

## How the Brabant Region Police Are Keeping Score

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The Brabant Region police are using business intelligence software in developing dashboards to use police resources more efficiently, set goals, compare regions and share achievements in crime reduction.

## **WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW**

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To improve governance and transparency with a public-sector dashboard, the goal is to provide insight and visibility into how well an agency is in compliance. Accomplish this with a performance measurement strategy that considers cultural and organizational issues in determining key performance indicators. Involve significant commitments from every level of the agency in building methodologies that are used to measure performance.

## **STRATEGIC PLANNING ASSUMPTION(S)**

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By 2010, half of public safety agencies in North America will develop long-term business intelligence visions, architecture and user-driven performance metrics.

## **CASE STUDY**

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The hype around the use of law enforcement dashboards as a measurement and predictive tool is at its height, and much resembles the days of executive information systems. For more information, see "Every Scorecard Needs a Strategy Map."

This is in response to many factors — governmental regulations and citizen demands. Law enforcement agencies have seen large stores of data hold the promise of aiding agencies in addressing performance problems more quickly and capitalizing on opportunities, such as more timely and accurate intelligence to be used in resource allocation.

The Netherlands is a densely populated country, containing 16 million people, inhabiting 41,526 square miles and containing 489 municipalities. The Dutch Police are considered a single force but are divided into 25 regional forces and the National Police Services Agency. The Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations provides an annual budget that is divided among these agencies.

A regional force is responsible for policing a given region. The size of each regional force is dependent on factors such as population density and crime rates. The management of each police region is autonomous. For example, the regions can decide on matters such as funding, staffing, equipment, buildings, organization and IT systems.

This study focuses on one of these 25 regions: the Brabant Zuid-Oost (Brabant). It is responsible for 750,000 citizens, with an operational police strength of 2,000 employees, and makes every attempt to comply with the central government's performance metrics.

### **Problem**

Brabant manually entered and extracted data from different systems and applications, most notably Excel spreadsheets, distributed throughout the organization. These were difficult to maintain and use because it meant accessing multiple systems and relying on internal communications to provide integrated reports. Agency units would compile figures and data for historical comparisons from multiple sources, leading to internal disputes about veracity. Brabant devised a monthly reporting framework that assists in translating objectives and strategies to measures and targets, which drives acceptable behavior to internal and external viewers. Brabant ended the use of disconnected Excel spreadsheets to improve governance and transparency because of time consumption. Using Excel spreadsheets required a full workweek to generate data, and once it was generated and compiled, it suffered from questions about accuracy and

validity. For more information, see "Spreadsheets Are a Risky Substitute for Business Intelligence and Corporate Performance Management Applications."

## Objective

Brabant officials wanted to transition from being a traditional input to a results-oriented/metric-based output organization by building integrated reports from multiple sources that allow for the routine interpretation of data, improved data access, and improved resource management and operational strategic development.

## Approach

However, major policy decisions affecting police regions are determined by regional governance committees, underlying the Dutch belief that police regions should be governed by multiple entities. This governance model produces fragmented decisions sustaining each region. In 2003, the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations and Ministry of Justice created a national policy to promote better public governance among the 25 regions. Competition with the establishment of 12 performance targets was introduced. The central government entered legally binding covenants to:

- Increase the number of solved cases and reduce the amount of time to successfully conclude investigations
- Improve response times
- Reduce traffic-related injuries and fatalities
- Increase and improve the quality and number of complex cases being referred for prosecution
- Increase and improve collection efforts for legally imposed fines and penalties
- Create a forecasting capability to allocate resources

These incentives, if met, were to trigger additional monetary resources for the successful regions to refocus on finding a more-efficient manner in providing decision makers with the opportunity to have immediate access to crime information, without having to wait for the preparation of status reports.

