



THE BI BUILDERS

“There is a quantum shift from doing BI with spreadsheets and using a true business intelligence solution. We expected that. But we didn’t expect that it would be so easy to make the change. In just two months we were ready to go.”

- Alex Buhler, Director of Information Technology
CBV Collection Services

Case Study

BI SOLUTION BRIEF

Customer

CBV Collection Services

Industry

Professional Services, Collection Agency Call Centre

Location

Vancouver, British Columbia

System

SAP BusinessObjects Edge Business Intelligence (BI) with Data Integration

SAP® BusinessObjects™ Web Intelligence®

Xcelsius®

Service

BI Data Warehouse Data Mart Service

BI Report and Dashboard Service

THE COMPANY

In the highly-competitive, fast-paced collection business, CBV Collection Services operates under a strict professional code of conduct. Since its founding in 1921, CBV’s core values of ethical and honest behavior, quality service, and high productivity and performance have garnered a roster of satisfied customers who look to the company as the single source for their consumer and commercial collections requirements. CBV is licensed in every province and territory across Canada, with branches in Vancouver, Calgary, Winnipeg, Toronto, and Montreal.

THE CHALLENGE

“The more business you have, the more collections you can achieve, and the more revenue,” says Alex Buhler, Director of IT at CBV Collection Services. “CBV operations, client service, finance, and administration managers live and breathe numbers all day as they try to optimize call center productivity. They need to look at the inventory our clients give us, and they need to monitor call centers performance, right down to individual collectors, in as close to real-time as possible. Their view has to be both granular and macro up to the national level so they can evaluate and take action to improve both individual productivity and regional profitability.”

AS/400 Reports Inflexible

The problem was that CBV managers couldn’t really analyze profitability and performance across the business because they did not have a corporate business intelligence (BI) platform to help them access and analyze call center data.

Managers were forced to create their own Excel spreadsheets, which required manual extraction and refreshes from the AS/400 system. and resulted in more than one version of the “truth.” Managers also wasted time combining call center data with CBV’s time-keeping and phone systems to try and gain an understanding of key productivity indicators.

Poor Use of Expensive IT Resources

The other source of information was the IT department, where a team of three people worked full time to fulfill managers’ requests. Other than a set of 20 Crystal Reports, the team’s output consisted of manually-generated spreadsheets that combined the daily inventories of delinquent accounts from external sources, including more than 100 CBV clients. These were e-mailed to managers each morning.

“Managers should be managing, not tracking down data,” says Buhler. “Likewise, IT staff should be focused on strategic IT initiatives. When I analyzed how much time and money we were wasting on Excel spreadsheets across the company, I realized we had to find a real BI platform. We needed to consolidate our data sources, automate reporting, and improve the accuracy and timeliness of our business information.”

THE SOLUTION

The BI Builders worked with CBV, quickly deploying a new solution based on SAP BusinessObjects™ business intelligence software. After initial meetings to assess business requirements, the team decided to focus on extracting data from the AS/400 system to provide managers with better visibility into call center operations.

The BI Builders created a data mart using SAP BusinessObjects Data Integrator to extract call center transactional data from the AS/400. The BI Builders designed a Universe (a semantic layer) to define and organize the data in a way that's relevant to CBV managers' BI needs.

Next, the BI Builders built an interactive dashboard for managers to use for quick, easy-to-understand graphical depictions of call center operations and "what if" analysis to gain insight into the impact of a decision before it is made.

"BI Builders worked extremely quickly and the team was knowledgeable and professional. They added extra functionality into the solution so we could write goals and targets into the dashboard. We got a lot accomplished in a very short time. When I did the first demo for our executives in Vancouver they were extremely impressed."

- Alex Buhler, CBV Collection Services

THE REWARDS

In just eight weeks, CBV managers went from manipulating Excel spreadsheets to using an automated, enterprise class business intelligence platform. CBV expects that approximately 25 company executives and decision makers will use the BI Builders solution to improve their access to data, increase visibility into call center operations, and make better business decisions.

Improved access to near-time insight

Now managers have self-serve access to up-to-the-minute data from the AS/400 system. At first, the data was refreshed every hour, but when managers saw the potential of the solution, they requested that it be increased to every five minutes. The BI Builders solution is flexible, so it only took a simple adjustment for Buhler to meet their needs. "In the fast-paced world of the call center, information changes very quickly and managers are hungry for timely data," he says. "We used to get it once a day, now we know that everyone has the same information and it's never less than 5 minutes old."

Optimizing performance nationwide

Now CBV managers can monitor the performance of every collector and every call center, comparing the number and duration of calls, and the amount of money collected. They can also step in quickly to intervene if issues develop. "Now they can analyze how the different regions compare and try to understand the reasons behind any differences. The idea is to standardize and optimize performance across the company, and with these tools we can do that," says Buhler.

Making better business decisions

Increased visibility into call center operations is only the first step as CBV rolls out its BI solution. When the company uses Business Data Integrator to add data from other sources into the data mart, such as information from the time keeper and phone systems, managers will have access to a consolidated view of performance indicators which they can use to make better decisions.

"CBV is now saving the money it spent on wasteful manual labour to accomplish mediocre reporting," concludes Buhler. "At the same time, we are making better use of the business data that resides in our existing systems. Most importantly, with access to accurate and fair information about our collectors' performance, we can better motivate them to drive productivity and increase revenue."

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