

Information Builders enables agile information solutions with business intelligence (BI) and integration technologies. Flexible, scalable, and secure, WebFOCUS – the most widely utilized BI platform – permeates every level of the extended enterprise through a simple and intuitive user experience.

### Administaff

#### Snapshot

##### Organization

Administaff is the nation's leading professional employer organization (PEO), serving as a full-service human resources department that provides small and medium-sized businesses with administrative relief, big-company benefits, reduced liabilities, and a systematic way to improve productivity.

##### The Challenge

To maximize the value of existing BI technology and implement an enterprise standard.

##### The Strategy

Upgrade WebFOCUS to take advantage of the latest capabilities; establish a real-time ETL architecture to supply current data for operational reporting; and roll-out new reports to three primary groups of users: finance, business operations, and customers.

##### The Results

Increased reporting efficiency; improved report development and maintenance; and raised client satisfaction.

##### Information Builders Solution

WebFOCUS and Professional Services.



## WebFOCUS Grows Up at Administaff

### Evolving BI Infrastructure Expands to Accommodate Many Types of Users

Hitting a growth spurt in high school usually means gangly legs, a squeaky voice, and uncertain self-esteem. Rapid growth in the technology domain is accompanied by its own awkward upheavals, but when properly managed these changes can propel an organization to new levels of success.

Such was the case for Administaff when it came time to expand its business intelligence (BI) environment. As one of the largest personnel management and human resource service providers in the U.S., Administaff helps companies in a variety of ways – running payroll, maintaining employee data, handling taxation issues, and managing employee benefits and workers compensation programs – nearly all of the things that are associated with hiring employees and keeping them on staff. In this type of business, managing growth and profitability often comes down to finding better ways to manage information.

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Administaff first began using Information Builders' WebFOCUS reporting tool several years ago, valuing the software's flexibility and versatility. After successfully using WebFOCUS in a client-facing capacity, Administaff began to adopt WebFOCUS as its enterprise-reporting standard in support of financial and operational reporting activities. As Administaff has grown to employ 100,000 people within more than 5,000 companies, the company has become increasingly reliant on WebFOCUS to accommodate the needs of its clients and staff.

“Over the past few years, Administaff's business intelligence environment has been maturing significantly,” says Dave Wallis, manager of business intelligence for Administaff. “WebFOCUS is a major component of our BI solution, but until last year we didn't have any single group coordinating WebFOCUS support and enhancement. We have several business users who depend on WebFOCUS for critical business processes and reporting needs, who were asking for more advanced reporting capabilities to meet the information needs of the business. That's when we decided to take steps to position ourselves so we could more greatly benefit from the sophisticated reporting and analytics capabilities that WebFOCUS offers.”

#### **Keeping Up With the Latest Trends**

Recognizing that WebFOCUS was being underutilized as an enterprise-wide tool, Administaff called in Information Builders Professional Services to conduct a Needs Assessment of their WebFOCUS environment. As a result of this assessment, Wallis and his team received management support to upgrade their WebFOCUS software. This allowed the team to take advantage of the WebFOCUS suite of solutions, including Developer Studio, BI Dashboard, Visual Discovery, and Report Library, as well as its inherent support for Web services. They also took this opportunity to deploy more powerful reporting servers.

“Information Builders conducted a two-week assessment to help us develop a big picture for how we were using their technology corporate-wide,” says Wallis. “Their insight helped us optimize our BI strategy moving forward. We've been very happy with the services Information Builders has provided. They have helped us to maximize our use of BI technology throughout the enterprise.”

Gaining a clearer understanding of Administaff's use of WebFOCUS was the first step toward implementing more rigorous methods and standards for the software, ultimately improving internal efficiency and client satisfaction throughout this large organization. The technology team took advantage of the modern architecture of WebFOCUS to improve performance. Instead of common gateway interface (CGI) connections, WebFOCUS uses Java™ procedures to establish nonpersistent connections between each user's browser and the reporting servers. This is a more efficient approach since it allows many concurrent users to share server resources without consuming too much server memory.

“We now have better tools and monitoring capabilities for supporting our WebFOCUS users on a daily basis,” Wallis states. “The administration console is valuable for identifying issues with the system or with individual report processes. Looking ahead, we are planning on utilizing WebFOCUS Resource Analyzer to help us identify performance and usage patterns within our data sources.”