Brabant built a measurement pyramid to include relevant stakeholders and end users. It completed standards definitions, such as defining reports and metrics and identifying data owners and sources. Cognos PowerPlay (PP) for data warehousing was already deployed across the 25 regions as a standard reporting and analysis tool. Thus, Brabant, in building its performance measurement strategy, purchased Metrics Manager (MM) because it was a business intelligence tool that was compatible with PP and data retrieval. Facilitating extraction, transformation and loading is well-suited to batch-oriented loading from the existing data warehouse.

Brabant piloted the dashboard first among its executive owners and performance managers before full acceptance. It employed a multistep process:

- Declare strategies and objectives, such as defining the range and type of users
- Test and refine differing models and analysis output, such as historical crime information for basic awareness and simple analyses and comparisons
- Test and refine the forecasting process to establish cause-and-effect relationships among the dashboard metrics

- Test and refine performance measurement, such as meeting governance framework, that consists of policies, laws and standards.

This approach set appropriate expectations and committed the entire agency to a single version of the truth for information delivery, performance oversight and mutual collaboration.

This eliminated previous Excel-based target data from being subject to validity challenges from the multiple interagency methodologies that were used to record performance data. The dashboard demonstrates in a stoplight fashion and indicates trends that would be linked to performance stats. For example, crime rates, recidivism rates, officer certifications and absenteeism have monthly targets, and then, variance rates are tracked to let measurement and direct resources enable progress toward achieving these targets.

## Results

Brabant authorizes 100 staff to use MM and to build multiple dashboards to share information with internal (executives, midlevel managers, and the rank and file) and external (political authorities) viewers. These dashboards have reduced reporting times, which involved collecting, entering and retrieving disparate pieces of information, from one week to half a day. This capability has created a “just in time” decision-making culture. Brabant expects quick searches of every system, with an ability to drill down with geographic information system-based representations on specific locales to monitor activity, letting the region identify trends or critical, location-relevant relationships.

Brabant targeted a set of internal and external metrics to satisfy ministry objectives. Once monthly dashboard reports became authentic to management, expectations or goals were determined with the following results:

- Recidivism detention rates — Entered agreements with the public prosecutor and court to impose the maximum sentences allowed for repeat offenders, resulting in an incarceration rate increase of 20,000 days
- Civil sanctions — Issued and enforced by personal visitation penalties and fines for abusive behavior
- Officer absenteeism — Tracked officer duty requirements, reducing absenteeism rates from 9 percent to 5.2 percent in one year
- Certification — Tracked officer accreditation and training requirements, increasing regions' effective rating 10 percent in one year

## Critical Success Factors/Lessons Learned

Brabant executives established a framework but left the detailed requirements to be entered by those who will be held accountable. This effectively linked objectives to a strategy and enabled adjustments in a dynamic organization whose mission can change. For example, it was staff feedback that was responsible for the advanced visualization tools. These executives found out early in the process that imposing encouraged staff to find ways of evading metrics that it opposed and avoid quick implementations that can be disconnected from other reporting streams and lack the drill-down capabilities that are needed to validate empirical data. Brabant executives found out that, if the dashboards provided drill-down capabilities, their use by middle management would increase because the managers could see tactical data views and direct resources to influence outcomes.

Brabant executives discovered that their strategy map added to the fear of dashboards being used to justify punitive measures and threatened job security. Brabant executives had to

communicate clearly to the entire organization that dashboards would provide greater insight to performance metrics and that it would be built on audience-specific dashboard views to accommodate differing user-information needs.

Brabant executives discovered that, when building a dashboard, additional analysis can be counterproductive. They determined to establish a three-month cutoff to define standards and performance metrics. Results and essential metrics, such as officer absenteeism or recidivism detention rates, were refined, rather than trying to measure beyond core missions such as financial accounting (see Note 1).

## **Note 1**

### **Performance Metrics**

Brabant Region performance metrics were divided into year-to-date crime statistics and week-to-date crime indicators, which tracked the percentage changes based on historical comparisons for such crimes as homicide, robbery, drug-related offenses and sexual assaults. The same measurement methodology was employed in measuring ethical behavior, such as officer absenteeism, prosecution referrals and agency budgeting.

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