The City of Albuquerque: from heterogeneous data sources to public service visionary

Overview

■ *Challenge*

Automate data collection and information sharing throughout the City of Albuquerque's 20 departments, and supply critical information to the City's 750,000 citizens in a BI extranet

■ *Why IBM?*

The IBM Cognos solution had the scalability to serve the City's 7,000 internal users and also create an extranet for the entire population

■ *Solution*

An IBM® Cognos® 8 BI solution that provides effective, efficient reporting, analysis and scorecarding from a collection of heterogeneous information sources

■ *Key Benefits*

A 2000 percent ROI in cost savings and reduced administrative overhead; a BI extranet that supplies critical information to City residents; ability to analyze and solve issues and problems quickly; characterization as a public service visionary in citizen outreach; quick scaling to meet user needs; ease of use for internal and extranet users

At the City of Albuquerque, New Mexico, the saying goes that a well-informed public service is an effective public service. This premise grew legs when the City began using an IBM Cognos business intelligence (BI) solution to automate data collection and information sharing among its 7,000 employees in more than 20 departments–from public safety to libraries. The benefits of the system enabled the City to realize significant cost savings–almost 2000 percent overall–and have continued after its PeopleSoft CRM implementation and throughout its business processes.

The City also uses the IBM Cognos solution to supply critical information, such as public safety and campaign reporting data, to its 750,000 residents through a BI extranet. Since that time, the City has been characterized as a public service visionary in its outreach to citizens and its ability to give employees a single version of the truth. By using the IBM Cognos system to link heterogeneous data, inform the public and empower employees to make better decisions, the City has realized the true ROI of business intelligence.

Cognos®
software

Challenges Faced

With an annual budget of more than $1 billion, the City of Albuquerque provides a wide cross-section of critical municipal services to its residents. Historically, different departments maintained a variety of home-grown and off-the-shelf systems to manage data. For example, public safety services, water services, and residential and commercial development planning each captured high volumes of data relating to financial and operational performance. With a mix of ERP, older, mainframe and distributed relational database systems, data was spread across various systems and in multiple formats. Officials could not generate their own reports, nor could they consolidate information or share it with other departments without substantial manual effort.

Although the City of Albuquerque officials wanted to convey key data to city residents over the Internet–especially public safety data–they had no solution in place to accomplish this critical task. They realized that a public extranet could be a tall order to fulfill, as the solution would need to be easy to use with minimal training and minimal software maintenance. It would also need to be scalable enough to serve many people simultaneously and quickly. According to Brian Osterloh, Applications Development Manager for CRM & BI at the City of Albuquerque, they needed to implement a BI solution that was scalable, flexible and easy to use both internally and externally.

"At any moment, I needed to have the ability to go through the organization and reach 7,000 people, and then be able to go outside and connect with another 750,000 people. By far, scalability was our biggest requirement and challenge," says Osterloh.

Strategy Followed

After considering several BI solutions, the City of Albuquerque selected the IBM Cognos product due to its ability to scale quickly and meet the stringent requirements of a public extranet. The IBM Cognos solution was first implemented in 1997, and over the past decade, the City has developed its BI infrastructure to include IBM® Cognos® Series 7, IBM® Cognos® ReportNet and, most recently, IBM® Cognos® 8 BI. The City has standardized on IBM Cognos products, and their implementation spans more than 20 departments and a myriad of applications.

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>
> *Brian Osterloh*
> *Applications Development Manager*
> *for CRM & BI, City of Albuquerque*

In terms of the implementation process and roll-out, the IBM Cognos Professional Services organization has been central to the overall success of the project.

"When the City introduced the IBM Cognos suite of products, the company assisted us with training and implementation," states Osterloh. "IBM Cognos Education courses gave us the knowledge we required to successfully manage the project from the beginning through to advanced report writing. For each major step, we used the services of IBM Cognos Professional Services. Their technical assistance and ongoing support has been a crucial part of each implementation."

