

Customer success in the public sector



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Today, governments are facing increasing challenges that impact their ability to fulfill constituent requirements. Aging populations, economic slowdowns, budget shortfalls, and security issues are only a few. To solve these complex challenges, governments around the world are transforming how they work, collaborate, and serve their constituents. By using IBM Cognos 8 BI and IBM Cognos 8 Planning governments are improving business processes, creating collaborative networks, and empowering communities, citizens, and staff.

Government agencies at all levels and on every continent choose Cognos, an IBM company, to:

- Align the organization with strategic goals and manage towards the desired outcomes for the agency.
- Link managerial actions and decision-making with common goals.
- Demonstrate transparent processes and good governance throughout the agency.
- Redeploy resources easily to meet objectives that evolve over time.
- Increase process predictability and avoid disruptive surprises.
- Match budget requests to funding and ensure desired outcomes.

Read about how:

- **ARDEC** (Armament Research Development and Engineering Center, U.S. Army) used IBM Cognos 8 BI and IBM Cognos 8 Planning to save \$423 million.
- The **City of Albuquerque** used Cognos business intelligence to support its eGovernment and public safety initiatives.
- **MassHousing** used IBM Cognos 8 BI for accurate decision-making across the organization.
- **Saskatchewan Environment** improved governance, communications, and streamlined reporting in a geographically dispersed organization with Cognos.
- The **U.S. Marine Corps** used Cognos to unite data, understand information, and disseminate it to troops around the world.

Cognos was acquired by IBM in January 2008. Customer success stories written prior to that date may not reflect the new product naming conventions stemming from the acquisition.

Armament Research Development and Engineering Center



“A single view of business data across different data sources is not much to ask. A common user interface for easy ‘one stop shopping’ is not a novel or unreasonable request.”

— Mark Sauvageau, Chief, Operations and Matrix, Financial Management, U.S. Army ARDEC

The U.S. Army’s Armament Research Development and Engineering Center (ARDEC) manages life-cycle engineering processes required for the research, development, production, field support, and demilitarization of ammunition, weapons, fire control and associated items.

ARDEC began working with Cognos in 1995. Since then, ARDEC’s reporting and analysis needs have evolved in parallel with the advance of Cognos business intelligence abilities. This evolution helps ARDEC meet mandatory reporting and data requirements which must comply with federal guidelines.

As the IT environment grew to include systems with legacy databases and home-grown solutions, it became more difficult to gain visibility into all of ARDEC’s activities. This challenge led to an SAP® ERP implementation for consolidating transactions and operations.

The boost SAP provided to overall organizational management made the investment worthwhile and helped ARDEC increase overall operational effectiveness. But shortfalls in reporting resulted in unhappy users and a drop in the use of reports across the organization.

Challenges faced

“Implementing SAP on ARDEC’s reporting was paralyzing. When the switch was turned on, there were no reports,” says Mark Sauvageau, ARDEC Chief of Operations and Matrix for Financial Management. “So the BW team turned to SAP R/3® reports and scrambled to design some SAP BW Business Explorer

Industry:

- Defense / Public Sector

Geography:

- United States

Information Needs:

- Access to heterogeneous data sources.
- Self-serve report authoring for business users.
- Data consistency.

Platforms:

- SAP BW
- MS SQL Server
- MS Excel
- SAP R/3
- SOMARDS S2K (proprietary)

Users:

- 3000+

Solution:

- Cognos 8 Business Intelligence
- Cognos 8 Planning

Benefits:

- Access to all enterprise data sources.
- Self-serve reporting for Users.
- Cost effectiveness.
- Faster time-to-production.

(BEx) reports. The user response was not positive. The new reports were rigid and difficult to layout. We lost our ability to report on a single version of the truth across multiple data sources. There were complaints about all aspects of SAP reporting. The business terms were different. The reports could not be printed.”



With the addition of SAP, 3,500 ARDEC users now faced three versions of the truth regarding their financial data — one from the SAP R/3 transaction system, one from the SAP Business Warehouse, and another from their non-SAP systems. There was no option for reports that consolidated all three sources.

ARDEC's success relied in part on the Financial Analyst user community being able to provide accurate turn-around reports to customers. With that in jeopardy, ARDEC needed a solution to its reporting problems sooner rather than later.