## Gaining Momentum With BI

Since upgrading WebFOCUS, Administaff has built a more solid BI foundation to support the reporting done within the organization on a daily basis. Today, WebFOCUS is being used more widely than ever before in many parts of the business. Administaff's reporting initiatives center around three primary solutions:

- Financial reporting and analysis for internal managers and executives
- Ad hoc customized, human resources information reporting provided as a service to clients
- Client-facing self-service reporting via the Web

Financial reporting is focused on performing detailed analysis of key operational metrics such as payroll and invoice data, benefits and workers compensation claims data, and other high volume transactional data originating from a variety of source systems.

Ad hoc customized reporting entails a wide variety of reports generated by client-services personnel in the corporate office in Kingwood, Texas, as well as four Administaff service centers in Los Angeles, Houston, Dallas, and Atlanta. These reports draw largely from the company's proprietary human resources and payroll systems and are provided as a service to clients seeking detailed information about their workforce.

Administaff's uses WebFOCUS to access data warehouses and its operational databases, which contain demographic and human resources data on employees, transactional payroll and invoicing data, and employee benefits and workers compensation claims data. The data warehouse is updated each night to reflect operational business changes from that day. While these nightly updates to the data warehouse meet the needs of internal corporate reporting, many other reporting needs require more current data. To accommodate these needs, Wallis and his team are implementing a new ETL architecture that continually loads operational data into the reporting database, enabling internal and external users to create real-time reports from the data warehouse.

Through the Administaff Employee Service Center, client-facing reports provide basic payroll, benefits, and employee information through a self-service interface, which provides simple user configuration options and selections. Administaff currently supports more than 5,000 client companies and 100,000 employees. Client companies generate hundreds of WebFOCUS reports each day using the Employee Service Center's self-service portal. Additionally, about 20 report developers and power users have used WebFOCUS to create more than 8,000 internal reports for Administaff's various business units. With the new version of WebFOCUS, several business units are saving their report executions using Report Library. Many of these internal developers are also now using Developer Studio, which Wallis says is easy to learn thanks to its intuitive user interface.

## Crowd Pleasing Flexible Reporting Capabilities

The introduction of WebFOCUS as an enterprise standard has significantly increased the efficiency of Administaff's self-service reporting activities. Authorized users can access a wide variety of information, from historical paycheck data for work-site employees to company-wide benefit and tax information for managers. There are 18 different report templates accessible on the Web portal.

**“By treating WebFOCUS as an enterprise-reporting tool – and giving it the support it deserves – we are seeing new levels of business successes.”**

## Find Out More

To find out how our solutions can help your company succeed, talk to an Information Builders representative today.

Contact your local Information Builders office, visit us at [www.informationbuilders.com](http://www.informationbuilders.com), or in the U.S. and Canada, call **(800) 969-4636**.

This has resulted in an average of around 40,000 reports per quarter that clients run for themselves, relieving the reporting workload on internal personnel at headquarters and in the Administristaff service centers.

Ashley Adams, a product analyst for reporting at Administristaff, credits this user-friendly reporting environment for increasing customer satisfaction throughout the organization. "Our clients love the flexibility," she says. "They continually ask for new types of reports on the portal, and each self-service report we post there lightens the load for our developers. In addition to customer satisfaction, we are gaining greater efficiency in our business processes through our use of WebFOCUS. As our experience grows with BI technology, we are seeing a greater return on our investment and more capabilities overall for our reporting needs."

In the near future, Administristaff plans to investigate using WebFOCUS Visual Discovery for presenting BI analysis. Visual Discovery is an advanced data visualization product that makes it easy to graphically represent detail and summary data on the same screen. The Visual Discovery solution provides complex graphs such as paraboxes, data constellations, timetables and scatter plots as well as dynamic charting capabilities such as line, bar, pie, and histogram charts. Adams and other developers are also planning to use WebFOCUS ReportCaster to allow customers to schedule reports to run at predefined intervals, so the information they need will be automatically available to customers in support of their daily operations.

"We are finding so many useful capabilities in the WebFOCUS product set," says Adams. "For example, we can easily create compound reports that combine dissimilar types of information into one report – even when the data comes from totally separate data sets. This used to be a painful coding process; now it's a breeze, and the output makes it all look like one cohesive structure."

Meanwhile, Wallis and his team are exploring the possibility of creating WebFOCUS reports as Web services that can be embedded into a variety of business applications. "We want to use WebFOCUS to make our reporting environment more consistent and easier to maintain," he says. "Our use of business intelligence technology is evolving quickly as we continue to learn how to use WebFOCUS to leverage information. By treating WebFOCUS as an enterprise-reporting tool – and giving it the support it deserves – we are seeing new levels of business successes."



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