

Exp@nets Empowers its Decision-Making Process by Implementing a BI Solution



THE CLIENT

Exp@nets provides complete networked communication solutions and services to businesses across the United States. Specializing in the integration of voice, data, video, messaging, and web-enabled solutions, Exp@nets provides clients with a single point of contact for all communications and networking needs.

Serving more than 750,000 clients today, Exp@nets is the leading network communications provider for businesses that have between 20 and 500 employees. While national in scope, Exp@nets provides local service and solutions through more than 200 local offices and a team of 4,000 associates including data and voice engineers and technicians, sales consultants and client care representatives.

THE CHALLENGE

Exp@nets had been using a budgeting and reporting application called FINPAK, which was maintained in Microsoft Excel. FINPAK was comprised of numerous linked Excel spreadsheets that were sent throughout Exp@nets' organization to collect actual, budget, and forecast information via e-mail, the LAN, or WAN. Once the input data was collected, the Excel spreadsheets were used to consolidate the financial information and produce various reports. The limitations of FINPAK included the following:

- Lack of data integrity
- Inflexible budgeting and reporting environment
- Inability to provide multi-dimensional analysis
- Lack of a central storage facility
- Inability to provide Ad-Hoc reports

- Enormous size of Excel spreadsheets
- Timeliness of data gathering and reporting
- Excessive manual effort in maintaining FINPAK

Exp@nets needed an easier, more flexible method of viewing its organization than Excel spreadsheets could provide. It needed a system platform from which to build a corporate consolidation application, handling their 20+ companies. The new system would have to be flexible so as Exp@nets continued to grow by adding companies to its portfolio, it would capture this information and include it in corporate roll-ups.

THE SOLUTION

Exp@nets engaged Praxinet to design and implement a system that would consolidate its corporate data and provide a useful tool that would replace FINPAK and enable its personnel to make more educated business decisions. The system would eventually be called the Corporate Analysis & Reporting Database (CARD).

Praxinet stepped Exp@nets through a requirements definition process to determine the data to be included in an Essbase database and the specifications of CARD's output. They created the Essbase cube from various data sources, such as the Lawson General Ledger and existing FINPAK spreadsheets. Once the OLAP database was created, the engagement team developed reports based on existing FINPAK spreadsheets. Praxinet developed an Essbase Security Model granting users specific access to the Excel templates and reports.

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Lastly, the engagement team led Exp@nets through the rollout phase, which included user acceptance testing, end-user training, loading client software onto end-user desktops, and the creation of a Help Desk Support process.

THE TECHNOLOGY

Hyperion Essbase Multidimensional database
Hyperion Essbase API
Oracle RDBMS
Oracle Financials
Lawson General Ledger
Microsoft Windows NT Server
Microsoft Visual Basic
Microsoft Excel

THE BENEFITS

The CARD system, a Business Intelligence (BI) solution, has had an immediate impact. CARD has increased the integration of corporate data and the efficiency of data acquisition and loading. It has increased productivity by improving the timeliness and decreasing the manual effort in producing FINPAK reports. It provides the ability to easily add new companies as Exp@nets continues its growth strategy.

Exp@nets is more confident in the integrity of its financial information and its current level of security. All end-users are now confident that they are each working with consistent data. They have one version of the truth.

CARD provides Exp@nets with a central storage and multi-user facility for financial data in order to support management decision-making. Due to the BI tools CARD was built upon, end users have increased ad-hoc data analysis capability that leverages a multi-dimensional database. They enjoy quicker ad-hoc report generation and distribution, while still utilizing Excel as a familiar user interface. Exp@nets' management can now rely on robust multi-dimensional analysis, which provides quick and consistent answers to their everyday business issues.

About Us...

Praxinet, Inc. provides consulting and software solutions that improve business performance across government and private enterprise. Praxinet leverages its core competencies in strategic consulting, Internet technologies, and business intelligence to enable its clients to manage their operations more efficiently and intelligently. Praxinet has designed and developed mission-critical solutions for major clients such as Avaya, Swiss Re, Pitney Bowes, GE, Star Gas Partners, Deloitte & Touche, PricewaterhouseCoopers, Citibank, Pfizer, Verizon, UPS, IRS, NH Dept. of Health & Human Services, and Tishman Speyer Properties.

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