MDS Pharma Services

Overview

In the race to bring much-needed drugs to market faster, leading pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies worldwide rely on clinical research organizations (CROs). MDS Pharma Services is one of the world's leading CROs, providing innovative drug discovery and development services.

A business unit of MDS Inc. (TSX:MDS; NYSE:MDZ), MDS Pharma Services applies advanced scientific and technological expertise throughout the drug discovery and development process – from lead optimization, early clinical research and bio-analysis to global clinical development, central lab and centralized cardiac services. Its goal is to bring speed, precision, and productivity to drug discovery and development.

Challenges faced

MDS Pharma Services was looking for a business monitoring solution that would enable rapid response to fast-changing market conditions, better visibility into its sales opportunity pipeline, and improved financial performance. The company needed to understand the entire customer relationship – from sales proposal to signed contract – monitor project milestones, and calculate and compare the value of strategic opportunities year over year, by customer and other key competitive factors. And, it needed this information in hours, not days.

Accurate, timely forecasts of revenue and customer demand would help sales teams close more deals, bring higher profits and align expenses with revenue growth. With a better understanding of the most profitable strategic accounts and improved decision-making capability, MDS Pharma Services would also better serve the needs of its customers.

MDS Pharma Services needed a business monitoring solution that could tap into its existing customer relationship management (CRM) platform, its enterprise resource management (ERP) system, and other

Geography:
• Global

Industry:
• Contract Research Organization

Information Needs:
• Dashboards for daily financial metrics

• Visibility into sales and year-over-year trending

• Better information to help sales teams close more deals

• Low TCO

• Bridging disparate systems

Solution:
• IBM Cognos Now!

Benefits:
• Information in minutes rather than days

• Total view of customer

• Faster accounts receivable

• On-demand metrics for business agility, better customer service

• Rapid deployment – in 5 days

applications, to deliver key financial metrics, such as the number of signed contracts as a percentage of total sales opportunities, or the number of days sales outstanding (DSO) in accounts receivable.

However, getting these kinds of metrics was difficult and time-consuming using the company's existing reporting platform. Adding to the challenge was the storage of relevant information in multiple systems. To improve the ratio of closed contracts, it was critical to have a seamless flow of information from the CRM and ERP systems.

"We wanted to see the whole picture – the date when a sales lead was created, and how long it took to become a closed opportunity and contract, so we could compare

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our performance to the prior year. And we wanted this information now," explained Kellie Terry, IT Director, Program Management Office at MDS Pharma Services.

Strategy followed

To bridge the gap between its CRM and ERP systems, and gain immediate visibility into opportunity, revenue and profitability metrics, MDS Pharma Services sought a continuous monitoring solution that would meet these business and technology requirements:

- Financial dashboards to provide daily metrics and analyze profitability year over year.

- Ability to connect to multiple data sources and multiple data objects, and display in a single view.

- Accurate, timely forecasts of revenue and customer demand to help sales teams close more deals, realize higher profits and align expenses with revenue growth.

- Low total cost of ownership (TCO) through an easy-to-maintain solution with an adaptable user interface for business user self service.

MDS Pharma Services selected IBM Cognos Now!, the industry's first continuous business monitoring appliance designed to help decision makers proactively track, monitor, and respond to continuously updated operational metrics in real-time or near real-time. IBM Cognos Now! delivers highly visual, interactive, and self-service operational dashboards, data integration, streaming analytics, and reports – all prepackaged in either a hardware, software or VMware appliance.

With all required software pre-installed for fast and easy deployment, IBM Cognos Now! was installed and running at MDS Pharma Services in just five days. Over 100 users were provided access to the system in the first implementation phase, including the sales, finance, IT and, operations frontlines as well as C-Level executives. Many were up and running in just eight weeks. The solution's easy integration with existing systems and ability to consolidate data from multiple sources greatly accelerated time to results.

"One of the nice features of the Cognos tool is the consolidated data stream," observed Ms. Terry. "You can create an agent in IBM Cognos Now! that connects to most data sources and eliminates all the manual work of consolidating and crunching numbers. Now we can see not only our pipeline and projects, but the longevity and profitability of our projects, so we can target the most profitable opportunities."

Benefits realized

IBM Cognos Now! has helped MDS Pharma understand the entire customer relationship – from sales lead to signed contract to project milestones – and which of its managers and business units have the best customer relationships. Managers can proactively monitor strategic accounts on a daily or hourly basis. And week after week, financial managers have continuously improved accounts receivable, reduced DSO and fine tuned year-over-year financial metrics.

Financial and AR professionals can drill down to the actual invoice level, see AR aging, backload aging by business unit, view the top 10 customers with open transactions, and slice invoicing data by any criteria. They can also upload Microsoft Excel spreadsheets for lookup in context. Even if the header data is different, IBM Cognos Now! can consolidate data from disparate sources into a single dashboard view.

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 www.cognos.com.

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