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**DRIVING BETTER BUSINESS PERFORMANCE
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THE NEXT LEVEL OF PERFORMANCE™

PERFORM TODAY, PROTECT TOMORROW: Getting More Value from your Oracle Applications

ERP deployments deliver immense value. They efficiently track, collect and store vast amounts of transactional data. They are the data foundation that leads to useful reports, analysis, and good decisions.

However, ERP deployments are not purpose-built for the needs of performance management. In particular, the data they hold is not easily accessible for the deep-detail or cross-departmental reporting you require to manage performance better. Because of this, leading organizations turn to independent BI and performance management vendors like Cognos for these reasons:

Better user acceptance—Independent vendors build reporting software with both business and technical users in mind. Reports are easy to customize for non-IT users, and draw data from the variety of sources required to make business decisions.

Freedom from IT-bandwidth constraints—Rather than housing reporting in IT (which manages ERP deployments) independent vendors extend reporting capability to business users. This removes the constraints imposed by scarce IT resources to get the reports they need.

Independence from ERP upgrades—If the reporting features you want are in the next version of the ERP data warehouse, you have to wait for the company to move to that new version. With an independent BI platform, you perform today and get the BI you need on your schedule.

More room to grow—Successful BI deployments lead to more demand. Independent vendors let you add capabilities as you require them, draw from the full variety of data sources, and integrate financial and operational systems, protecting you from tomorrow's technology changes.

Read about *Vicor*, *the University of Minnesota*, *US Marine Corps* and *Acos* in this paper, their pathway to better reporting, and the results they achieved. These four organizations multiplied the value of their investment in Oracle ERP deployments with Cognos business intelligence standing on top of their data.



Vicor Corporation

“With our Cognos investment, we can now use resources to solve the problem, not just to understand that it exists. This facilitates continuous improvement.”

Joe Jeffery,
Director of Manufacturing Systems, Vicor

Vicor Corporation designs, manufactures, and markets modular power components and power systems used in the communications, data processing, industrial controls, test equipment, medical, and defense electronic markets. Headquartered in Andover, Massachusetts, the company also maintains other offices in North America as well as Europe and Asia. Vicor has annual revenues approaching \$190 million, and employs more than 1,000 people worldwide.

With Cognos, Vicor has implemented business intelligence software to track and analyze production processes and issues. The solution provides a framework for performance management and accountability, allowing the organization to tie together strategic goals, major initiatives, and improvement efforts.

Challenge Faced

For Vicor, the goal was simple: focus on “breakthrough improvement” in measures designated in the strategic objectives for each year’s operating plan. Many different techniques were used to achieve the objectives, including Hoshin Breakthrough Planning, Kaisen, 5S, and statistical process control.

Ultimately, the company adopted annual improvement themes to stimulate the full involvement of all employees. These included the “4 x 50s” (50 percent improvement in four strategic objectives in one year), “10 bucks a brick” (pull \$10 of cost out of each brick product), and “faster, better, cheaper” (to raise the bar even further). These initiatives helped to bring Vicor’s gross margins from percentages in the mid 20s to current levels in the mid 40s.

Quality Function Deployment (QFD) was used occasionally to help resolve issues where projects were competing for resources. With QFD, a manufacturing organization first

identifies its strategic priorities. From there, they implement the required initiatives to meet these objectives in areas such as customer service, quality, materials management, and asset management. QFD is an important decision-making tool when the business utilizes “flowdown” objectives and needs to resolve resource conflicts.

“We needed to correlate a set of objectives—the WHATs—with the initiatives that would accomplish these objectives—the HOWs—down into successive levels of planning,” says Joe Jeffery, Director of Manufacturing Systems at Vicor.

The challenge was to find software that would help them track, measure, and report on their progress.

Strategy Followed

Vicor’s operating environment is complex. Their business model is one of “mass customization,” which involves high-volume production and a high mix of individual models. The company routinely ships over 8,000 different products to 8,000 different customers each year. This is accomplished using “on shore” manufacturing, based in Andover. Bills of materials are highly indented (up to eleven levels). Manufacturing routings include up to twenty tracked operations, as well as many information tasks.

