

Information Builders enables agile information solutions with business intelligence (BI) and integration technologies. WebFOCUS – the most widely utilized business intelligence platform – connects to any enterprise system or application and enables simple and intuitive interaction with information.

Indaver

Snapshot

Organization

Headquartered in Belgium, Indaver is one of Europe's leading waste-management specialists, with more than 800 employees in eight European countries.

The Challenge

Enable management to easily and quickly create high-quality, detailed financial reports, to control budgets and workflow from wherever they may be.

The Strategy

Create a Web-based reporting system that combines the benefits of a powerful reporting language with an extremely user-friendly, browserbased interface.

The Results

The company saved a minimum of 30 percent in time spent producing reports and empowered users with quality up-to-the-minute financial information for enhanced decision-making.

Information Builders Solution

WebFOCUS and WebFOCUS ReportCaster.



Indaver

Boosts SAP Reporting Capabilities With WebFOCUS

Indaver, one of Europe's leading waste-management specialists, treated 1,754,270 tons of waste material in 2004 – equivalent to the capacity of approximately 215 cargo ships. That's an 18 percent increase from the previous year, largely due to more companies choosing to outsource their waste management needs to cope with stricter environmental regulations and a mounting number of administrative requirements from the European Union. As customer demand continued to increase, so did Indaver's resolve to provide its customers with the most environmentally sound and innovative waste-management solutions.

This meant putting the quality of its products, processes, and services beyond dispute and building public confidence through openness and accountability. To help accomplish this and steer customers' waste-management processes efficiently and cost-effectively, the company turned to enterprise-class technology solutions from SAP and Information Builders.

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From Local Player to European Leader

In the mid-1990s, Indaver was a local Flemish company and relied on Microsoft Excel to satisfy its basic reporting needs. Indaver then began its international expansion, including a merger with VLAR, a Flemish waste-recovery company. As a result, Indaver grew in a relatively short space of time into a group of more than 30 companies, which made it a major European player in the waste-management market.

Indaver now employs a staff of about 824 who are divided between eight locations in Belgium and Europe. In Antwerp, there are three incinerator plants that generate recycled energy and a physical-chemical treatment facility. In Doel, Indaver has a plant for recycling a variety of waste, some of which contains mercury, and for incinerating domestic and non-hazardous waste. The company has further locations that handle paper and cardboard processing and composting, as well as others that house the management, administrative, and financial departments.

Squeezing More Intelligence From SAP

Indaver's technology requirements evolved as the company grew. Its first move was to implement SAP R/3 as its enterprise resource planning (ERP) system with the core objective of fully integrating the system of waste management at its customer sites. Thanks to this plan, the company could rely on a highly transparent and well-structured administrative flow, which traced the entire waste-management cycle and created the necessary supporting legal documents every step of the way.

SAP R/3 was eventually rolled out to the whole group, enabling data to be integrated across the organization at its source. Indaver wanted to capitalize on this operational unity by enabling users to analyze real-time information from its production SAP system quickly and easily. However, it had little in the way of integrated reporting capabilities among its various offices. They had clearly outgrown Excel, and SAP reporting was deemed too cumbersome for managers to use for everyday decision support.

“We wanted an integrated Web-based solution that was powerful, yet easy to use,” says Hans Wezenbeek, IT business analyst at Indaver. “It was also important for the solution to provide a native interface to SAP, largely eliminating the need for a data warehouse.” What Indaver needed was a good set of reporting tools that would enable it to access the SAP data directly and unite company reporting functionalities in a single, comprehensive user-friendly environment. The company found what it was looking for with Information Builders' WebFOCUS, an integrated platform for enterprise business intelligence.

Easy to Implement and Use

To get the system up and running, one of Indaver's IT staff attended a three-day WebFOCUS training course at Information Builders. Based on the training provided and examples worked on during the course and in a two-day pilot project, Indaver handled the implementation itself. This was an important choice for Indaver because they wanted to retain control of the project at all times and not have to rely constantly on external consultants. This self-confidence was justified because the implementation of WebFOCUS went smoothly and, after a couple of months, the main reports were already up and running.

“Clearly, WebFOCUS is the ideal combination of a powerful language and an extremely user-friendly interface.”

WebFOCUS provides Indaver with a comprehensive Web-based reporting solution. Through an intuitive drag-and-drop development environment, WebFOCUS empowers developers to quickly create and deploy compelling applications. Users can then easily create richly formatted reports from enterprise data in real time using a set of robust reporting tools.

