Streamlined Reporting on an Enterprise-Wide Platform

As a decentralized operation with over 28 distinct selling operations, Southern Wine and Spirits (SWS), the largest U.S. beverage alcohol distributor, was challenged with pulling together timely information for analysis at corporate offices. This executive information needed to be summarized at a high level with powerful drill down functionality.

"We were given the task of finding a product that could not only deliver timely information to our executive offices, but could also be used by sales management in each selling division to monitor their business. In addition, we were tasked with developing a portal-based supplier reporting platform capable of delivering information to thousands of external users. In a company this geographically dispersed, it took a lot of time and effort to pull information together, consolidate it, and make it available on a common reporting platform" said Mike Brockway, Director of Enterprise Services for SWS' Business Solutions Group, the division in charge of supporting the back office activities of more than 10,000 SWS employees.

Before looking for a solution to meet their needs, SWS developed a list of requirements:

- A simple solution from an information systems perspective to let selling divisions take ownership of local support issues

- Easy to drill down and drill across data so that one could easily navigate down into the detailed information, without requiring IT support

Quick Facts

Industry: *Beverage Alcohol Distribution*

Size: *Largest U.S. beverage alcohol distributor*

Employees: *14,500 team members*

Company Description: *Southern Wine & Spirits of America, Inc. is the nation's largest wine and spirits distributor and broker with operations in 35 markets.*

Headquarters: *Miami, FL*

Website: *www.southernwine.com*

Solution: *The Diver Solution*

- Handle large data volumes and 'crunch' the data in a relatively short period of time

- Supported on the current information management platform

- Portable, allowing executives to use the system via laptops or an internet browser when they travel

- Built-in advanced graphing and reporting capabilities. It was SWS' intention to eventually replace legacy systems with reports generated by this tool

- Be generic to SWS' business processes enabling them to take this product and use it across many areas of business

- Flexible and scalable so that it could be used in finance, shipping, personnel, and warehouse management

- Web-enabled; able to support remote locations, suppliers, outside vendors, as well as people on the road

- Installed and deployed rapidly

- Proof that the solution would allow SWS staff to build basic BI applications without requiring outside consulting services

Challenge

- *Consolidate disparate data and summarize it in a timely manner while providing easy access to detail*

- *Provide an enterprise-wide solution with built-in analytics and reporting that would replace legacy system reporting and foster independence from IT*

Solution

- *A true enterprise-wide platform serving external and internal users of all levels with varied technical skill levels*

- *Portable, web-based reporting and analysis system*

- *Handles large data volumes faster than competitors and scales to evolving needs*

- *Consolidates a hundred million records of data from all sales divisions, daily*

Results

- *Streamlined reporting*

- *Better decision making based on accurate, timely data*

- *Information delivered to 1,500 suppliers in an easy-to-use tool promoting adoption and use*

Dimensional INSIGHT

An Enterprise-Wide Solution

The organization realized early on that the basic design structure selected would be critical to the product's overall success. The BI tool was only one part of an overall solution that included the design and implementation of a data warehouse containing all of the company's critical data.

"We worked as a joint venture with [Dimensional Insight] to design a data warehouse. The data warehouse in production today pulls data from all of our sales divisions every day. This involves just under a hundred million records, and it's growing every day. The main benefit we have derived, in terms of managing cost of ownership, is that we no longer have to call our sales divisions for special reporting requests," said Brockway.

As the company started looking at the expansion of the BI deployment, they realized they had to prioritize which business areas to focus on first. The management of total cost over time required a step-by-step approach to adding new BI application areas, and not falling to the temptation to address every need at once.

"Based on our project management requirements, the BI vendor we ultimately selected — Dimensional Insight — allowed us to implement a true enterprise-wide platform — serving external and internal users of all levels with varied technical skill sets. As part of our selection process, we looked at six different vendor offerings. Our decision ultimately was made based on the vendor that handled our volume of data faster than any other product we looked at and could scale as our needs evolved," explains Brockway.

Once the immediate priority of internal sales reporting was satisfied with Dimensional Insight's end-to-end BI platform, The Diver Solution™ (Diver), SWS began moving Diver into other departments within the organization to help streamline external reporting needs using a phased approach. Southern Wine & Spirits began placing more emphasis on servicing the information needs of their 1,500 suppliers. In order to preserve data integrity, maintain a consistent enterprise BI platform, and manage total cost of ownership, the decision was made to deliver information services to suppliers and other external users using Diver.

"Ease of use was so important. As long as the users have some PC knowledge, and they know how to click or doubleclick a mouse, they can easily use the tools," states Brockway.

About Dimensional Insight

Dimensional Insight, Inc. is a leading provider of BI solutions with our BI platform and family of purpose-built applications. Our data integration, modeling, reporting capabilities, analytics, portals, dashboards, and applications empower users throughout the enterprise to make timely, data-driven decisions. Thousands of worldwide customers choose Dimensional Insight solutions for flexibility, ease of integration, and rapid time-to-value. Dimensional Insight consistently ranks as a top performing BI vendor in customer satisfaction.

> *"We looked at many offerings...each system had its pluses and minuses, but in our opinion Dimensional Insight out-shined all of them."*
>
> *- Mike Brockway,*
> *Sr. Project Manager,*
> *Southern Wine & Spirits*

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