Vicor’s manufacturing systems include highly integrated robotic assembly, as well as supply chain applications, engineering systems, and operational systems for storage and shipping. All planning, costing, inventory management, and master recipe generation data is managed through a PeopleSoft ERP system.

The organization selected Cognos PowerPlay to provide metrics and analytics capability on top of the ERP environment. “Like our other systems, the BI software needed to be extremely flexible in order to support our mass customization model, so we chose Cognos,” says Jeffery.

The Cognos solution was able to meet the organization’s key BI requirements. First, the PowerPlay cubes could group business information along formally established reporting lines, and provide alternate drill paths to make hierarchy substitution easy. Information could also be viewed across many time horizons (years, quarters, months, and days), as well as rolling and comparative time dimensions. And the solution could facilitate trend reporting and allow drill-through for investigating anomalies.

Web enablement was another important factor, since much of the user community interacts with various systems through Web-based front ends.

“While our version of PeopleSoft is still client-server based, many of the transactions and all of the reporting have been replaced with Web-enabled technology,” he adds. “Most of our data cube deployment base uses client-server technology, but we are selectively deploying the Web version of PowerPlay where it makes sense.”

Benefits Realized

Cognos is now used across the organization to align strategy with tactics in areas such as labor productivity, inventory management, purchasing, and manufacturing yields. One of the company strategies, for example, is to improve customer on-time delivery. With Cognos, users can track activities and do root-cause analysis of delinquent backlog or other issues that impact deliveries.

Industry

- Manufacturing

Geography:

- Worldwide

Information Needs:

- Web-based metrics and analytics to track quality improvement initiatives
- Elimination of spreadsheet-based metrics
- Drill-down analysis capability
- Trend reporting

Platform:

- PeopleSoft ERP (7.5)
 - HP-UX Operating System, Oracle Database Management System, HP Integrity Server
- Cognos 7.3 Transformer and Client
 - Server – Windows 2003
 - Clients – Windows XP and Windows 2000

Solution:

- Cognos PowerPlay

Benefits Realized:

- Metrics and analysis provide a comprehensive view of process and system information; facilitates continuous improvement
- Simple drill-through allows timely, in-depth investigation of anomalies
- Streamlined and trend reporting
- Improved communication across functions, and decreased silo mentality

Jeffery points out that this timely, in-depth visibility has brought efficiency gains across the business.

“Let’s say the user sees an anomaly in the metrics data that he or she would like to investigate,” he explains. “The user can simply drill into the information and continue chasing the anomaly down to the individual work order, sales order, or other event that caused the problem. This has been a great productivity gain compared to our old method of compiling static metrics with tools like Excel.”

“With our Cognos investment, we can now use our resources to solve the problem, not just to understand that it exists. Middle management routinely uses an integrated metrics suite in the form of tailored dashboards. This ensures commonality of data sets and facilitates the integrated relationships necessary for balanced scorecard reporting and continuous improvement.”

According to Jeffery, BI has become a way of life at Vicor. In addition to process improvements, metrics and analytics reach across different functional areas, which increases cross-communication and decreases silo-based thinking.

He also notes that in-house analysts are continuing to develop new metrics and cubes to further support strategic and tactical initiatives as needs and ideas arise. Ultimately, better information will help the company achieve better performance, now and over the long term.



University of Minnesota

“To say we have been shocked by the results of the business intelligence software would be an understatement.”

—Susan Grotevant,
Director, Information Management Systems,
University of Minnesota

Introduction

With higher education funding from states and municipalities hitting record lows, public colleges and universities are looking internally to identify new revenue models and improve efficiencies.

The need for academic “belt-tightening” calls for easy-to-use IT solutions that provide accurate analysis and forecasting, enabling more strategic decision-making to ensure schools and students continue to make the grade.

The Organization

The University of Minnesota (U of MN) has a long history as a top academic research institution, receiving international acclaim for invention, from the heart pacemaker to the aircraft flight recorder (“black box”) and the retractable automotive seat belt. Since its inception in 1851, Minneapolis-based U of MN, has grown to encompass four campuses, a collaborative center in Rochester, extension offices, research, and outreach centers throughout the state.

