaries, which do not typically interact with one another. Each of the subsidiaries operates

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*~ Connie Rosengarten, accounting manager, Liberty Media Corporation*

on different technology platforms as Liberty Media does not mandate that subsidiaries transfer their data to a standard technology platform or system. However, each subsidiary is expected to report its financial information to corporate headquarters on a regular basis.

Over the past several years, Liberty Media has increased its number of consolidated subsidiaries and, according to Connie Rosengarten, accounting manager at Liberty Media, the company wanted easier insight into its financials and a better process for gathering important financial information. "We reached a point of wanting the ability to automate the data consolidation process so we could move from a quarterly to a monthly close. We had been consolidating information manually, which had become a very labor-intensive and time-consuming process," she says.

Paramount in Liberty Media's decision-making process was selecting a consolidation tool that was robust and flexible enough to help the organization streamline its monthly reporting process and supplement the quarterly close report that was already in place for SEC reporting purposes.

### **Strategy Followed**

Liberty Media evaluated IBM Cognos 8 Controller and another software product, but ultimately selected IBM Cognos 8 Controller due to the product's ease-of-use and robust reporting capabilities. "When we saw the statistical capabilities of IBM Cognos 8 Controller during the demo, it became apparent that we would be able to produce the types of reports we wanted in a timely fashion," states Rosengarten.

Liberty Media went live with IBM Cognos 8 Controller in January 2008. With the help of the IBM Cognos Guardian Services, the IBM Cognos Professional Services support teams and the IBM Cognos services consulting partner, RSM McGladdery, the product was fully implemented in six months. IBM Cognos 8 Controller runs in Liberty Media's Windows and Citrix-based IT environment and interoperates with its SQL server and the various ERP systems that are deployed in each of the subsidiaries.

Currently, the IBM Cognos 8 Controller is deployed in Liberty Media's accounting and finance departments and is accessed on a monthly basis by approximately 70 users across Liberty Media's subsidiaries. Many of the users are technically proficient with IBM Cognos 8 Controller. The majority of the 70 users are data providers, who load data into the system for corporate use.

### **Benefits Realized**

Using the experience and in-depth knowledge of the IBM Cognos Professional Services team, Liberty Media has been able to quickly automate its reporting structure, which has helped alleviate the monthly manual information gathering process from its corporate staff and each subsidiary. It has been easier to gather accurate and in-depth information, which has created a positive experience among the user community.

"Our subsidiary companies are happy with IBM Cognos 8 Controller. Now all they have to do is load a file to get information to the corporate office, as opposed to manually filling out the information in an Excel template," comments Brian Wendling, vice president, assistant controller at Liberty Media.

Critical to the success of the IBM Cognos 8 Controller implementation was Liberty Media's use of IBM Cognos Guardian Services, a series of work packages designed to address specific implementation requirements. The program works by allowing a customer to choose specific services to complement their existing capabilities and project requirements. Guardian Services includes access to Technical Account Managers (TAMs.) TAMs are technical resources personnel with deep IBM Cognos application expertise, who help customers navigate

through service offerings, using IBM Cognos resources, tools and proven practices. Liberty Media's TAM was Paul Allen.

"Paul showed us different ways to tailor the solution to the needs of our organization. The one-on-one personal contact has allowed us to take advantage of aspects of the product that we might otherwise have never known about or thought to explore," says Wendling.

The business modeling and tailoring provided by the IBM Cognos Professional Services team has allowed users throughout the organization to access information quickly from disparate systems using a single tool to deliver consistent monthly reporting. "One of the keys to our successful implementation was the ability to call IBM Cognos at any time and speak with Paul, as opposed to struggling with an issue on our own. It's definitely a value-added service," states Rosengarten.

In summary, Rosengarten feels that the IBM Cognos 8 Controller and the IBM Cognos Professional Services team have made life much easier for Liberty Media's subsidiaries. "Due to the step-by-step guidance from the IBM Cognos team, we were able

to switch over to IBM Cognos easily, without having to change our business processes or models, and that has been significant."

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