Strategy followed

ARDEC set out to leverage its SAP investment while also delivering organizational performance reports. Sauvageau's Financial Management (FM) team was responsible for the Cognos implementation and knew reporting was business critical. When ARDEC's SAP team asked for reporting help, FM responded with a plan that included help from Cognos.

Together, the FM team and Cognos setup a single secure sign-on process for accessing both the Cognos portal and the SAP portal. Cognos business intelligence reporting with SAP BW and non-SAP data was enabled in three months.

"We chose Cognos as a user-friendly way to report from SAP for financial metrics," says Patricia Alnor, Program Manager of Business Intelligence for Technology and Management International at ARDEC. "Cognos gives us ad hoc, static, and formatted reporting to help us answer questions on the fly. This enhances our investment in SAP. Our business users build their own reports, rather than relying on programmers to navigate the SAP report-building environment."

Rather than fall into a one size fits all approach, ARDEC pursued the best tools for specific needs. According to Sauvageau, when it comes to data, it may not be realistic to keep everything in one place.

"One example is our budget data. This is data from a ColdFusion application written six years ago. The beauty of Cognos 8 is that it doesn't care. Its data integration capability gathers all ARDEC data from SAP BW, SQL Server, and Excel® spreadsheets.

A single view of business data across different data sources is not much to ask. A common user interface for easy 'one stop shopping' is not a novel or unreasonable request. It actually cuts down on maintenance costs and easily improves user attitudes towards the system."

For ARDEC, leveraging its SAP investment through Cognos makes sense. By relying on SAP BW for modeling and architectural features as well as its role as the main data repository, ARDEC is leveraging the solution's strength. Similarly, staff turn to Cognos 8 Business Intelligence as a user-friendly, ad hoc report solution for presenting SAP BW and non-SAP data in printable, presentable, drillable reports.

Benefits realized

ARDEC has won more than twenty-five awards over the last decade. These awards would not have been possible without the help of the Cognos suite of tools used to submit Qualitative Data Packages. Another tangible benefit was ARDEC being funded for \$4.7M for awards. There was a documented savings to customers (via the Cognos toolset) of \$237.5M from FY97-FY01. Their estimated savings to customers was \$423M from FY95-FY05.

"One of the great things about Cognos is you don't have to be an IT guru," says Alnor. "I'm definitely not one. There is no programming in my background. We're a financial management group that is responsible for the entire BI deployment and Cognos makes it easy. If you have a problem you call Cognos Support and they'll walk you through it. I've installed Cognos 8. And it took me only a few hours. It's as simple in the back end as it is in the front end."

Access to multiple data sources has allowed management to make critical decisions quickly and has proven more cost effective compared to an SAP-based reporting solution. ARDEC uses Cognos to address the reporting needs of five levels of management, from dashboard-style reports for senior leadership, to status-type reports for managers, and day-to-day detail reports for operational staff.

“We have deployed Cognos to our financial and operational staff as well as high-level managers, but plan to roll it out to all users within the organization. With Cognos, people have an easier time understanding the numbers they see,” says Sauvageau. “Our time for report-building is 50 percent faster from development to production. In fact, we have a faster time-to-production for new projects. It only took 10 minutes to integrate with SAP BW.”

Looking ahead

Beyond reports that consolidate SAP BW and non-SAP data sources, FM is now actively working with Cognos to integrate SAP transaction data for a single, organization-wide view of performance management information. FM also intends to integrate information from Microsoft Project for one view of all aspects of program management. Eventually, employees will start their day with a personal dashboard showing all the key metrics for their individual projects, be able to drill down through the dashboard to the root causes of missed metrics, and take corrective action. As part of this process, Sauvageau’s FM team is also rolling out Cognos Planning to draw on financial data from the SAP BW system.

City of Albuquerque

ALBUQUERQUE

“Data is a bunch of numbers or text characters. It’s not information. People need information, not data, to make decisions. Cognos lets us take data and turn it into information on a strategic and operational basis and link the two as needed. With Cognos, it is now possible for us to use relatively few resources to provide information to a large and diverse audience.”