As Minnesota’s only research university, U of MN is home to world-renowned professors and researchers, and more than 60,000 students. The school ranks among the top 25 public and private research university campuses. It has in the past five years alone received in excess of 230 patents for its innovative work, in addition to being credited for establishing more than 30 area start-up companies.

The Challenge

- Funding cutbacks
- Increasing administrative inefficiencies
- Need for data accessibility, integration, and analysis

State funding for higher education in Minnesota has been declining for nearly three decades, dropping from sixth to 26th among the states for its percentage of state budget support received. Consequently, one of the greatest financial challenges U of MN faces is developing new and sustainable revenue streams to ensure its future during a period of unprecedented change.

Recognizing that long term structural changes in the public financing of higher education would place more reliance on tuition and other revenue to offset changes in state appropriations, U of MN implemented a budgetary and management model designed to provide financial incentives to enhance revenues and control costs beginning July 1, 1997.

U of MN’s Susan Grotevant oversees the school’s Information Management System department, which is responsible for academic, financial, and human resources data across the school’s four campuses “In 1997,” she recalls, we implemented PeopleSoft as our Enterprise Resource Planning platform to assist with a new management focus — known internally as “Incentives for Managed Growth (IMG).”

Industry

- Higher Education

Geography

- Minnesota; satellite locations state wide

Information needs

- Data integration across multiple platforms
- Self-service data availability for multiple users/skill levels, in distributed locales
- Powerful analysis and reporting capabilities

Solution

- Cognos PowerPlay

Benefits

- Identification of new revenue potential, estimated at \$187 million
- \$5 million cost recovery
- Information-rich decision-making environment
- Higher quality student experience

IMG called for a more equitable reorganization of responsibilities for day-to-day decisions across campuses, colleges, and departments. The objective was to reduce resource and programmatic redundancies, achieve cost savings, and streamline administrative operations.

This management model placed responsibilities for day-to-day decisions affecting revenue and expenditures at the collegiate and departmental level and represented a significant change from the previous budgeting model where revenues and costs were not directly linked. This change, along with steadily increasing demands for accountability and productivity and improved academic and student outcomes, drove a dramatic increase in the need to transform data into business intelligence and to improve U of MN's strategic decision-making capabilities.

According to Grotevant, "the implementation of IMG and the financial incentives it offered to colleges was the first and perhaps single greatest driver for encouraging interest in issues related to: developing better models for understanding the supply and demand for courses; recognizing the complex financial cross subsidies and dependencies that exist within colleges and campuses; and understanding and managing the factors influencing instructional costs."

These objectives demanded the creation of an information-rich decision-making environment that could also reach all levels of the organization.

In order to make sense of the full breadth of its data stores and realize a return on investment from its existing enterprise resource planning investments, while lowering total cost of ownership for these systems, the University decided to invest in a business intelligence solution from Cognos.

Grotevant selected the Cognos BI solution because of its robustness. The ability to handle large amounts of complex data, enterprise scalability, powerful analytic capabilities, the ease of use of its graphical user interface, and attractive return on investment made it a winning choice.

Cognos PowerPlay specifically has proved to be a cost-effective tool for delivering the enterprise-level analytical information required to support the increasingly entrepreneurial, competitive, and privatized financial environment faced by U of MN. Coupled with U of MN's PeopleSoft-based Student Records and Student Financial solution, PowerPlay helps administrators understand the supply and demand for courses: providing information on how tuition is generated, the

corresponding costs of instruction, and understanding the complex cross-subsidies that exist among and within colleges and professional schools.

"Cognos PowerPlay is one of the most powerful and cost-effective solutions to deliver enterprise-level analytical information throughout the organization," said Grotevant.

PowerPlay has also helped make evident to academic administrators the large differences in revenue contributions made by different programs based on academic disciplines, levels of instruction (for example, graduate versus undergraduate models for the delivery of instruction), and the cost of faculty and instructors.

According to Grotevant, "PowerPlay will be an important asset in integrating data from the PeopleSoft Admissions and Student Records systems in order to gain a clearer picture of student performance." PowerPlay is also expected to play a key role in analyzing data from U of MN advisement and academic progress system to reduce the cost of instruction and time to graduation by more accurately forecasting course demand. It will also improve student retention rates through the identification of early warning indicators of academic difficulty, and support timely and effective advising interventions.

