

## Information Management software

## Laurentian Bank of Canada

## Overview

■ **Challenge**

*Provide branch employees with the information needed to successfully run their businesses*

■ **Solution**

*A business intelligence (BI) solution that provides flexibility, scalability and seamless integration across multiple data sources, along with self-service capabilities*

■ **Key Benefits**

*Improves decision making with accurate and timely access to information; enables personalized customer service with just in-time access to customer statistics and information; helps sales staff quickly refine sales strategies; allows delivery of new reports in days versus months; enables staff to answer ad-hoc questions in less than a day*

■ **Why IBM Cognos Software?**

*Flexibility, scalability, seamless integration across multiple data sources and self-services capabilities*



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Founded in 1846, Laurentian Bank of Canada is a Quebec banking institution operating across Canada, dedicated to meeting the financial needs of its clients through the excellence of service, simplicity and proximity. With more than \$17 billion in balance sheet assets and close to \$15 billion in assets under administration, the bank has 158 retail branches and employs more than 3,300 people.

A key component of Laurentian's success has been its dedication to capitalizing on its greatest asset: human capital. Integral to this strategy

was to make every process, including reporting, more efficient. To support this mission, the bank deployed an Oracle data warehouse to consolidate the data from over 20 different legacy systems. The bank also chose to implement a Cognos BI solution to provide employees with the information needed to do their jobs quickly, easily and effectively.

**Challenges faced**

Each Laurentian branch must contribute to the company's bottom line through yearly objectives.

“Our main goal was to provide branch employees with the information needed so they could successfully run their businesses,” explains Serge Couture, Senior Manager, Business Intelligence Competency Center, Laurentian Bank of Canada.

The bank’s IT department ran into technical challenges fulfilling branch and corporate requests for reports due to its diversity of legacy systems. “It was very challenging for us to consolidate all of the information at a customer level, since there was no customer unique identifier across the different platforms” says Couture.

This cumbersome process affected each branch’s ability to obtain their information in a timely manner, with requests often taking many months to fulfill. “With no timely reporting, and minimal information, the branches had to be very creative in order to meet their business goals,” notes Couture.

To overcome this challenge, Laurentian designed an infrastructure and technology platform supported by operational designs (a Business Intelligence Competency Center or BICC) to centralize reporting and deliver valuable information.

#### **Strategy followed**

Laurentian considered BI reporting solutions mainly from Cognos and Business Objects. The bank was attracted to the flexibility, scalability, seamless integration across multiple data sources, and self-service capabilities of Cognos products.

After getting up and running with its new Oracle data warehouse, Laurentian developed its BICC. This small, but highly effective team reports to the VP of Marketing. Its goals are to drive efficiency, increase delivery consistency, ensure deployment success, broaden the scope of the BI lifecycle, and manage personnel levels. The new team’s objective is to roll out the complete BI solution through the corporation including the 158 branches.

Although the bank took the lead on its BI development, it worked with Cognos partner Globalsult Inc. to help implement the solution. For the past two years this successful partnership has been helping with a variety of initiatives including ETL development, creating cubes and reports, and mentoring the team.

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*~ Serge Couture, Senior Manager,  
Business Intelligence Competency  
Center, Laurentian Bank of Canada*

Most recently, Globalsult helped the bank to centralize all ETL processes, using Data Manager, in order to obtain a better control over the different transformation jobs. Globalsult also participated in developing a pilot of its Cognos scorecarding solution for the executive management team and the marketing department.

Additionally, Laurentian leveraged Cognos Consulting, Training, and Support to ensure a successful deployment. Faced with a challenging security issue, Laurentian partnered with Cognos Consulting to develop a solution to secure all PDF reports distributed via the Web. It ensures that all PDFs could only be opened on the bank network and could not be saved locally or emailed outside the bank.

Cognos Consulting managed this whole project, from finding a solution, closely communicating with the vendor, and developing a proof-of-concept. "The project's success is attributed to Cognos Consulting's technical expertise and understanding of our business," emphasizes Couture.

Taking advantage of Cognos Training, BICC team members were able to quickly get up-to-speed by participating in classes on Cognos ReportNet, Metrics, and Data Manager. The bank has also relied on the Cognos phone support to quickly answer questions. "Cognos Support has been very helpful. We always get the answers we need," notes Couture.

Since going live, Laurentian has standardized on Cognos for all its informational reporting and business intelligence needs. Moving forward, the bank will complete the deployment of its Cognos scorecarding solution and online reporting using the Cognos 8 BI platform.

Laurentian then plans to continue the expansion of its Cognos BI solution to its product management teams and to other corporate business lines. One of the bank's next challenges will be to develop an executive dashboard. The bank anticipates ending the year with 50 percent more users because of the interest the online solution will create.

Equally important, the BICC team will continue working towards their goal of reducing the number of ad-hoc report requests by 80 percent by deploying the Cognos 8 solution through the corporation.

### **Benefits realized**

"We have a lot of confidence in Cognos to help us meet our BI objectives. Our users believe in the solution and understand the added value of the tool," explains Couture. "Now it's just a matter of our BICC team continuing to expand the functionality of our Cognos solution and delivering it to new users."

With its Cognos solution, Laurentian's BICC is able to standardize its reporting process and provide the corporate office and branches with a single and complete view of their business. Bank employees are now able to access data that is more accurate and timely – data that was previously unavailable. As a result, they are able to make better decisions, manage closer to objectives, and support the growth of the company.

Reporting has also become more efficient and frequent with Cognos. In addition to distributing nearly 40 standard weekly and monthly reports, Laurentian's BICC is now able to respond to requests for new reports in a few days whereas before it could take months. Further, the BICC can also answer ad-hoc questions in less than a day.

Leveraging the analytical capabilities in Cognos with the data warehouse, Laurentian's credit and marketing departments have learned more about their customer base. Previously, this demographic information was not easily available. Department members can also create their own reports, saving the BICC from fulfilling three ad-hoc requests per week on average. "With Cognos and our data warehouse, we now have just in-time access to customer statistics and information, which has helped us provide more personalized customer service," states Couture.

With Cognos, Laurentian has gained a competitive advantage in the banking industry, where it is a challenge to expand client base and retain clients against some of the bigger banks. The bank's marketing team has leveraged Cognos to provide weekly feedback on its marketing campaigns, enabling it to easily change its strategy. Branch

sales team members can also now easily monitor their progress against campaign goals with weekly performance reports. "With Cognos, sales representatives are more proactive and can refine their strategy at any point during a campaign, which they were not able to do as quickly before," explains Couture.

#### **About Cognos, an IBM company**

Cognos, an IBM company, is the world leader in business intelligence and performance management solutions. It provides world-class enterprise planning and BI software and services to help companies plan, understand and manage financial and operational performance. Cognos was acquired by IBM in January 2008\*. For more information, visit **<http://www.ibm.com/software/data/>** and **<http://www.cognos.com>**.

*\*As a result of the acquisition, product names have now changed to reference IBM at the beginning of the software or service.*



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