

Intersil

Drives Innovation With WebFOCUS

Standardized Dashboards Encourage User-Driven Reporting for Global Semiconductor Manufacturer

Continual process innovations and global supply chains have made the semiconductor industry one of the most competitive and volatile sectors of the manufacturing world.

To gain a foothold in high-growth markets, such as flat panel displays, optical storage devices, and power management systems, industry leaders such as Intersil Corporation have learned how to streamline critical operational processes. Intersil's semiconductors are widely used in everything from LCD televisions to video switching equipment, but its competitive edge doesn't stem merely from having better integrated circuits

or more robust sales channels. Intersil wins by working smarter, driven by an enterprise-wide business intelligence (BI) environment created with Information Builders WebFOCUS.

"In an industry this competitive, our edge comes not just from the products we produce, but from how well we manage information," confirms Terry Brophy, vice president of Information Technology at Intersil. "Since deploying Information Builders' technology, we have established a more holistic view of what we are doing."

While other manufacturing companies struggle to deploy departmental reporting tools within



Snapshot

Organization

Intersil is a global technology leader that specializes in the design and manufacture of high-performance analog semiconductors.

Challenge

Various methods for analyzing and presenting information led to extra work and inconsistent results. Business users also needed visual representations of information.

Strategy


Create WebFOCUS dashboards to report on and analyze many aspects of the business. Each dashboard reveals trends and enables comparisons to previous periods.

Results

WebFOCUS dashboards supply information for all key functional areas of the business, from sales to finance to operations. Approximately 400 people have WebFOCUS accounts.

Information Builders Solution

WebFOCUS, Professional Services, and Education.



each plant and division, Intersil has implemented a common type of BI dashboard that enables consistent reporting practices throughout the company. Brophy says the benefits of standardizing on WebFOCUS include faster ramp-up, less user training, and the ability to roll up information across the enterprise in a consistent way.

Building Consistency

Intersil has a rich data warehouse that includes information on billings, bookings, and backlogs – essential components in its worldwide distribution processes. However, before WebFOCUS came on the scene, there was little consistency in how its highly dispersed workforce accessed that information. Most people created

reports using Microsoft Access and Excel, both from the warehouse and from the company's transactional systems, leading to thousands of reports but no single version of the truth.

“Because there were so many methods for crunching numbers,” explains Brophy. “Sometimes users received inconsistent results, even though the data all came from the same source.”

“There were too many reports, creating islands of data. The whole process was much too time consuming, with less time spent on analysis and more time spent trying to figure out if the data was

“WebFOCUS lets users save information from a dashboard directly into an Excel spreadsheet, including the formulas. A lot of vendors don’t provide that.”

Terry Brophy
VP, Information Technology
Intersil

accurate and matched other data sets. It wasn’t immediately clear as to what trends were actually occurring.”

Some of Intersil’s analysts had used other BI products on a limited basis in the past. With an eye to acquiring a more complete and user-friendly BI environment, Brophy and her team conducted a thorough review and analysis of six BI products. As part of this evaluation process, Information Builders developed a proof of concept to demonstrate how its reporting technology could work with Intersil’s data.

Brophy’s team favored WebFOCUS for its complete development environment and overall ease-of-use for both users and developers. “The other BI products could provide similar visual results, but we wanted to tie those results tightly to Microsoft Excel, something which WebFOCUS did phenomenally well,” Brophy continues. “WebFOCUS lets users save information from a dashboard directly into an Excel spreadsheet, including the formulas. A lot of vendors don’t provide that.”

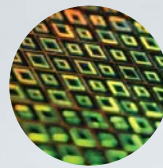
WebFOCUS also performed well during a series of speed tests against large data sets. “It came down to the best bang for the buck,” Brophy sums up. “Information Builders satisfied all of our technical needs for less money than the other BI vendors.”

An Information Supply Chain

Intersil purchased WebFOCUS, then engaged Information Builders Professional Services to develop the template for a new set of BI dashboards. Third-party consultants from ResiliEnt Business Solutions

assisted with the implementation. Intersil also sent several developers to WebFOCUS training classes to get up to speed with WebFOCUS Developer Studio and other parts of the BI environment.

“We have been happy with the services Information Builders provided,” says Brophy. “The consultants were a big help with the implementation and the education was worthwhile. The training and development services provided a strong foundation for building our knowledge base.”



Leveraging this knowledge, Robin Nursey, director of Business Applications, and his team of developers used WebFOCUS Developer Studio to create 11 WebFOCUS dashboards to report on and analyze many aspects of the business. Each dashboard reveals trends and enables comparisons to previous periods. As part of this effort, Intersil focused on data quality and spent time cleaning up the data in its warehouse, which includes Oracle, SQL Server, and FOCUS databases.

“We built momentum with the BI initiative by getting key users involved throughout the company,” says Nursey. “This strategy helped us make the most of our investments in the data warehouse and associated dashboards. I think we did a great job of designing a reporting environment that really suits user needs, and of providing drill-down capabilities and trends to provide quick answers.”

WebFOCUS dashboards now supply information for all key functional areas of the business, from sales to finance to operations. Approximately 400 people have WebFOCUS accounts, and nearly



200 of them use the dashboards on a regular basis. “We have about 1,600 people in our organization, and, in one form or another, all of them are influenced by the information WebFOCUS brings us,” Nursey adds.

For example, one dashboard focuses on backlog activity, orders, sales, and returns. It reveals trends and historical figures by quarter. Users can drill in to specific details, clear down to the line-item level in Excel. Other dashboards monitor sales, analyze pricing, track inventory levels, and report on assembly operations. “Taken together, the dashboards help managers spot sales opportunities, review target accounts, manage assets, fine tune product development, and make all types of financial decisions,” says Brophy.

Each dashboard includes multiple tabs and ways of configuring data. Because the reports are parameterized, users have literally millions of variations for displaying information. Nursey says most users require very little training to use WebFOCUS. “We point them to the dashboards and provide a half-hour demonstration to get them up and running. Once you learn to use one dashboard you can use the others, thanks to standard methods for drilling down and filtering data. Adopting WebFOCUS as our BI standard has really helped in this area of standardization.”



The Benefits of Consolidation

Intersil’s enterprise reporting environment is also paying off in time-savings for the organization. For example, it used to take nine or 10 hours to produce a spreadsheet of the customer trends report. With 92 different tabs, it was unwieldy to

populate, update, and distribute. Now users can view and analyze this same information through a WebFOCUS dashboard, and Intersil doesn’t have to send around a massive spreadsheet to discover trends in the data. Intersil has applied this same strategy of user-driven access, analysis, and distribution to many other parts of the company as well.

“Business users can produce information automatically, resulting in less hand-holding from our standpoint,” says Brophy. “Our user community can spend time analyzing information instead of finding and crunching data.”

Having a better understanding of the information means business users can identify production trends, make rapid pricing decisions, and keep product releases on schedule – essential capabilities in this ever-changing industry.

Brophy believes it’s more effective to construct this type of reporting system using general-purpose BI software than it is with the reporting tools embedded in ERP or MRP software applications. “Packaged applications typically feature reporting capabilities that are much less flexible and robust,” she says. “They don’t have the same native access capabilities, let alone permit any type of standardization in your dashboards. Our data comes from a variety of data sources, so we need BI tools that can simultaneously access multiple types of data and support many different applications. That’s what we get with WebFOCUS.”

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Robin Nursey
Director, Business Applications
Intersil