This multidimensional analysis made possible through U of MN's Cognos-based BI solutions allows colleges to see that even where credit hours are equal, tuition outcomes can vary widely depending on the student's college of enrollment, tuition discounting, and differences in tuition rates due to residency or other factors. Using this information, colleges now have a wider range of alternatives for increasing tuition revenue other than just admitting more students. Some of these options include adjusting recruitment strategies to change the mix of students paying different rates, or calculating the net return on investment to discount tuition through the use of scholarships to attract highly qualified students who would otherwise not attend the University.

Benefits

- Identification of new revenue potential, estimated at \$187 million
- \$5 million cost recovery
- Information-rich decision-making environment
- Higher quality student experience

The return on investment in the purchase of Cognos Business Intelligence tools has been both immediate and long term. ERP

systems provide information one person and one transaction at a time. Business intelligence tools such as PowerPlay can quickly aggregate and organize information from multiple sources to facilitate analysis, permitting the University to identify approximately \$5 million in unbilled tuition during the initial implementation of the new student financial system.

Since implementing Cognos, the University has identified several additional opportunities to increase revenue, including: strategic tuition funding and discounting; student progress tracking (and flagging potential issues areas); minimum course loads increases; and more manageable class-size-to-instructor ratios.

“To say we have been shocked by the results of the business intelligence software would be an understatement,” said Grotevant.

Today, using its tuition cube to analyze patterns and behaviors within the student population and historic and current course enrollment activities, U of MN has been able to identify new revenue generators that have already accounted for an increase in operational income totaling more than \$187 million; a 76 percent, largely organic, increase over earnings in 2000.

Other cubes have yielded similarly remarkable results, for example: the course enrollment cube offers colleges the opportunity to tailor course offerings to meet changing student demand. With increased data accuracy and a more complete view of operations, colleges and individual departments can also eliminate courses with declining interest, helping to reduce administrative and resource costs.

In the forecasting realm, the University is continuing to improve its ability to plan the type and timing of courses offered and using its advisement and academic progress cube to streamline operations and improve efficiencies.

The continuing return on investment to the University is measured by the dramatic increase in the availability of operational and management information and analytic capacity made available by tools like PowerPlay during a period of significant change in both the financial support for higher education and the expectations of students and stakeholders.

The magnitude of that change is reflected by the significant increases in tuition rates and revenues — totalling \$187 million — and the dramatic expansion in the demand for information reflected by the growth of the enterprise reporting customer base to more than 10,000 employees and 2 million reports annually.

Focus on the Future

“Today, I don’t see my job as providing reports, but instead providing people with the information they need to make informed decisions,” said Grotevant.

In addition to expanding its use of PowerPlay to all types of administrative data, the University plans to implement Cognos’ most recent release of ReportNet to provide greater reporting functionality and graphical capabilities to both report users and the data warehouse user community.

The University also plans to use Cognos PowerPlay, NoticeCast, and ReportNet to take advantage of the near real-time data available in its data warehouse to support an even broader range of operational reporting needs.

Finally, ReportNet is also expected to play a role in responding to heightened interest in the development of performance-based management and scorecarding initiatives brought about by a major strategic positioning initiative currently underway.

The University also plans to expand its enterprise-level performance-based management and scorecarding initiatives by deploying Cognos Visualizer along with ReportNet, and Cognos NoticeCast.

“Funding will always be a challenge within higher education. By having a grasp on our data, we have been able to make the most out of a potentially discouraging financial situation,” said Grotevant.



US Marine Corps

“The Marine Corps will always do what’s best for our people on the front lines. Today, tomorrow, and into the future, we are taking Cognos with us into battle.”

—Jarret S. Kuhfahl, Financial Systems Developer,
the US Marine Corps

Since inception in 1775, the Marine Corps had grown both institutionally and organizationally to include over 180,000 active and 40,000 reserve Marines. The Programs and Resources Department is the principal staff agency responsible to the Commandant of the Marine Corps for developing and defending the Marine Corps financial requirements, policies, and programs.