Brian Osterloh, Applications Development Manager for CRM & BI, City of Albuquerque



At the City of Albuquerque, New Mexico, the saying goes that a well-informed public service is an effective public service. This premise grew legs when the City began using a business intelligence (BI) solution from Cognos, an IBM company, to automate data collection and information sharing among its 7,000 employees in more than 20 departments—from public safety to libraries. The benefits of the system enabled the City to realize significant cost savings—almost 2000 percent overall—which have continued after its PeopleSoft CRM implementation and throughout its business processes.

The City also uses Cognos to bring critical information, such as public safety and campaign reporting data, to its 750,000 residents through a BI extranet. Since that time, the City has been characterized as a public service visionary in its outreach to citizens and its ability to give employees a single version of the truth. By using Cognos to link heterogeneous data, inform the public, and empower employees to make better decisions, the City has realized the true ROI of business intelligence.

Challenges faced

With an annual budget of more than \$1 billion, the City of Albuquerque provides a wide cross-section of critical municipal services to its residents. Historically, different departments maintained a variety of home-grown and off-the-shelf systems to manage data. For example, public safety services, water services, and residential and commercial development planning each captured high volumes of data relating to financial and operational performance. With a mix of ERP, legacy, mainframe, and distributed relational database systems, data was spread across various systems and in

Sector:

- Government

Geography:

- United States

Information Needs

- Reduction of manual data collection from disparate systems.
- Actionable information for HR, finance, emergency personnel.
- Rich, timely information for citizens.
- Scalability.
- Ease of use and maintenance.

Platforms:

- Windows
- SQL Server
- PeopleSoft ERP
- IBM DB2
- IBM AS400, IBM Domino Database, IBM FileNet

Users:

- 7,000 employees internally.
- 750,000 people externally in the City of Albuquerque.

Functional areas of deployment:

- Financial
- Fire and police
- Human resources
- Utilities
- Public safety

Solutions:

- IBM Cognos 8 BI
- Cognos Professional Services
- Cognos Education

Benefits:

- Effective, efficient reporting, analysis, and scorecarding across all data sources.
- A 2,000 percent ROI from Cognos investment in 2003.
- A BI extranet that keeps citizens informed 24/7.
- User self-service to BI information.
- Quick scaling to meet new user needs.
- Ease of use and management.

multiple formats. Officials could not generate their own reports, nor could they consolidate information or share it with other departments without substantial manual effort.

Although the City of Albuquerque officials wanted to convey key data to city residents over the Internet—especially public safety data—they had no solution in place to accomplish this critical task. They realized that a public extranet could be a tall order to fulfill, as the solution would need to be easy to use with minimal training and minimal software maintenance. It would also need to be scalable enough to serve many people simultaneously and quickly. According to Brian Osterloh, Applications Development Manager for CRM & BI at the City of Albuquerque, they needed to implement a BI solution that was scalable, flexible, and easy to use both internally and externally.

“At any moment, I needed to have the ability to go across the organization and reach 7,000 people, and then be able to go outside and connect with another 750,000 people. By far, scalability was our biggest requirement and challenge,” says Osterloh.

Strategy followed

After considering several BI solutions, the City of Albuquerque selected Cognos due to their product’s ability to scale quickly and meet the stringent requirements of a public extranet. Cognos was first implemented in 1997, and over the past decade, the City has developed its BI infrastructure to include IBM Cognos Series 7, IBM Cognos ReportNet, and, most recently, IBM Cognos 8 BI. The City has standardized on Cognos, and its implementation spans more than 20 departments and a myriad of applications.

In terms of the implementation process and roll-out, the Cognos Professional Services organization has been central to the overall success of the project.

“When the City introduced the Cognos suite of products, Cognos assisted us with training and implementation,” states Osterloh. “Cognos Education courses gave us the knowledge we required to successfully manage the project from the beginning through to advanced report writing. For each major step, we used the services of Cognos Professional Services. Their technical assistance and ongoing support has been a crucial part of each implementation.”

To provide the right data at the right time, Cognos software accesses information from the City’s key applications, including its PeopleSoft Customer Information System and Citizen Relationship Management (CRM/311). In addition, the City has a very large external Web presence that allows, for example, vendors to check the payment status for their services, and citizens to look up the contributors of any given campaign.

