

Insurance Company Improves IT Efficiency

Business intelligence solution delivers cost-effective access to critical business data for decision support and reporting

The company featured in this story has grown to be one of the largest auto insurance companies in the United States as a result of its personalized, superior 24/7 service and adoption of innovative technologies. The customer has requested anonymity for internal policy reasons.

In addition to being one of the first insurance companies to establish an online presence back in 1995 to attract and support its customers, the company also implemented an internal information technology (IT) infrastructure to improve efficiencies throughout the organization. The infrastructure evolved with each practice area, line of business, and regional office having its own set of applications and storage systems, which did not communicate with one other.

These isolated systems impeded the free flow of information across departments and constrained the ability of decision-makers to act quickly and to understand how their actions impacted the company as a whole.

24/7 Service Requires Flexible Business Intelligence Solution

“Our company provides 24-hours-a-day, seven-days-a-week customer access through the phone and Internet, which has increased the pace of decisionmaking across all practice areas,” says the insurance company’s IT Manager. “To support growing customer demands, we needed to give our users a common interface into all business areas so that they could make fast and accurate decisions.”

To improve the speed and quality of decision making, the insurance company required a computing architecture and Internet-enabled business intelligence system that could unite its practice areas and lines of business and provide employees in more than 350 offices with access to accurate and current information stored across the enterprise. The business intelligence system needed to aggregate data from all lines of business in a location where it could be categorized, shared, analyzed, and used to quickly generate robust, easy-to-understand reports.

After evaluating several products, the company chose a fully integrated and scalable business intelligence solution that provides enterprise-strength query, reporting, and online analytical processing (OLAP) functionality at the lowest cost of ownership. The solution enables users to access and analyze various data sources, including databases, data marts, data warehouses, and enterprise resource planning applications from the desktop or over the Web.

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IT Manager

Industry

Insurance

Customer

U.S.-based Auto Insurance Company

Business Challenges

- Practice areas and lines of business used their own discrete applications and storage systems, resulting in the same data being re-entered multiple times in different systems
- Each office used its own regional information technology systems, disrupting standardization of business practices, rules, and information systems
- The cost of managing data and applications on employees’ desktops was driving information technology costs higher

Business Solutions

- Business Intelligence

Business Benefits

- Provides cost-effective access to enterprise data for 2,500 users, regardless of location
- Integrates data from all lines of business
- Lowers total cost of ownership by centralizing storage, management, and administration

Integrating Data from all Lines of Business

By implementing the business intelligence solution, the insurance company integrated data from all lines of business, including agency, claims, consumer buying, human resources, marketing, and policy services. By leveraging the power of the Internet, employees can now access the information they need using a standard browser — an inexpensive graphic user interface (GUI) that runs on any type of desktop computer.

“This implementation benefits all of our employees who use the system,” says the IT manager. “With more than 2,500 users scattered across the United States, software and model distribution has always been a challenge. Our IT organization was faced with distribution and support issues, and the end users were burdened, particularly those located in remote small claims offices. The solution completely automates the distribution process and greatly minimizes end user support.”



Improved Efficiencies and Reduced Costs

In addition to improving efficiencies, the business intelligence solution also reduces costs. By centralizing the storage and management of data, applications, analytical tools, and access privileges, it is no longer necessary for IT staff to visit each desktop when adding a new user or changing an existing user's privileges. Because access to the system requires only the Web browser, all users are served regardless of where they work — at regional offices, on the road, or from home.

The easy-to-use, Web-based user interface also makes the solution more user-friendly than competing products. In addition to dramatically lowering end user training, the interactive user interface presents specialized access to the data model, allowing occasional users to understand the relationship between the data more easily, while providing frequent or ‘power’ users access to detailed reports and powerful analytical tools.

Ease of use was an important criteria for the insurance company so that employees could develop, generate, and deliver their own reports and tasks, which in the past required the expensive involvement of a programmer. With the business intelligence solution, users can modify how reports are structured through the ad-hoc capabilities of the application with minimal training.

Already, the insurance company has used the native reporting capabilities to inventory 3,000 ‘canned documents’ or templates, which employees can draw upon to develop advanced reports. About 80 per cent of users access data through these pre-defined reports that, in turn, are accessed through on-screen buttons. These buttons prompt users to provide parameters for required data specific to their business analysis. The balance of the company's users either modify existing reports to further explore the data, customize reports, or build a new query/report from scratch.

The insurance company's business intelligence system is fostering an environment where data flows freely between lines of business, and decisions are made with the most up-to-date and accurate information on hand. This is achieved through a set of analytical tools that add functionality while reducing complexity through centralization — an added benefit of reducing the long-term costs of managing the system.

This is an actual client testimonial. The client has asked to remain anonymous.

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