It is the mandate of the P&R Department to advise and assist the program sponsor, HQMC staff agencies, and Marine Corps Field Comptrollers in all matters relating to accounting, related information systems, and program execution. It is their mission to be the center of financial management excellence and quality in the review, analysis, and reporting of financial execution. To help them do this, they chose Cognos.

Challenges Faced

The Marine Corps faced the same problems as most large organizations. They had disparate systems that weren’t integrated to share information and data. Their primary data source was a homegrown mainframe accounting system that was extremely sophisticated, but limited in terms of reporting and data accessibility. They needed a platform that could extract data from this system, and consolidate information from 65 other systems, including their Oracle database.

Once the information was centrally accessible, they needed a sophisticated reporting and analysis platform that was tailored to the unique needs of their key audiences, including Marines, Comptrollers, DFAS, DoN, and OSD offices.

They needed a Web-based system to help eliminate the high cost of maintaining client-based applications. And, with over 3,000 users in every corner of the world, the system had to be high performing, scalable, and readily available at all times.

Strategy Followed

Use of Cognos software at the Marine Corps evolved over a number of years. “We started with a very small deployment of Cognos Impromptu for standard reporting,” says Jarret S. Kuhfahl, Financial Systems Developer, US Marine Corps. “We very quickly realized the reporting power it gave us, and the fact that it was easy to use meant it fit our requirement perfectly. In terms of capabilities, we felt Cognos was the only choice and didn’t consider any other solutions.”

The heavy use of Cognos began two years later with reporting on manpower usage in the Marine Corps Total Force System (MCTFS), and for financial and reporting against their Standard Accounting Budget Reporting System (SABRS). With the introduction of Cognos PowerPlay and Cognos Visualizer, the Marine Corps began to build a complete end-to-end performance management system. With PowerPlay they could deeply analyze and track data to the lowest level of detail. With Visualizer they could present high-level information in dashboards, providing the at-a-glance information that the Marines needed.

Most recently, the Marine Corps implemented Cognos ReportNet for a truly Web-based system. In doing so, they launched a system that provides facts in a timely and accurate manner to over 3,600 users across the globe. The system is updated daily, is readily available 24/7, and runs over 1,000 reports each day.

The success of the Marines Corps, however, hasn’t been solely based on finding the right product—they have also benefited from the people who stand behind it. “One of the keys to our success has been the value that Cognos Training Services has brought to the process,” says Kuhfahl. “Although we have always found Cognos products easy to use, Cognos training allows us to get a large number of users up and productive in the least amount of time possible. The Cognos trainers are also uniquely positioned to show us the best practices for the software, further maximizing our return on investment.”

Industry:

- Government

Geography:

- United States

Information Needs:

- A common enterprise IT environment with a Web-based portal and an enterprise shared data environment
- Fast financial information for management, outside agencies, and troops
- Flexible reporting and analysis that can adapt quickly to changing requirements

Platform:

- Homegrown mainframe accounting system
- Oracle 9i
- Other proprietary and transactional systems

Solution:

- Cognos ReportNet
- Cognos PowerPlay
- Cognos Visualizer

Users:

- 3,600+

Benefits:

- A BI platform that touches all disparate data sources to provide a single version of the truth
- Information in minutes rather than days
- Reports and insight on areas never before possible
- Cost savings in processing power, lower resource requirements, and less reliance on paper
- Web-based system that delivers information across the globe

Benefits Realized

With Cognos, the US Marine Corps has the right information at their fingertips. They now have deep and broad insight across the full spectrum of performance management metrics. With basic reports, transaction level details, department level analysis, accurate numbers for contingency operations, compelling dashboards, and metrics on their key performance indicators, the Marines have a single version of the truth across the organization.

With return on investment always being the watchword, Kuhfahl feels Cognos has been invaluable. “With Cognos we have a system that is adaptable, flexible, inexpensive to maintain, and easily deployable. We are power users and regularly throw curves at the system and Cognos always performs. Most importantly, the system is fast. We can now provide information in minutes as opposed to days or weeks and with initiatives like the war on terrorism, timely information is a powerful weapon. As Marines we need to be ready anytime, anywhere, and Cognos helps us do just that.”