The close working relationship between Cognos and IBM has also helped the City maximize its investment in IBM technologies such as DB2, AS400, Domino Database, and FileNet.

“The open, distributed architecture of Cognos works seamlessly on our existing IBM and PeopleSoft technology infrastructure. As a result, we can ensure residents and employees find consistent and helpful information to help keep the City running smoothly and more efficiently,” remarks Osterloh.

Benefits realized

“Data is a bunch of numbers or text characters. It’s not information. People need information, not data, to make decisions. Cognos lets us take data and turn it into information on a strategic and operational basis and link the two as needed. With Cognos, it is now possible for us to use relatively few resources to provide information to a large and diverse audience,” states Osterloh.

According to Nucleus Research, an independent Wellesley, Massachusetts-based firm that evaluates financial return on IT assets, the City of Albuquerque achieved nearly 2,000 percent ROI in 2003 from its overall Cognos deployment by reducing administrative overhead and identifying cost saving opportunities. The savings has continued to grow throughout the years.

Today, Cognos is a strategic element of the City's day-to-day business and has been deployed to all City departments, including fire, police, human resources, and financial departments. The impact on the IT department has been dramatic, with the introduction of PeopleSoft CRM/311 having the biggest effect on operations and resource management.

The City implemented CRM/311 during July of 2005. During this time, Osterloh became aware that large-item garbage pickup requests tripled. Before Cognos, a citizen had to call more than a day in advance for pickup and typically wait a week for the item to be removed after their request was captured on one of three different sources. The City had one person in their Solid Waste Management Department who spent six hours each day extrapolating the information manually and creating the work list for the following day.

The City decided it would be best to consolidate and have all of the requests come through the CRM/311 application, which would then allow creation of a single Cognos report in minutes.

“When we showed the first report to the person who had been manually creating the report every day, she was thrilled. She just got back six hours of her day, every day,” comments Osterloh. In addition to the resource management savings, citizens no longer had to call one day ahead. They could call anytime and have their items picked up the same day, instead of waiting a week.

Cognos has also helped significantly improve the graffiti removal process for the City. In 2007, the mayor had stated that his goal was to have graffiti removed within 24 hours of being reported, instead of in two to four days. According to Osterloh, this was a very ambitious goal, but one that was very important to the mayor and the City.

To achieve this monumental task, the City had all of the requests routed through the CRM/311 system. Using Cognos, Osterloh was able to create reports that allowed him to see that it was previously taking two to four days for graffiti to be removed. He determined that if a person called CRM/311 between midnight and 7 a.m., it took on average one day less than if the call came in between 7 a.m. and midnight because of where the call landed in the queue. He found that the vast majority of graffiti reports came in between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m. and they were being delayed 24 hours due to the dispatch time. This new information allowed him to redeploy the work hours and dispatch times to circulate throughout the day. Through its use of Cognos, the City solved the problem and achieved the mayor’s goal.

“Through Cognos, we were able see the issues and solve them quickly and efficiently,” states Osterloh. “The decisions that were made because of Cognos have allowed the Solid Waste Management Department to get within 24 hours for graffiti removal—with no additional resources and an increased volume!”

Overall, Osterloh has been thrilled with Cognos and has plans in the near future to roll out IBM Cognos 8 Go! Search, which allows users to find reports, scorecards, and other content created in IBM Cognos 8 BI. “The Cognos innovation continues to impress me,” states Osterloh. “With IBM Cognos 8 Go! Search, our employees are looking forward to accessing Cognos reports with the ability to fine-tune their results to view what they need, when they need it.”

MassHousing



“The overall payback of the unified picture provided by Cognos 8 BI has been priceless. For an executive to be able to view information quickly, you can’t put a value on it. Reports that previously took days to create can now be completed in a matter of minutes.”

Carl Richardson, BI Product Manager, MassHousing

MassHousing is the leading provider of affordable housing for both individuals and major developments across the state of Massachusetts. Since 1970, MassHousing has provided more than \$9.9 billion in financing for more than 88,000 units of mixed income rental housing, and in excess of 55,000 loans for home owners and home buyers throughout the state. MassHousing is a self-supporting, independent public authority.

