



Life Sciences Firm Enhances Performance Management, Saves Millions with Microsoft BI

Overview

Country or Region: United States, Canada

Industry: Life Sciences

Customer Profile

Sysmex America, Inc. is a leading life sciences company specializing in clinical diagnostic equipment. The organization is part of Sysmex Corporation of Japan.

Business Situation

Sysmex needed a comprehensive business intelligence solution to replace costly, manual reports and achieve a clear view of organizational performance.

Solution

With the help of Simplement, Sysmex adopted an end-to-end solution based on Microsoft Business Intelligence.

Benefits

- Complete and accurate view of organizational performance
- Self-service business intelligence
- Savings of \$2 million on licensing, consulting and development costs
- Saved thousands of man hours through automation

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Marilyn Richards, Director of Corporate IS and Technology, Sysmex

Managers at leading clinical diagnostics company Sysmex had no easy way to access information from multiple data sources, including ERP and regulatory compliance software systems. Previously, it used specialist consultants to create reports, and the backlog grew as managers waited for IT to code reports based on rigid, pre-defined specifications. To increase efficiency, Sysmex chose an innovative, cost-effective Business Intelligence solution based on Microsoft technology and Simplement Data Liberator™. Within a few months, the company developed over 40 key management reports, achieving a “single version of the truth” and empowering managers with actionable information. By choosing Microsoft over competing BI solutions, Sysmex has saved approximately \$2 million on licensing, specialist consulting, and development costs.



“It’s unbelievable how much we’ve saved with Microsoft BI compared to other tool sets. Add up licensing, specialist consultancy, and development, and we’ve saved nearly \$2 million by choosing Microsoft.”

Marilyn Richards, Director of Corporate IS and Technology, Sysmex

Situation

A leader in the life sciences industry, Sysmex America, Inc. (Sysmex) delivers quality clinical diagnostic equipment manufactured by Sysmex Corporation, its Japanese parent. The worldwide organization achieves annual revenues of more than \$1.5 billion, and has had double digit growth for the past several years.

Sysmex had outgrown its existing reporting capabilities. To make sound business decisions and support continued growth, it needed a high-functioning and comprehensive business intelligence (BI) solution that would be easy to use, cost-effective, and provide a “single view of the truth.”

Every functional area in the company has significant analytical needs. SAP is the firm’s chosen ERP system, and Sysmex needed a way to access that system’s information freely on a real-time basis.

Ideally, it wanted a BI solution that would also solve other data needs, such as enabling work flows, and eliminating manual data consolidations.

Sysmex wanted to reduce time spent on consolidating monthly financial reports. “Different regional units would manually extract and transform data, which headquarters would then cut and paste manually,” says Marilyn Richards, Director of Corporate IS and Technology at Sysmex. “It was a painful process and our staff spent many, many hours collecting the data from distributed sources and pasting it into large, unwieldy spreadsheets,” she adds.

To choose the BI solution that best met its needs, the firm evaluated competing technologies from SAP, Microstrategy, IBM and Microsoft. Criteria included ease of development; ease of use; interoperability

with other systems; security; and affordable licensing and consulting costs. “We also wanted to quickly create new reports based on multi-source data, distribute reports across the business in real time and give our people self-service BI,” states Richards.

Solution

Based on the evaluation, Sysmex chose a BI solution from Microsoft and independent software vendor Simplement. Simplement’s flagship product, Simplement Data Liberator, makes data from SAP systems available in real-time in the Microsoft SQL Server platform, allowing users to work with the data in a familiar Microsoft environment.

The Microsoft solution was chosen because of its low cost, simplicity, and ease of use. In addition, new features and capabilities in Microsoft SharePoint 2010, such as Microsoft SQL Server PowerPivot for SharePoint 2010, and Microsoft SQL Server PowerPivot for Excel, were particularly attractive to Richards and her team.

Having an existing Microsoft Enterprise Agreement also provided benefit. “The Microsoft BI solution is part of our license and beautifully integrates with SharePoint collaboration and workflow tools,” says Richards.

By using Microsoft SQL Server 2008 Enterprise with Simplement Data Liberator, Sysmex was able to solve key data and reporting challenges as well as enhance BI across the business. Today, Sysmex identifies the SAP data it needs for BI purposes and Simplement Data Liberator makes it automatically and continually available in SQL Server, eliminating the need for batch extraction windows. SAP data is then integrated seamlessly with data from other sources and natively consumed by familiar and powerful Microsoft BI tools.

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Robert MacLean, Principal, Simplement

Sysmex’s IT team uses Microsoft SQL Server 2008 Management Studio to create data views that currently feed over 40 front-end reports, which are developed in SQL Server Reporting Services and published using SharePoint. Data views are the new fundamental unit of work for IT departments focused on data brokering and self-service BI. They are re-useable building blocks that can be consumed by Microsoft SQL Server 2008 Reporting Services, Microsoft SQL Server 2008 Analysis Services and PowerPivot to create reports and KPIs.

