Analytics

Data is created continuously and everywhere, both within companies and elsewhere, in massive quantities and in many different formats (both structured and unstructured). As a company, it is not only important for you to know how best to extract, but also how you can properly utilize it – or, in this case, read it. This makes good analytics solutions indispensable in order to filter important insights and management information from large quantities of data.

Closed loop Performance Management at H.Essers

Premium logistics provider H.Essers wanted to move away from Excel spreadsheets for reporting and analyzing its business performance. To sustain its growth, the company needed a solution for integrating reporting, analysis, and consolidation with budgeting. With the implementation of the IBM Cognos Business Analytics suite, H.Essers can now use the time previously devoted to spreadsheets for getting business insights.

By Ketchum

"
We have been able to do our financial closing each 10th of the month, whereas it used to take six weeks after each quarter to do the closing.
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Joerie Fabry,
Group Controller, H.Essers

H.Essers offers complete supply chain solutions and has experienced solid growth over its 85 years of existence. Today, the company has 37 sites in 11 countries across Europe, 16 of which are situated in Belgium. "Each of our business units generates vast amounts of data", explains Steven Pacquée, Team Manager Business Intelligence at H.Essers. Reporting had been done for many years in Excel spreadsheets, but the company found that there were limits to this method. "We needed a reliable and intelligent solution to collect, process, and analyze this data," says Pacquée.

Setting up a Business Analytics road map

Working together closely with element61, the thought-leading Business Analytics consulting company, H.Essers defined a business analytics road map that led to a multi-year program that defined the information needs, processes, technology, and organization. Between the actions taken, a Business Intelligence Competence Center was set up within the existing

Strategic Information Center. As a second step, H.Essers embedded the IBM Cognos BI and IBM Cognos Controller solutions for reporting and consolidation within its existing Cognos TM1 structure for budgeting, which has created numerous advantages.

From repetition toward valuable insights

Reporting through spreadsheets was time consuming for H.Essers' employees. This was time that could have been used better to generate valuable insights. Steven Pacquée: "By implementing IBM Cognos, the time that was previously devoted to spreadsheets can now be used for analyzing the data and getting business insights. Time decreased, insights increased." IBM Cognos enabled H.Essers to significantly reduce the time of financial closing. Joeri Fabry, Group Controller: "We have been able to do our financial closing each 10th of the month, whereas it used to take six weeks after each quarter to do the closing. That is a huge improvement that enabled us to adapt much faster to changing budgetary realities."

Clear perspective on budget and business

The shift had more advantages. H.Essers already used IBM Cognos TM1 to do budget forecasting, but was never able to compare specific budgets with specific transport orders. Today, H.Essers is able to compare its existing transport orders with those of last year and find out how they correlate with their respective budgets. It enables the company to maintain a clear perspective on both the budgetary reality and each specific transport order. Previously, analyses were restricted to an aggregated level. Each user now has the ability to tailor his/her reports to his/her own needs. Today, 60 users are making use of IBM Cognos at H.Essers, a number that is expected to double in the upcoming year.

Challenge

To define and deploy a manageable and user-friendly Business Analytics solution at H.Essers that enables the quick collection, process, and analysis of data from a variety of business units to deliver management information.

Solution

Moving from Excel spreadsheets to IBM Cognos for reporting and analysis, IBM Cognos Controller for consolidation and management reporting and connect to the existing IBM Cognos TM1 budgeting solution.

Key benefits

A high performance, fast, and reliable data warehouse based solution that enables the Business Intelligence Competence Center at H.Essers to generate valuable insights for the company.

True asset

The close collaboration between the consultants of element61, in a coaching and co-development modus, with H.Essers' BICC was key to the success of the initiative.

"IBM Cognos TM1 has been very valuable to us in terms of budgeting, but to sustain our growth and improve our ability to manage big sets of data, we needed a bigger solution that integrated reporting, analysis, and consolidation with budgeting. Expanding from IBM's Cognos TM1 software to the IBM Cognos Suite, including BI and Controller, has proven to be a true asset to our data warehouse", says Steven Pacquée. "We are very glad that our partner element61 guided us to this IBM Solution. We could not have done it without them." ∎

element 61
experience & expertise

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