Mission critical for an organization like MassHousing is quick, reliable information that helps the organization save money, serve the community better, and satisfy regulatory requirements effectively. And, that’s why they chose Cognos.

Challenges faced

In 1998, the agency embarked on an initiative to deploy an Executive Information System (EIS). “We wanted something that would give us information on how the business was running without having to get multiple answers from multiple people and then summarize it,” says Carl Richardson, BI Product Manager, MassHousing.

With the goal of centralizing MassHousing’s data—at the time siloed in six separate business divisions: Home Ownership, Rental Development, Rental Management, Corporate, Mortgage, Insurance, and MassHousing Overall—the EIS would easily allow executives to view pertinent information without having to access underlying data systems. By consolidating the data, the EIS would enhance the accuracy and integrity of MassHousing’s reporting across each of its six business segments; a key challenge given its disparate architecture. For example, if an executive wanted to know what their total loan amounts were across two business areas, they had to access the two separate databases and then combine and manually add the data.

Industry:

- Government

Geography:

- North America

Information Needs:

- Standardization of reporting criteria.
- Secure executive reporting on budgeting/trending.
- Compliance and diversity reporting.
- Customized portals.
- Mapping tools for visual presentation.

Platforms:

- Microsoft Windows Server 2001, 2003
- Microsoft SQL Server 2003
- Progress 8
- Microsoft Access
- BEA Aqua Logic

Solutions:

- Cognos 8 BI

Benefits:

- Increased efficiency of business reporting, decreased response times.
- Unified picture of the overall business.
- Integrated portal customized for each user.
- Highly-flexible, consolidated and accurate reports.

Strategy followed

MassHousing searched for a reporting tool capable of generating an integrated portal reporting system for its executives. After evaluating products from the leading vendors, MassHousing selected Cognos. “The Cognos solution was much more flexible and in tune to what we needed to do and how we wanted to present information,” explains Richardson. “It was more adaptable to changes that would occur within the data, and there was less maintenance with Cognos products than the others.” Shortly following the decision, MassHousing began consolidating the data across its



six business units and deployed Cognos across the agency during the following year.

As MassHousing's Executive Information System has matured, so too have the requests and needs of its 300 plus users. Users are now requesting a greater number of reports, and particularly, customized reports. Executives need greater security and increased visibility into the agency to better manage their business. Other departments, such as human resources and compliance and diversity, have also requested access to Cognos reports in order to meet current regulatory requirements.

To continue to meet these evolving demands, MassHousing decided to migrate to the Cognos 8 BI suite. "Until now, everything has been geared towards a particular department," says Richardson. "We want to take that up a step where the corporate manager can see an initial page that's geared towards them as individuals rather than the business as a whole."

In December 2005, MassHousing began deploying Cognos 8 BI. With supporting technology from BEA AquaLogic, MassHousing created an internal portal that the agency now refers to as My MassHousing. The portal provides employees with a centralized place to read agency news, fill out timecards, and access performance management systems.

Equally important, the portal will provide executives with easy access to budget information, and proactive highlight reports on trending and stoplight information. "Rather than having to search a number of reports to find the one that is needed, informational reports are sent directly to the executives' My MassHousing portal. With this, they can view the information the moment they get in the office," says Richardson.

From the beginning of the project, MassHousing have utilized Cognos consulting and training teams. Always on the lookout to develop its internal staff, MassHousing had its team work in tandem with Cognos developers for the added benefit of the knowledge transfer for the building of components and BI software expertise.

Now, MassHousing has a dedicated team of six people in its business intelligence and corporate reporting department, which was officially designated in 2006 and created separate from the traditional IT department. The new department acts as a business intelligence competency center (BICC), and is tasked with making sure that both existing and new systems do not affect the overall reporting effectiveness or the needs of the agency overall.

Benefits realized

MassHousing maintains that Cognos is the lifeblood of its agency and continues to evolve its business with Cognos business intelligence. "It's really the business that has driven this entire project. As the needs of executives continue to grow, they're pushing us to implement Cognos solutions rather than the other way around," states Richardson.