Building on the data views, Richards’ team has quickly created critical management reports and deployed them in SharePoint. The reports incorporate top-level information such as profitability, cost of sales, inventory, and delivery times. “The new reports give us a complete and clear view of organizational business performance for the very first time,” says Richards. “We could never have achieved these results within just a few months if we had chosen another system,” she adds. Richards speaks from experience; she has implemented BI systems from a variety of vendors at a number of different firms.

Sysmex managers now use intuitive tools within SharePoint to quickly drill down into reports and share performance information with colleagues via the firm’s SharePoint intranet. Currently, more than 150 employees will access performance information via the new portal.

To facilitate self-service reporting, Sysmex is deploying Microsoft SQL Server PowerPivot for SharePoint and Microsoft SQL Server PowerPivot for Excel. These technologies will allow Sysmex business users to pull performance data directly from the data views into SharePoint

and Microsoft Excel, where they can slice and dice them to understand performance trends and display results in reports and workbooks.

PowerPivot gives Sysmex business users the power of cubes without waiting for the IT team to build them in the traditional way. The Simplement tool automatically transfers SAP’s security model to the Microsoft BI platform. This gives business users access to self-service BI within the familiar Excel interface, while ensuring that IT retains overall control of data governance and security. “When business analysts see PowerPivot, they say it is all they’ve ever wanted,” says Robert MacLean, Principal at Simplement. “What makes it even more compelling is the fact that non-technical personnel can pick it up with no training whatsoever.”

Richards adds: “PowerPivot has made the vision of true, self-service reporting a reality for BI users.”

Benefits

With Microsoft BI, Sysmex is achieving its primary objective of a single, accurate view of performance, from sales and costs to servicing, compliance and pricing. The new solution is also helping Sysmex increase efficiency and productivity, enable pervasive and self-service BI, and achieve dramatic operational cost savings.

“It’s unbelievable how much we’ve saved with Microsoft BI compared to other vendor choices” says Richards. “Add up licensing, specialist consultancy, and development, and we’ve saved nearly \$2 million by choosing Microsoft.”

Self-service and automation deliver huge time savings

Sysmex employees can view top-level

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For more information about Simplement products and services, visit the website at: www.simplement.us/

For more information about Sysmex America, Inc. products and services, visit the website at: www.sysmex.com/

Microsoft Business Intelligence

Microsoft provides a comprehensive set of business intelligence technologies that enable organizations to improve performance through better decision making. Microsoft Business Intelligence helps small and large businesses maximize the value of their data through timely analysis and knowledge sharing. Powered by Microsoft SQL Server, SharePoint and Office, Microsoft business intelligence solutions provide increased value to users throughout the organization.

For more information about Microsoft Business Intelligence solutions, go to: www.microsoft.com/bi

customized reports quickly and easily using PowerPivot. This reduces development workloads for IT by thousands of hours per year, and allows IT to focus on adding value in other ways. "Giving management and staff real-time views of the business empowers them as professionals and frees up time and manpower," says Richards.

In addition, the new solution has enabled Sysmex to replace the manual creation of corporate financial reporting to the parent company using automated Microsoft BI reports. These are accurate and up-to-date, eliminating manual extractions and data manipulation.

Improved productivity and performance

The availability of accurate performance data is creating a stir at Sysmex with increasing requests for new scorecards, reports and plans for a BI steering committee. "Our Microsoft BI solution is having an explosive effect and everyone wants to participate," says Richards. "With BI at our fingertips, we obtain better and more accurate corporate information and enable self-service."

Cleaner business data

Because of the platform's comprehensive reporting features, Sysmex has been able to identify and resolve a number of latent data cleansing issues. "We didn't expect the

solution to increase the accuracy of our data," says Richards. "However, this has been an unexpected and very welcome benefit for us."

Support for SharePoint workflows

Using real-time data from Simplement, Sysmex is supporting valuable SharePoint workflows. "Now, when a purchase order is entered in SAP, a SharePoint workflow ensures that the right people are informed and approvals are obtained," says Richards. Once purchase orders are approved, Microsoft BizTalk Server writes the results back to SAP automatically, which delivers significant time and cost savings.

Reduction of ongoing support costs

Sysmex now creates accurate reports without the need for custom ABAP development. "Building custom reports and cubes around SAP data requires extensive ABAP/BW development, which typically is very costly for us," says Richards. "By contrast, it's incredibly quick and easy to develop in the Microsoft BI environment, and Microsoft developers are far more economical. This contributes to the significant ongoing savings we are experiencing," she explains.

Software and Services

- Microsoft Office
 - Microsoft Office 2010 Suites
 - Microsoft Excel 2010
 - Microsoft SharePoint Server 2010
- Microsoft Server Product Portfolio
 - Microsoft SQL Server 2008
- Technologies
 - Microsoft SQL Server 2008 Analysis Services
 - Microsoft SQL Server 2008 Integration Services
 - Microsoft SQL Server PowerPivot for Excel
 - Microsoft SQL Server PowerPivot for SharePoint 2010
 - Microsoft SQL Server 2008 Reporting Services
 - Microsoft SQL Server Management Studio
 - Excel Services In Microsoft SharePoint Server 2010