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## Overview:

### Challenge

One of the main business challenges prior to the implementation of Cognos Express was getting actionable data from their systems.

### Solution

IBM Cognos Express was an attractive solution because it could be rapidly deployed and its ease of development would facilitate a fast return on their investment.

### Benefit

To date, Grasshopper Group has transitioned all of their previously manual operational reporting to a fully automated process using scheduled reports that are emailed to ten users daily.

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*“Cognos Express was a solution that fit our budget, even as a small company, and we were able to get it implemented in a much faster time than I would have ever expected.”*

– Mike Morris, Vice President of Operations

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## Grasshopper Group

*Selecting IBM Cognos Express for affordability and rapid ROI to help achieve their goal of servicing over one million entrepreneurs*

### Background

Grasshopper Group is a provider of a suite of tools designed to help empower entrepreneurs. They are currently a thirty-five person operation with over one hundred thousand customers and growing that number steadily every day. As Grasshopper Group continues to expand their product line and experience rapid growth, they have identified a critical need to attain better insight into their customer and product information in order to provide better targeted and more effective offerings that will ultimately improve their own customers' rate of success. Their specific goals in implementing a business analytics solution were to:

1. Access actionable information without IT intervention.
2. Understand their best customers and better target their origin.
3. Better understand customer behavior by identifying patterns in the data.
4. Provide trusted and accurate information to decision makers.

### The Challenges

Grasshopper's existing information landscape presented a number of challenges to their ability to make informed decisions about their business. Grasshopper's flagship product is a virtual phone system that generates large volumes of highly detailed usage information. Querying this data proved to be a very slow and difficult process, and making sense of the results was a separate challenge in itself. Furthermore, marketing and sales data were in a separate system that made any form of consolidated reporting a tedious and error-prone manual process.

### The Solution

Grasshopper Group selected IBM Cognos Express as the solution to their information delivery woes, chiefly because they were “very confident that Cognos, as a leader in the industry, was going to be able to help solve [their] problems.” Beyond its well-established lineage as an enterprise class BI platform for the world's largest organizations, IBM Cognos Express was an attractive solution because it could be



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## Solution components

### Software

- IBM® Cognos® Express Xcelerator
- IBM Cognos Express Reporter

### Business Partner

- Ironside Group
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*“One of our main business challenges prior to the implementation of Cognos Express was getting actionable data from our systems.”*

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*“The ability to finance those costs [both software and services] over a 36 month period and really eliminate any significant upfront capital investment was a very large benefit to us.”*

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rapidly deployed and its ease of development would facilitate a fast return on their investment. What was most surprising to Grasshopper Group was just how minimal of an investment that would be. By taking advantage of an attractive offer from IBM Global Financing, Grasshopper Group was able to even further reduce their upfront expenditure on IBM Cognos Express.

Another contributing factor to Grasshopper Group’s decision in going with Cognos Express was the involvement of the Ironside Group as a trusted advisor. The presence of a highly regarded IBM Business Partner with the depth of industry knowledge and technical expertise to the degree of Ironside Group’s helped to establish a level of comfort with the solution, all but guaranteeing its success at Grasshopper Group.

## The Approach

Ironside Group took an approach that applied their own proven implementation methodology, which draws upon decades of experience in planning and deploying enterprise-class business intelligence solutions at Fortune 100 companies, but elegantly scales to meet the real-world needs of a small company like Grasshopper Group.

The first phase of implementation was outlined to install Cognos Express and leverage the powerful in-memory analytics engine of IBM Cognos Express Xcelerator. Ironside Group built a multidimensional view of their data that was previously unattainable using standard relational queries. This was completed in less than five days and allowed Grasshopper Group to explore their data in a new and revealing manner that exposed a number of data quality issues, and ultimately to led to the recommendation of building a true data warehouse.

In the second phase, Ironside Group designed a flexible data warehouse that was well-suited to both meet and extend far beyond the current day’s analytical needs. The Ironside Group worked closely with Grasshopper Group’s engineering team to routinely resolve data quality issues in their source systems as well as implement and validate the data warehouse model.

Ironside Group then deployed the IBM Cognos Express Reporter module upon the new data warehouse, designed an easy to use ad-hoc query package for use with Query and Report Studio and delivered a full suite of dynamic operational reports and dashboards. In addition, Grasshopper Group’s engineering team attended one of Ironside Group’s quarterly public Report Studio training courses in order to better understand the technology and ensure that Grasshopper Group will be able to quickly and independently begin developing their own reports on their new business analytics platform.

Phase two was completed in less than three months, with implementation of the IBM Cognos Express Reporter component taking only three weeks.

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*“As we were looking for solutions, we were also looking at different potential partners to help us with implementation, and Ironside Group’s expertise in the area really just made [IBM Cognos Express] a no-brainer for us.”*

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*“[Since implementing IBM Cognos Express] we’ve been able to make much more objective and quantitative analysis of our customer acquisition costs and we’ve been able to better target different [sales] channels for our customers.”*

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## The Results

To date, Grasshopper Group has transitioned all of their previously manual operational reporting to a fully automated process using scheduled reports that are emailed to ten users daily. The ability to query the data warehouse in an ad-hoc fashion has been rolled out to four users through Query Studio and two power users have begun to author content rich reports and dashboards using Report Studio.

Grasshopper is well on their way to moving from a culture of decision making by “gut feel” to a metrics driven environment where decisions are made based upon a common accurate view of the business.

Next steps include bringing additional subject areas into their data warehouse, as well as incorporating data from their newest products, Chargify and Spreadable.

## About Grasshopper Group

Founded by two entrepreneurs, Grasshopper Group has been making it easier for entrepreneurs to start and grow their small businesses since 2003. Back then, we started out with a simple goal of empowering entrepreneurs with our first product, the Grasshopper virtual phone system, and we did just that—serving nearly 100,000 entrepreneurs (and we’re still growing).

Today, our commitment to helping entrepreneurs is stronger than ever as we continue to grow our company and develop products for busy entrepreneurs.

## About Ironside Group

Founded in 1999, Ironside Group is a Business Intelligence, Data Warehouse, Enterprise Planning and IBM Cognos Training solution provider. As a highly regarded IBM Premier Business Partner and IBM Cognos Partner for eleven years, Ironside Group has served as a trusted advisor to some of the world’s largest and most prestigious organizations, guiding them to continually improve their performance by making intelligent and informed decisions.

For more information on Ironside Group and how they can help you please visit: [www.ironsidegroup.com](http://www.ironsidegroup.com)

## About IBM Business Analytics

IBM Business Analytics solutions deliver world-leading enterprise planning, consolidation and BI software, support and services to help companies plan, understand and manage financial and operational performance. IBM Business Analytics solutions bring together technology, analytical applications, best practices, and a broad network of partners to give customers an open, adaptive and complete performance solution. Over 23,000 customers in more than 135 countries around the world choose IBM Business Analytics solutions

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To request a call or to ask a question, go to [ibm.com/cognos/contactus](http://ibm.com/cognos/contactus). An IBM Cognos representative will respond to your inquiry within two business days.



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