"The overall payback of the unified picture provided by Cognos 8 BI has been priceless. For an executive to be able to view information quickly, you can't put a value on it. Reports that previously took days to create can now be completed in a matter of minutes," stresses Richardson.

Considered mission critical, the Cognos solution is included in the agency's disaster recovery program. "It's one of the key systems that have to be brought back up in case of a disaster, which speaks volumes," says Richardson. "MassHousing initially deployed Cognos as a subsystem, and now it's essential for business continuity."

As a result of the progress and success MassHousing has seen during the last 10 years using Cognos solutions, it now serves as an internal reference and example to its community and outside vendors. "We've had managers from other agencies actually come in to look at what we're doing within Cognos and with our systems. There are numerous people who have been pointed towards Cognos because of us," says Richardson.

Saskatchewan Environment



“There is a good appreciation for Cognos, with everyone benefiting from the improved oversight of department activities by our executive, and improved communication between executive and staff on our plan.”

Rick Bates, Director of Strategic Planning and Corporate Assessment, Saskatchewan Environment

In partnership with the people of Saskatchewan, Saskatchewan Environment has the provincial responsibility to manage, develop, and protect Saskatchewan’s environmental and natural resources for conservation, economic, recreation, and social purposes and to ensure they are sustained for future generations. The organization manages more than 37 million hectares of Crown resource lands, including 35.5 million hectares of provincial forest. It helps protect the province’s air, water, and land from contamination, provides provincial forest fire suppression services, and operates 34 provincial parks, 150 recreation sites, 22 protected areas, eight historic sites, and three ecological reserves.

To help manage this broad mandate, Saskatchewan Environment employs 1,300 people at over 52 field locations. Executive oversight of such a geographically dispersed organization with such a broad mandate proved challenging. Initial efforts for improvement involved development of a paper-based reporting system, which, although a step forward, was labor-intensive and slow. Saskatchewan Environment chose to implement Cognos 8 Business Intelligence (BI) to provide a more efficient means of executive oversight and to help streamline reporting.

Challenges faced

“We needed a solution that could produce reports rapidly,” explains Sarah Gammell, Strategic Planning and Corporate Assessment at Saskatchewan Environment. “Our paper-based system was inefficient, so we were looking for a way to improve it.”

Prior to Cognos, all reporting was done through a word processing program. Producing the organization’s

Industry:

- Government

Geography:

- Canada

Information needs:

- Web-based platform.
- Scalable.
- Self-service capabilities.
- Sorting capabilities.
- Ease-of-use and flexibility.
- Robust communication features.

Platforms:

- Windows Terminal Server
- Microsoft SQL Server

Solutions:

- Cognos 8 BI

Benefits:

- Improved communication within the organization.
- Enhanced executive oversight and governance over projects.
- Faster reporting process and the ability to easily address ad-hoc requests in a timely manner.
- Ability to sort data for multiple views of progress.

seven yearly reports, specifically the quarterly reports, was labor-intensive and required a great deal of interaction between Strategic Planning and Corporate Assessment and the other areas of the department. Strategic Planning and Corporate Assessment would first request data from the 14 branches, compile each branch’s information into one document, and then send it back out to the branches for editing.



Equally important, Saskatchewan Environment is often approached by other agencies for updates on projects they are involved in. These ad-hoc requests were creating a strain on the Strategic Planning and Corporate Assessment unit and the department.

Strategy followed

Saskatchewan Environment sent out a request-for-proposal to evaluate BI vendors. The agency wanted a scalable, flexible, easy-to-use, Web-based offering that provided sorting and self-service capabilities. The agency also needed a solution with robust communication features.

After evaluating the submissions, the agency chose to implement Cognos 8 BI because it met the organization's technical requirements and offered a timely deployment schedule. The organization entered the Cognos 8 BI beta program and was the first organization to go live with the product in North America.

"Cognos had everything we were looking for in a BI solution. In addition to being easy to use, Cognos had the strong communication features that would help us improve access to information for staff across the department and gain a better understanding of how the organization was performing in terms of implementing our key projects," states Rick Bates, Director of Strategic Planning and Corporate Assessment, Saskatchewan Environment.

