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*Interviewer:* Welcome to an IBM Cognos Express midsize business analytics success story video. In this video, IBM and LPA, an IBM premier business partner, speak to Mentoring Minds, an international educational publishing house based in Texas.

*Gavin:* Mentoring Minds is an educational publisher. We are based in Texas and founded by a former assistant principal. As we celebrate our nine year anniversary, we're now an international company with sales in all 50 states. We have contracts with the Department of Defense. So it's really just a great story in terms of one man's vision and growing it from filling the need of some teachers that he had, to now we have products essentially around the world.

*Interviewer:* Mentoring Minds implemented the IBM Cognos Express reporter module with LPA's services, to gain better insight into their business faster. The results have been outstanding, saving the marketing and IT teams three months per year developing and delivering reports. And now, Mentoring Minds makes better business decisions based on a single source of data. Let's listen as Gavin explains their former challenges.

*Gavin:* Three years ago our BI platform was Excel, and prior to that there wasn't much of a BI platform. And in terms of data manipulation, or insight into data, it was pretty nonexistent. Even still, you know, when we first got started, or when I came onboard about five years ago, it was a lot of shooting from the hip, a lot of gut hunches, let's kind of go with this and not necessarily look at what the data means. You know, as we grew over the last three years, we needed some reporting capabilities that, one, was able to merge all of our data sources, because even to this day we still have data in a variety of places; you know, Excel documents, Access files, Sequel databases, or CRM, our accounting software.

So there's all this data that needed to be combined in order for us to get, I guess, actionable insight. And we needed something that helped us not look in the rearview mirror, but look through the windshield in terms of where we needed to go with this company. You know, a reporting standpoint, it was a lot of duplication of processes, and it created a headache just from – you know, from me having to do all these reports, but also from people trying to get access to the information.

*Interviewer:* With help from LPA, Mentoring Minds implemented the IBM Cognos Express reporter module and have achieved great success.

*Gavin:* The reporting module, I really like the ability for anyone, really, to get in and be able to create reports. And so I know the IT guys love it, because now I'm not calling them as many times as I used to, to figure out how to match all these data sources. You know, now I have everything in one spot. Better yet, everybody else who looks at it, meaning the C-level and the director level, they have everything they need in one spot. If you were to combine all of that over an annual basis, you know, I would say at least four weeks time saving that we're not calling them, and/or having them to dig through whatever sources we have floating around to find the information for the reports.

The amount of time, for me and my team, that it has saved, gosh, I would say tremendous amounts, you know. If I had to put a hard number on the amount of time that it saves the marketing department in terms of generating these numbers, on an annual basis, easily three months. To where now it's updating an Excel spreadsheet, or it's updating some **maps** program inside of Cognos, to where when they log in, it's all there. We're giving them quick insight to information that they wanna see, so the C-level and the directors, they love it.

*Interviewer:* The story gets particularly interesting here, as Gavin describes Mentoring Minds' positive relationship with LPA, including their efficiency, as well as their wealth of technology knowledge and experience.

*Gavin:* And they are awesome, for lack of a better term. Our – I guess our account rep, **Chad Erman**, has been there with me step-by-step, every part of the process, making sure that, one, we were happy, and two, the job was getting done correctly. As far as, you know, the technical expertise, when we got started with the project we had a good idea of what we wanted to see. Again, we'd been creating these reports on a manual basis, so I knew them intimately, inside and out, in terms of what it needed to look like. And our process is using Excel, so we knew what we needed it to look like from that side. So we got Chad and the team at LPA in and essentially had a conversation with them and said, "You know, we wanna get from point A to point B. How we – you know, the middle of the road from A to B, that's where you guys come in. Just help us end up at B."

And I tell you what, those guys knocked it out of the park. Literally, two weeks, we had Cognos installed with our systems talking to them, with our information. And by the time they left, we had dashboards and reports that showed us information, you

know, in the snap of a finger, or as easy as logging in. And it would've taken us, literally, days to create. So one of the main reasons we went with Cognos Express was we wanted an affordable solution that gave us timely results, and LPA was the partner that helped us achieve that. They helped us get in and dirty with the data very quickly, and were able to almost immediately see results and insight from what Cognos was able to do for us.

*Interviewer:* That wraps up today's video. Thank you to Gavin **Rascoe**, Mentoring Minds, and LPA, an IBM premier business partner.

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