To provide the right data at the right time, IBM Cognos software accesses information from the City's key applications, including its PeopleSoft® Customer Information System and Citizen Relationship Management (CRM/311). In addition, the City has a very large external Web presence in which, for example, vendors can check the payment status for their services, and citizens can look up the contributors of any given campaign.

The project has also helped the City maximize its investment in IBM technologies such as IBM® DB2®, IBM® AS400®, IBM® Domino Database® and IBM® FileNet®.

"The open, distributed architecture of the IBM Cognos system works seamlessly on our existing IBM and PeopleSoft technology infrastructure. As a result, we can ensure residents and employees find consistent and helpful information to help keep the City running smoothly and more efficiently," remarks Osterloh.

Benefits Realized

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According to Nucleus Research, an independent Wellesley, Massachusetts-based firm that evaluates financial return on IT assets, the City of Albuquerque achieved

nearly 2,000 percent ROI in 2003 from its overall IBM Cognos deployment by reducing administrative overhead and identifying cost saving opportunities. The savings has continued to grow throughout the years.

Today, the IBM Cognos system is a strategic element of the City's day-to-day business and has been deployed to all City departments, including fire, police, human resources and financial departments. The impact on the IT department has been dramatic, with the introduction of PeopleSoft CRM/311 having the biggest effect on operations and resource management.

The City implemented CRM/311 during July of 2005. During this time, Osterloh became aware that large-item garbage pickup requests tripled. Before the new IBM Cognos system, a citizen had to call more than a day in advance for pick-up and typically wait a week for the item to be removed after their request was captured on one of three different sources. The City had one person in their Solid Waste Management Department who spent six hours each day extrapolating the information manually and creating the

work list for the following day. The City decided it would be best to consolidate and have all of the requests come through the CRM/311 application, which would then allow creation of a single IBM Cognos report in minutes.

"When we showed the first report to the person who had been manually creating the report every day, she was thrilled. She just got back six hours of her day, every day," comments Osterloh. In addition to the resource management savings, citizens no longer had to call one day ahead. They could call anytime and have their items picked up the same day, instead of waiting a week.

The IBM Cognos system has also helped significantly improve the graffiti removal process for the City. In 2007, the mayor had stated that his goal was to have graffiti removed within 24 hours of being reported, instead of in two to four days. According to Osterloh, this

was a very ambitious goal, but one that was very important to the mayor and the City.

To achieve this monumental task, the City had all of the requests routed through the CRM/311 system. Using the IBM Cognos system, Osterloh was able to create reports that showed him that it was previously taking two to four days for graffiti to be removed. He determined that if a person called CRM/311 between midnight and 7 a.m., it took on average one day less than if the call came in between 7 a.m. and midnight because of where the call landed in the queue. He found that the vast majority of graffiti reports came in between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m. and they were being delayed 24 hours due to the dispatch time. This new information helped him to redeploy the work hours and dispatch times to circulate throughout the day. Through its use of the IBM Cognos solution, the City solved the problem and achieved the mayor's goal.

"Through the IBM Cognos system, we were able see the issues and solve them quickly and efficiently," states Osterloh. "The decisions that were made because of the IBM Cognos solution have helped the Solid Waste Management Department to get within 24 hours for graffiti removal–with no additional resources and an increased volume!"

Overall, Osterloh has been thrilled with the new system and has plans in the near future to roll out IBM® Cognos® 8 Go! Search, so that users can find reports, scorecards and other content created in IBM Cognos 8 BI. "The IBM Cognos innovation continues to impress me," states Osterhol. "With IBM Cognos 8 Go! Search, our employees are looking forward to accessing IBM Cognos reports with the ability to fine-tune their results to view what they need, when they need it."

About IBM Cognos BI and Performance Management

IBM Cognos business intelligence (BI) and performance management solutions deliver world-leading enterprise planning, consolidation and BI software, support and services to help companies plan, understand and manage financial and operational performance. IBM Cognos solutions bring together technology, analytical applications, best practices, and a broad network of partners to give customers an open, adaptive and complete performance solution. Over 23,000 customers in more than 135 countries around the world choose IBM Cognos solutions.

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