Saskatchewan Environment went live with its Cognos solution in January 2006 and was able to roll out Cognos 8 BI to its department of 1,300 users ahead of schedule. To help them get the most from their new solution, Saskatchewan Environment used services from Cognos Consulting, Training, and Support.

The organization partnered with Cognos Consulting to determine the best way to convert its data from its old system. Cognos Consulting also conducted on-site training with 30 managers to get them up to speed quickly.

"Cognos Consulting was amazing," praises Gammell. "They spent the time to really learn our business and directly applied this information when mentoring our team. We learned quite a bit."

Saskatchewan Environment took advantage of five classes offered by Cognos Training to gain in-depth knowledge on topics such as metadata repositories, reporting, and scorecarding. Saskatchewan Environment also relied on Cognos Support to help troubleshoot issues the organization experienced while updating its system. "Cognos Support has been great. They are very responsive and helped us resolve issues quickly," notes Gammell.

Moving forward, Saskatchewan Environment plans to

develop an executive dashboard and improve the integration of its measures and overall performance management system.

Benefits realized

"There is a good appreciation for Cognos, with everyone benefiting from the improved oversight of department activities by our executive, and improved communication between executive and staff on our plan," explains Bates.

Based on Cognos solutions, Saskatchewan Environment has been able to improve executive oversight and background information. Executives are able to monitor project implementation easily and view metrics on a broad range of activities, which they were not able to do previously. Saskatchewan Environment executives can grasp a project's status relative to objectives quickly using the easy-to-read graphic displays in Cognos 8 BI.

"With Cognos, we have improved executive oversight," states Bates. "Now executives have a clear picture of the organization's progress towards objectives on key projects. At a glance, they are able to view the status of key projects, and from there, determine next steps for projects that are off-track."

With Cognos, Saskatchewan Environment has been able to improve its reporting process and provide users with data that is more accurate, timely, and accessible. With the self-service capabilities in Cognos 8 BI, users are now able to enter information directly from the source, eliminating Strategic Planning and Corporate Assessment's involvement in the process and saving the organization a significant amount of time. "Cognos has saved us at least a couple of weeks per report," says Gammell. "We are also able to produce ad-hoc reports very quickly."

Another benefit Saskatchewan Environment has realized has been its ability to monitor initiatives by organizational structure as well as by goal or objective. Using the sorting feature, the organization can now gain immediate insight into a project's progress and see how metrics in different branches relate to one another. Prior to Cognos 8 BI, Saskatchewan Environment had to manually scroll through results to find keywords, a time-consuming and frustrating process.

"With Cognos 8 BI, results can be filtered by project, showing all metrics related to that plan and providing different views of the organization," notes Gammell.

Gammell sums up the organization's enthusiasm for Cognos. "We are happy with our Cognos solution and look forward to continuing to expand its functionality."

U.S. 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, U.S. 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.

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.



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, U.S. 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.”

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 U.S. 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.”

About Cognos, an IBM company

Cognos, an IBM company, is the world leader in [business intelligence](#) and [performance management](#) solutions. It provides world-class enterprise planning and BI software and services to help companies plan, understand and manage financial and operational performance. Cognos was acquired by IBM in January 2008. For more information, visit <http://www.ibm.com/software/data/> and <http://www.cognos.com>.

For more information about defense

Armed forces worldwide rely on Cognos to enhance logistics and ensure mission readiness. The U.S. Army, Navy, Marine Corps, and Air Force all use Cognos to improve operational performance.

For more information on Cognos solutions for defense, please visit www.cognos.com/defense.

For more information about education

The Cognos solution empowers over 1,000 institutions of higher education. Over 530 K-12 school districts and over 20,000 schools rely on Cognos to deliver optimal education programs and improve student performance for over 12 million American children and young adults. Thirteen state departments of education and the U.S. Federal Department of Education trust their performance to Cognos.

For more information on Cognos solutions for education, please visit www.cognos.com/education.

For more information about government

Over 75,000 U.S. federal government employees rely on Cognos to run more efficient, effective, and transparent programs. Cognos also helps state agencies in 40 U.S. states improve their performance.

For more information on Cognos solutions for government, please visit www.cognos.com/gov.

Request a call

To request a call or ask a question, go to www.cognos.com/contactme. A Cognos representative will respond to your enquiry within two business days.

