

THE BLANCHARD GROUP CHOOSES BUSINESSOBJECTS™ EDGE FOR HIGH-PERFORMANCE REPORTING

"Thanks to BusinessObjects™ Edge, designed for companies of our size, we were able to choose a solution we thought was only for large accounts,"
Pascal Ruchat, IT Manager and Management Controller, Blanchard Group



Industry

Distribution of agricultural and road-building equipment

Business Process

Manufacturing, operations

Challenge

Blanchard Group wanted to be free of the limitations of Excel when faced with high volume and complexity of data, give users secure access, and find a solution that matches an SME's investment capacities.

Why Business Objects?

Business Objects delivers the robust functionality Blanchard Group requires – at an SME price.

Business Objects Products and Services

BusinessObjects™ Edge

BusinessObjects Web Intelligence®

Crystal Reports®

CHALLENGE

The Blanchard Group specializes in the distribution and servicing of agricultural, landscaping, and road-building equipment and spare parts. This small-to-midsize enterprise (SME), originating in Brittany, France, distributes top-brand tractors and combine harvesters and tractor loaders (including the New Holland brand). Thanks to New Holland, the €95 million Blanchard Group is pursuing a policy of sustained nation-wide development that includes the opening of three new agencies in six weeks. The company decided to upgrade its IT systems in order to support this growth, conceiving a complete system overhaul around Citrix, new commercial servers, and networks equipped with laptops. "We were short of high-performance reporting tools," declares Pascal Ruchat, IT manager and management controller at Blanchard Group.



The group processes around 3,000 invoices a month, covering some 30 different areas of equipment and parts coming from about 50 suppliers and manufacturers. Heracles, an application developed using Magic Software, manages all the group's activities except payment: accounting, stock and planning, invoicing, sales of equipment and parts, after-

sales service, warehouse repairs, and so on. Monthly executive information systems are performed by database extractions that supply over 50 Excel spreadsheets. Blanchard Group uses Crystal Reports® software from Business Objects, an SAP company, to generate some of the reports.

Ruchat explains, "When I arrived in 2002, my first job was to automate as much as possible the monthly management reports with tables of totals, a well-tryed, satisfactory system for general management. All management reports were automatically generated each month, but the solution had technical and organizational limits. For example, Excel cannot handle more than 65,000 lines, which is not enough when we have to compare and cross data over 200,000 references, 21 agencies, and several different companies." In addition to concerns about the quality, security, and confidentiality of data, Ruchat notes that users were dependent on IT to supply and manipulate data, since only the IT team could make extractions from the Oracle tables. So Ruchat looked to the market for a solution that could handle the volume and complexity of Blanchard Group's data, and keep it confidential.

APPROACH

"We wanted a fast, user-directed tool that could reduce the demands on our IT team," says Ruchat. "We looked at other products, but they required us to review our whole architecture. That's why we were attracted to BusinessObjects™ software, with its simple global concept and secure access." But Blanchard Group thought its investment level would preclude it from accessing the Business Objects offerings. "Fortunately, Business Objects had just launched the BusinessObjects Edge packages, designed for the SME market," explains Rodolphe Raimbault of ASI Informatique, a Business Objects partner.

ASI Informatique assembled a prototype with Blanchard Group's data, with the results showing that the complex dynamic crossings that had been impossible with Excel now were performed easily with BusinessObjects software. This demonstration is how Blanchard Group became the first company in France to implement BusinessObjects Edge, based on the principle of simultaneous, not named users. "A license of five simultaneous users is enough for an SME's functional needs, since in the end it can permit access to reporting for 25 to 50 different users," says Raimbault. At the same time, Blanchard Group went for conventional licenses that included named users for technical requirements and the IT team. All users access BusinessObjects Web Intelligence® software via the InfoView component portal and reports are generated transparently by Crystal Reports.



ASI Informatique completed the installation and technical confirmation of return solutions, and it provided training for the IT team and the top managers of the SME responsible for generating the reports.

RESULTS

Blanchard Group expects gains from its investment in Business Objects. Improved analysis of information will allow better control of the company's development, because of the fast, easy integration of new entities. Better knowledge of the market and clients is also an important objective. For example, during harvesting periods, Blanchard Group opens its offices on Sundays to perform repairs for its clients as quickly as possible. BusinessObjects Edge can analyze the different data at these offices, the activity level, the most-requested spare parts, the necessary resources, and other key factors. As well as providing better knowledge of these critical fields, the software enables regular analyses of all levels of the company, so the different services will see improved productivity and autonomy. In the end, warehouse managers, team leaders, retailers, and traveling representatives will be able to access decision-making data to control their activity better. "One of the great advantages of BusinessObjects software is its task-oriented language: all the fields are expressed in clear and comprehensible terms for any user," Ruchat says. IT is free from the burden of producing all the monthly reports in one day, providing timely reporting to decision-makers when needed. Finally, the automatically updated spreadsheets will offer more recent and reliable information.



Ruchat concludes, "Thanks to BusinessObjects Edge, designed for companies of our size, we were able to choose a solution we thought was only for large accounts."

ABOUT ASI INFORMATIQUE

Active all over France through five regional offices, this computer services company specializes in the development and inclusion of company portals, Web solutions, and decision-making applications. ASI is a gold-level Business Objects partner.

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