



Overview

Business challenge

REXEL Austria GmbH wanted to replace laborious manual report generation in its logistics and warehouse management functions with a central, web-based information system.

Solution

With IBM® Cognos® Business Intelligence, REXEL has a reporting solution that provides up-to-date and consistent corporate data and allows users access via a web browser.

Processing 30,000 articles at the touch of a button

IBM Cognos Business Intelligence provides decision-making insight for logistics and company management

REXEL Austria GmbH has been setting new standards in the wholesale retailing of electrical installation material and electrical appliances in Austria since 1996. With comprehensive service offers and a broad portfolio of high-quality products, REXEL has established itself as a market leader. With around 530 employees at 14 locations and one central distribution centre located in Wels, the company generated annual sales of more than €250 million in Austria in 2009.

Deliver the service promise

REXEL Austria GmbH has continuously extended its business in recent years – today the company sells its products across the whole of Austria through two sales networks. At the same time, the service expectations of customers regarding fast and smooth delivery are increasing: more than 30,000 different electrical solutions need to be ready for delivery within 24 hours to meet the service promise that REXEL gives its customers.

As a result, logistics has become a mission-critical factor: people in charge need to coordinate orders, product inventories, supplier relationships and delivery methods accurately to comply with delivery times and delivery quality standards, and to satisfy the customer. Systematic warehouse management is key to this: products need to be commissioned correctly within the shortest possible time, while stock levels (and capital lockup) should be as low as possible.

Much effort, low profit

In the past, to achieve this the required information needed to be painstakingly exported from source systems and then consolidated manually with Microsoft Excel. About 180 hours of work were needed each month for these tasks.

“The efficient planning and management of the logistics processes was equally delayed,” explains Ing. Reinhard Füllerer, Business Application Manager (SCM) at REXEL Austria GmbH. “REXEL urgently needed a new reporting system that could provide up-to-date data centrally via self-service functions, based on a standardised data model. In addition, the company’s management team required sophisticated analytics features as well as easy-to-use dashboard functionality.”

After comparing several business intelligence solutions in summer 2010, the right solution was found. Following a successful proof of concept, the consulting company Pitagora Informationsmanagement



Business Benefits

- Staff in charge in logistics and warehouse management can serve themselves with reports and analyses, giving them all the information they need to coordinate orders, deliveries, and inventories to fulfil customers' service requirements.
 - At the same time, management dashboards provide the decision-making insight needed to overview and manage the business performance of the entire company.
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GmbH convinced REXEL of the advantages of the IBM Cognos Business Intelligence application suite.

“The solution was exactly what we were looking for: an information portal that consolidates corporate data and displays it at the push of a button in any format you want,” says Füllerer. “Performance, flexibility and user-friendliness are in the foreground.”

Teamwork for information advantage

Working with Pitagora, REXEL began to implement the new solution in July 2010. Starting from an existing standard report that consolidates all logistics performance figures, the project team redesigned the whole process of data processing and report generation from scratch. The data structures needed for this were exported from the source systems and transferred into a request-oriented data warehouse which is used as a central data repository for reporting. Subsequently, meta models were configured to allow users to create the required reports and analyses independently. Finally, the project team designed management dashboards for the management team that would reuse existing analytics components to provide a rapid overview of performance data.

Central database available via the web

Since November 2010, managers in the logistics and warehouse management teams have been using the IBM Cognos Business Intelligence solution for reporting and analyses. The data warehouse automatically updates the reporting solution with quality-assured data on a daily basis. Users access the web-based interface via a browser and create reports as and when they require them. While previously users needed to request help from the IT team to extract the needed information from the source systems, now the whole reporting process is automated by the data processing and communication layer.



Solution Components

Software

- IBM Cognos® Business Intelligence

Servers

- IBM® BladeCenter®

IBM Business Partner

- Pitagora Informationsmanagement GmbH
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“With IBM Cognos Business Intelligence, REXEL Austria GmbH has improved the quality of data and reporting considerably, and has also reduced the time it takes to generate reports from 180 hours to just one minute per month.”

— Ing. Reinhard Füllerer, Business Application Manager (SCM), REXEL Austria GmbH

Using the information advantage

With help of IBM Cognos Business Intelligence, REXEL Austria GmbH has improved both reporting quality and data quality considerably. The company now has a universally valid data model for all reporting requirements. The data warehouse ensures that users have the reliable and consistent data they need to support their everyday work. The solution’s self-service features allow users to request up-to-date information about orders, products or inventory capacities daily in the shape of standard reports with a minimal amount of effort. The time taken for the generation of standard reports has been reduced from 180 hours a month to about one minute.

The solution’s analytics functions also provide further decision-making insights for the optimisation of the logistics processes. When unexpected situations occur, users can dive into the multi-dimensional data with drill-down analyses and examine the root causes. The new query engine in the latest version of IBM Cognos Business Intelligence pays dividends here, as the technology enables huge amounts of data to be analysed at the press of a button and outputs the required information in real time.

“The analytical capabilities of the solution are very versatile,” says Reinhard Füllerer. “They help us to respond to diverse issues and make the overall logistics processes run more efficiently. This not only benefits the company itself, but also our customers.”

Getting on top of business performance

The flexible dashboard features of IBM Cognos Business Intelligence add further value to the information that the solution provides. Besides mission-critical questions regarding logistics and warehouse management, the solution also provides answers to questions about the business performance of the whole company. Even without IT knowledge, managers are able to select the information or performance figures that interest them and filter them by different parameters, (time, product category and so on). Executive managers always have an eye on sales, costs, customers and market opportunities, which gives them an up-to-date and reliable basis for strategic decisions.

“The management team is enthusiastic about the speed with which information can be retrieved and the intuitive usability of the new solution – it’s a real leap forward in terms of information access for the management team,” says Füllerer.

Into the future

IBM Cognos Business Intelligence has proved successful as REXEL Austria GmbH’s reporting solution – the users have adopted the solution extremely positively. As a result, the company plans to extend the usage of the Business Intelligence suite to other parts of the company such as finance and human resources. Moreover, new functions like Active Reports for offline report generation should in future increase the flexibility of the information retrieval process.

”The implementation of IBM Cognos Business Intelligence was a strategic decision for REXEL,” concludes Reinhard Füllerer. “By

providing easy access to valuable business information, the solution will continue to deliver competitive advantages in the future.”



About Pitagora

Pitagora Informationsmanagement GmbH was founded in 1993 by Robert Wittnauer in Innsbruck. The company has become a partnership with its customers, who are the focus of its business. Only through a stable and fair relationship is it possible to properly recognise customers' needs. Through Pitagora's corporate structure, it can identify these needs holistically and develop solutions, no matter what process customers want to follow to support their business electronically.



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IBM Business Analytics software delivers actionable insights decision-makers need to achieve better business performance. IBM offers a comprehensive, unified portfolio of business intelligence, predictive and advanced analytics, financial performance and strategy management, governance, risk and compliance and analytic applications.

With IBM software, companies can spot trends, patterns and anomalies, compare “what if” scenarios, predict potential threats and opportunities, identify and manage key business risks and plan, budget and forecast resources. With these deep analytic capabilities our customers around the world can better understand, anticipate and shape business outcomes.

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Produced in Austria
June 2011
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