The US Marine Corps has recovered costs in a number of ways with Cognos. By implementing a system that allows rapid turnaround of reports by non-technical users, the Marines can keep expensive resources, like IT programmers, focused on strategic initiatives rather than maintenance of the system. And since reports are now done off Cognos rather than the mainframe, their processing costs are substantially reduced. Cognos has also helped the department move towards paperless processes, substantially reducing costs in postage, paper, faxing, and more.

“Business Intelligence are truly the two best words I could use to describe Cognos products,” says Kuhfahl. “Today the Marines are faster, leaner, and more responsive as an expeditionary force; we needed a system to be the same. With Cognos we know we are going into battle with the right information.”



Acoss

“Cognos applications are characterized by ease of implementation and quick user acceptance. These are two essential criteria for the success of our decision-support project and, therefore, for our goal of extending analysis to new areas, including performance management and the optimization of the service we provide to our clients.”

—Pierre Bisson, IT Director,
Within The Acoss/Urssaf Organization

Established in 1945, the French Social Security Agency oversees the provision of old-age pensions, health insurance, and maternity pay for workers and their families. Under the supervision of the French government, it is managed by the trade unions and representatives of employers' organizations. Since 1967 it has been headed by ACOSS (the central umbrella body for social security organizations), which manages a network of 106 local URSSAF offices responsible for collecting employee contributions and other payments that flow into the funds used for social security. Overall, the URSSAF handles about 5 million contributors, and employs 13,700 people at 118 locations.

Challenges Faced

In order to monitor the performance of its duties to the government and the national social security authority as instituted by the reform act of 1996, ACOSS introduced a set of business intelligence tools. The project was intended, as a first step, to simplify access to data. “We chose decision-making above database-driven tools, which were too complex for our particular end-users,” explains Pierre Bisson, IT Director within the ACOSS/URSSAF organization. Very rapidly, however, the project grew in scope and became an indispensable aid in understanding client needs, monitoring litigation, managing the risks involved in non-recovery of contributions, and measuring performance on the part of the URSSAF service providers. Now known as the “Galaxy” project, it relies on eight data repositories (one for each IT centre), built around the central repository managed by the ACOSS team.

Strategy Followed

In 2000 the URSSAF decided to undertake a full-scale reorganization of its infrastructure. “At the time, the URSSAF offices were using an architecture that had become layered over time,” explains Bisson. “The data marts had gone in different directions, leaving us with a complex and untidy situation to deal with. Rather than trying to put this right, we chose to start again from scratch.” The initial architecture, which was already built around Cognos Impromptu and PowerPlay, was originally made up of the 103 different repositories used by the URSSAF offices. At that time, URSSAF was mainly using the reporting facilities for monitoring litigation proceedings.

The restructuring project was undertaken with the aim of implementing a more centralized infrastructure for the organization's data that could cope flexibly with changing requirements and work with new applications for optimizing business process management. “Since 1996, the technologies used by URSSAF and especially the tasks it has to carry out have changed considerably,” explains Bisson. “The new architecture had to allow us to introduce new services that could primarily help those making payments with their declarations. However, it also had to let us analyze our processes so we could optimize them.”

As part of the restructuring process, it was necessary to reconsider the value of the Cognos solution which had been in place since 1996. Following a tender process, URSSAF decided to continue working with Cognos, because of the simplicity of its applications and open and cooperative attitude. “We issued an invitation to tender in 1996, and at that time the only business intelligence tools available were client/server based.

“The Cognos solution represented the best value for money, as well as being straightforward and quick to implement—a key factor as our infrastructure is complex,” explains Bisson. “This is still a factor and, what's more, Cognos is Web-based. This is also a basic requirement for incorporating the toolset into today's IT systems and also for making deployment easier. Now, in fact, we are so convinced of the superiority of Cognos in terms of ease of implementation, deployment, and of use, that we deploy virtually all of their applications!”

