NEWINTELLIGENCE
Providing New Intelligence to your Business

Arani Sees the Light with SAP Business One & IBM Cognos Analytics
Delivering on promise of reliable, self-service business intelligence

ARANI

Overview

The need
Dennis Daoust, VP of Operations and Supply Chain, recognized the need for improved operational efficiency Arani could manage in-house. They needed a more reliable and scalable analytics solution.

The solution
With help from IBM Silver Business Partner, NewIntelligence, Arani implemented a suite of IBM® Cognos Analytics software that not only met Arani's current needs, but also allowed for the company's continued growth.

The benefit
Better data, better decisions. Accurate, efficient, company-wide analytics allows the Arani team to make fast, well-informed business decisions. The team created standardized documentation to support the company's rapid growth.

Headquartered in Montreal, Quebec since 2009, Arani specializes in designing, manufacturing and distributing energy efficient LED lighting products for residential, commercial and industrial projects. Arani is committed to first-class customer service by providing efficient lighting solutions that are tailored and easy to install. Arani's LED experts continuously introduce new products that seek to simplify the lives of lighting industry professionals. The company employs over a dozen head office staff and a network of over 20 sales agents in North America.

Growth Challenges

Arani's existing SAP Business One (SAP B1) framework was unable to provide the types of reports needed, such as Net Monthly Sales, Returns & Credits, and Gross Profit Margins. As a result, Daoust spent a significant amount of time creating reports in Microsoft Access and Excel. As the business continued to grow at a rapid pace, the management team was unable to make proactive decisions due to its limited insight into crucial information, and its reactionary approach to reporting.

"We are a nimble company," said Daoust. "We are growing fast and building market share quickly so we needed a solution that could grow with us."

The limitations caused by SAP B1's inefficient reporting and dashboarding capabilities caused even further strife for Arani since their original framework was riddled with internal data issues.

Some of these limitations included:

- Missing and incorrect fields
- Incorrectly formatted data within tables
- Formulas and calculations were incorrect and/or had multiple client-specific variations

Turning to NewIntelligence, BI experts, the team worked together to document challenges, define requirements, and implement the solution.

Shawn Mandel, Principal Partner at NewIntelligence discusses some of the challenges, "While SAP B1 was the main data source for the solution, data was also being sourced from numerous excel sheets as well as SAP B1 data which had been manipulated in Microsoft Access. Without a centralized automated interface, it was awkward for management to quickly create reports and make informed decisions on the fly."

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Erroneous data prevented meaningful visibility into sales and inventory processes."

- Corey Mendelsohn, President, NewIntelligence

Accurate, Self-Service Reporting

Knowing Arani's team was not fully armed with an IT department, NewIntelligence identified the following top-priorities:

1 Data Integrity
Arani required greater visibility into supply chain processes in order to make critical decisions based on trustworthy data.

2 Reporting Efficiency
Arani's management team was making too many manual manipulations to pull the right data, which hindered the ability to make informed decisions.

3 Self-Service
One of Arani's main goals was to ensure key decision makers were empowered to use the new system to handle scheduling and distribution of their own reports, add new users, and roll the system out to the entire company.

With these requirements in mind, NewIntelligence coordinated with Arani throughout each stage of the project.

"NewIntelligence works in a development and production environment, which provided flexibility to course correct before moving to production," said Daoust. Minimizing disruption to current processes allowed for a seamless system integration upon completion.

Finding (& Eliminating) Errors in a Dynamic Data Environment

To avoid being bogged down with extraneous data related to the company's complex infrastructure, NewIntelligence focused solely on Arani's Supply Chain Management Solution data. Arani's erroneous figures needed to be identified, repaired and resolved before proceeding with the creation of the new solution.

"NewIntelligence's president, Corey Mendelsohn, is quite technical, which helped immensely in coordinating how to approach the data issues," said Daoust.

Once the first iteration was completed, Arani understood their initial logic needed to be modified to accommodate different types of calculations, so that key team members could efficiently access critical data.

With Arani's feedback and clarification on specific data fields, tables and calculations,

they were able to detail new custom rules. This allowed the solution to ensure the final design responded to cascading changes, while minimizing the need to recalculate those items in multiple reports. The development team also helped create a standard development model that allowed Arani to customize going forward.

Customized, scalable access to data

Aiming to leverage its data sources company-wide while maintaining best practices that would allow Arani to grow, the system was standardized for ease of use while providing accurate information.

The process:
- Identified the issues, and redefined the tables and calculations to ensure future data calculations were accurate.
- Created a powerful interactive dashboard to aid in the accurate tracking of quotes, orders, sales, and inventory.
- Trained Arani employees, empowering key decision makers to create their accurate reports quickly and efficiently.

Partnering for a bright future

Building the Arani solution took just 68 days from kickoff to Phase I rollout. Pleased with the results, Daoust stated, "NewIntelligence listened to our issues and built a solution that met our needs with the ability to add more users and functionality as we grow. We see a good partnership where NewIntelligence will help us meet those challenges and empower Arani's team to access good data."

The new solution was adopted quickly company-wide. Arani operations, executives, sales and marketing teams now rely on the ability to create, schedule and distribute custom reports on a daily basis.

Daoust concluded, "It has empowered the Arani team with meaningful data that is relevant to their position."

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Fact-driven decisions now outpace assumptions. The solution is impressive.

- Dennis Daoust, VP of Operations & Supply Chain, Arani

Solution Components

Software
- IBM Cognos Analytics v. 11
- NewIntelligence ICI

IBM Business Partner
- NewIntelligence

SAP B1 Quick Start

Through the Arani experience, NewIntelligence developed the **SAP B1 Quick Start** analytics solution.

Now, SAP B1 users facing similar reporting and analytics demands can take advantage of NewIntelligence's SAP B1 Quick Start solution. In as little 2 - 3 weeks' time, business professionals are equipped to create and analyze their own sophisticated SAP B1 reports and dashboards with little training and no help from IT.

IBM Silver Business Partner™

SAP Business One

IBM Cognos Analytics