“The system is particularly easy to use,” says Wezenbeek. “Users can simply view reports using a Web browser. All they need is a user name and password – and they can access the system from wherever they happen to be at the time.” WebFOCUS fulfills the role of a workflow system that is used specifically for employees who log in less frequently to SAP. One of Indaver’s key reporting applications enables managers to control budgeting. The maintenance department also uses the system to link financial details with the technical information from worksheets and purchase orders.

Indaver also uses WebFOCUS ReportCaster to control when reports are run, determine how they are distributed, and send out alerts that make it easier to monitor a number of processes. Control over scheduling can be concentrated in the hands of a single administrator or spread among any number of authorized users. The content, timing, frequency, format, and even the method of distributing reports can all be easily managed and customized to meet individual needs.

A Flexible and Powerful Reporting Environment When Indaver upgraded its SAP R/3 software, it opted to revamp its reporting needs based on the new version of SAP. Indaver’s corporate structure had also evolved further, creating more complex reporting requirements. Once again, Indaver’s own IT department was able to carry out the required adjustments with relative ease. “WebFOCUS is a flexible reporting environment with many capabilities,” relates Wezenbeek. “In every instance, we were able to set the parameters for the various reports correctly while navigating through the SAP upgrade process.”

Indaver also uses WebFOCUS’ powerful financial modeling language to handle complex, financially oriented data and to enhance financial planning, management, and control. This enables Indaver users to develop a variety of reports in which, for example, they can work with formulas using cells instead of rows and columns. “The programming language used is fairly complex, but this hasn’t slowed us down at all,” says Wezenbeek. “Because of WebFOCUS’ graphic design environment, as far as the end user is concerned, the complexity of the language remains totally invisible. Clearly, WebFOCUS is the ideal combination of a powerful language and an extremely user-friendly interface.”

Scalable and Cost-Effective

When the project began, the WebFOCUS Reporting Server was running on a Pentium 3 (600 MHz) Windows server, while SAP was on a Pentium 2 (400 MHz) server. Generally, WebFOCUS did not impact the SAP server’s performance significantly, and it was always possible to generate reports based on the interim files prepared each night by WebFOCUS, if there was a concern about putting too much stress on the production environment. This way of working proved to be very effective for Indaver.

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

informationbuilders.com,

or in the U.S. and Canada,

call **(800) 969-4636.**

Since the migration to the new version of SAP R/3, both WebFOCUS and SAP run in a significantly larger environment, mainly because Indaver now employs a lot more people and therefore has more users. Thankfully, this has not proved to be costly for Indaver. "Information Builders does not calculate the licence fees based on the number of users," explains Wezenbeek. "This is particularly reassuring because if we grow further and more users are added, this will have little effect on our level of licence fees and will not deter Indaver's corporate expansion." At the moment, some 80 staff at Indaver use WebFOCUS.

More Productivity in Less Time

When evaluating reporting solutions, Indaver conducted an assessment of the expected return on investment. Of particular importance was the extent to which direct reporting on SAP data would be profitable. "Previously, we spent a lot of time collecting data, entering it into an Excel document, and making copies," states Wezenbeek. "With WebFOCUS, we are now spending at least 30 percent less time producing reports and, just as important, the quality of our reports is significantly higher."

Wezenbeek is especially impressed with WebFOCUS' drill-down capabilities, which allow users to look at report results in greater detail. In fact, WebFOCUS enables the integration of powerful hyperlink drill-downs to any other report, program, location, or multiple locations within enterprise reports. These hyperlink drilldowns are available in all supported output formats, including HTML, Excel, and PDF. By using the drill-down function in the reports, users can scrutinize specific transactions within the invoices entered. "That was something that used to require endless work," says Wezenbeek.

With WebFOCUS, Indaver's financial professionals can obtain a complete, accurate, up-to-the-minute view of financial and corporate performance. Indaver is so satisfied with the results it has achieved with WebFOCUS that it is currently considering adding the WebFOCUS Business Intelligence Dashboard, also from Information Builders. The WebFOCUS Business Intelligence Dashboard integrates the reporting environment into one user-friendly Web portal. Each user can personalize their portal by deciding what reports they see and how they see them. Users can select analytic tools for creating reports, graphs, and bar charts, as well as features such as matrix reporting, ranking, color-coding, drill-down, and font customization.

"The Business Intelligence Dashboard will be straightforward to connect to our existing system and will give our users more choices about how they view their information," says Wezenbeek. "We are excited about the possibilities and looking forward to our next step."