The data warehouses rely on UNIX AIX four-way pro servers, with an Oracle 9i database with a partitioning option. There are also data repositories based in eight regional IT centers (the “Galaxy” project) holding more than one terabyte of data, as well as one central repository managed by ACOSS. The repositories are housed in an Oracle 9i/IBM AIX environment

with a partitioning option. Cognos ReportNet is deployed on a Windows 2 CPU server. Cognos DecisionStream runs on the same platform as the repositories: a UNIX AIX four-way processor with 16 Gb of memory, which may be extended in order to benefit from the “dimensions” process offered by Cognos DecisionStream.

Initially, the organization remodeled its central architecture on an area-by-area basis. The 103 data repositories (and certain other data marts) were streamlined down to only eight. All of the data feed processes were handled automatically by the Cognos DecisionStream ETL solution. Each of the interregional IT centers looks after several URSSAF offices, with the same software and hardware architecture deployed everywhere. This first stage took four years to complete, with users finally moving to the new architecture in 2005.

Benefits Realized

It is expected that the previous system will be decommissioned once and for all in 2006 when users have moved their local data on to the new architecture. As part of the process, URSSAF is replacing its 2000 Cognos Impromptu licenses with Cognos ReportNet licences and extending the use of multi-dimensional analysis with Cognos PowerPlay to new areas. These include calls from clients by area and by hourly time-slot with the aim to better understand and meet clients’ needs.

In parallel with optimizing the level of services provided to its clients, URSSAF also wishes to exploit the new architecture and to put performance indicators in place. “We are not yet taking an approach based purely on balanced scorecarding, though we are getting there,” states Pierre Bisson. “The aim is to speed up all of our processes so that they can be optimized to enable managers to improve service quality and rationalize costs. This strategy of delivering an enhanced service at the lowest costs took shape in 2005, before an initial prototype model was developed using Cognos Metrics Manager.

“We’ve only made a start in terms of moving towards performance management, but the results are already very clear. To take this further, we are planning to roll out dashboards without delay,” adds Bisson.

Benefits to the solution have been manifold. With Cognos ACOSS now has:

- An architecture that is flexible and easily managed: Their architecture has been developed to adapt to all requirements, the decision-support infrastructure is easier to administer, and its radial design is better suited to cope with future change.
- Fewer demands for IT in terms of development and maintenance: the introduction of the Cognos DecisionStream ETL tool helped the organization to avoid the use of batch processes for extracting and manipulating data, processes that are almost always responsible for delays and maintenance complications.

In addition, where it once took hours to extract and manipulate the data used to feed the data warehouse, this now takes only a few minutes. The ETL tool and the radial design allow high levels of responsiveness in gathering data on new events and analyzing them.

- An effective way to optimize the organization’s services and performance: the use of a Web client combined with analysis tools and key performance indicators has enabled the URSSAF offices to improve their levels of service to clients while allowing internal processes to be optimized.

Area of activity:

- Public sector

Geography:

- Europe

Information Needs:

- To restructure its IT architecture and simplify control
- To respond to new service requirements
- To optimize management of business processes

Solution:

- Cognos DecisionStream
- Cognos ReportNet
- Cognos PowerPlay
- Cognos Metrics Manager

Platforms:

- IBM AIX
- Oracle 9i

Users:

- 2,000+

Benefits:

- Architecture that is more easily managed and is more flexible
- Optimization of the organization’s services and performance
- Fewer demands in terms of development and maintenance

About Cognos

Cognos, the world leader in business intelligence and performance management solutions, provides world-class enterprise planning and BI software and services to help companies plan, understand, and manage financial and operational performance.

Cognos brings together technology, analytical applications, best practices, and a broad network of partners to give customers a complete performance system. The Cognos performance system is an open and adaptive solution that leverages an organization's ERP, packaged applications, and database investments. It gives customers the ability to answer the questions — How are we doing? Why are we on or off track? What should we do about it? — and enables them to understand and monitor current performance while planning future business strategies.

Cognos serves more than 23,000 customers in more than 135 countries, and its top 100 enterprise customers consistently outperform market indexes. Cognos performance management solutions and services are also available from more than 3,000 worldwide partners and resellers. For more information, visit the Cognos Web site at <http://www.cognos.com>.

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