

Improving Supply Chain Performance

Increasing competitiveness with information from across the entire supply chain

“Our Performance Reporting system gave us fast benefits and identified areas for improvement, but we needed to drill to the detail to find the information we required to take action to make business process improvements...” Supply Chain Manager



Situation

The customer knew they had to improve performance across the supply chain to enhance their competitiveness in their chosen marketplace. They needed to analyze information that was scattered across multiple LOB, ERP and spreadsheet systems. This required them to manually assemble and disseminate reports which were time consuming and error prone to create. As a result, the consolidation was being performed once a month with no new information being available during the interim period.

The customer needed a faster and better way to evaluate material procurement, scheduling processes and supplier performance.

Customer Concerns

The customer knew that there were several risk factors:

- Dissipation of scarce budget resources if the benefits were not captured
- Loss of user confidence if the information was incorrect or difficult to retrieve
- Dissemination of wrong information would adversely affect user business decisions

Management, especially the V.P. of Supply Chain for the company, was concerned that they would be unable to continue to use their existing reporting tool (Crystal Reports®) as their reporting application. Crystal Reports was a familiar and favored and changing would mean additional costs for acquisition and training, a lack of productivity or even backsliding as a new tool was deployed.

Management was also concerned about the challenge of accurately mapping the business data since it needed to be consolidated across several companies and systems. How the data was labeled and stored was dependent on how the software for each source system was configured. The customer needed support from someone who had the business expertise to find and properly interpret the information stored in those systems.

To improve this complex business critical process certain business rules had to be built into the application. The business users knew what worked and what needed improvement, but, they needed IT support for implementation. Internal IT departments are very talented in managing the corporate data and associated platforms; however, they are often too busy to become familiar with each departmental process and the associated business rules. Therefore, departmental managers would need to spend valuable time scripting each step to avoid the risk factors listed above.

The customer needed faster, more accurate supply chain information, consolidated from multiple companies that they owned.

The customer is a UK based manufacturer of propellers, fans, and air conditioning systems to customers world-wide.



BI-DataMall® is a registered trademark of AccessIG, Inc.

Solution

The customer contacted AccessIG, Inc., a Microsoft Certified Partner, to partner with the customer to help mitigate the risks and accelerate the capturing of benefits. Because AccessIG had extensive business experience the customer did not have to script each step. AccessIG was able to anticipate downstream and horizontal implications, explain them to the customer who then chose the path with which they felt most comfortable. And, based on their extensive business experience, they brought valuable “best practice” experience that the customer would draw upon.

As a result, the customer gained faster benefits at a lower cost due to:

- the acceleration of the process improvements/prototyping phase
- the acceleration of the identification of the cost/benefit
- the acceleration of the identification of avoidable risk

Responding to their request to replace a manual supplier performance evaluation with an automated, proactive solution, AccessIG proposed a solution based on Microsoft’s SQL Server 2005 to help consolidate, transform and disseminate MRP, Master Schedule, Parts, Sales Order, Buyer and Supplier information that was critical to improvement of the Supply Chain process.

AccessIG installed the BI-DataMall®, built on Microsoft SQL Server , which is designed to provide a link to multiple disparate software systems, drawing information together for a consolidated view across the entire companies’ operations.

Data was automatically extracted from each LOB, ERP and spreadsheet system on a scheduled basis and combined into a single, multi-divisional BI-DataMall. Information was labeled with a common identifier in order to eliminate the problems associated with individual system configurations.

In addition, using SQL Server ensured compatibility with Crystal Reports, the reporting tool of choice for the customer. This allowed the business users to begin using the solution immediately, with minimal training. Using NT authentication provided an easy way to enact multiple levels of security so the valuable corporate information was protected.

The BI-DataMall automatically monitored data updates and if failure occurred, critical personnel were notified. Users were always presented with an “updated as of date and time” so they were informed as to the age of the

Benefits

- The customer was able to quickly and inexpensively deploy a BI-DataMall to get to actionable information when drilling within the Performance Management system
- The value of the Performance Management system investment was greatly enhanced
- IT support was reduced due to the standardization of tools
- The customer retained the ability to scale to a full Data Warehouse in the future
- All users in the department or workgroup have a centralized location for accessing information
- The information is structured for easy reporting and analysis
- Customer has multiple options for creating and distributing reports; i.e., automatically generated, one time, published, e-mailed, etc.