

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.

Easynet Global Services

Snapshot

Organization

Easynet Global Service is a managed-networks, hosting, and telepresence company.

The Challenge

Synthesize global information to obtain a unified view of finance, billing, service delivery, and customer resource management; cleanse data, build reports, and deploy dashboards to deliver consolidated information to key decision makers.

The Strategy

Combine data from international service histories, profitability reports, fault-management indexes, and the CRM system to identify top tier customers. Promote data cleansing for more consistent reporting. Develop dashboards to inform employees of high value opportunities.

The Results

Easynet has restructured its business development activities, identified its most important customers, and provides more sophisticated services to top-tier companies.

Information Builders Solution

WebFOCUS and Professional Services.



Easynet Global Services Boosts Profitability With Global Reporting Environment

BSkyB Subsidiary Uses BI to Increase Margins, Prioritize Sales Efforts, and Deliver Premium Services to High-Value Customers

At a certain point in every company's growth, it becomes necessary to take a step back and determine whether the core information systems that run the business are still effective, sustainable, and efficient. Easynet reached this juncture when the company branched out to address burgeoning markets in China and the United States.

"We're going through a period of rapid change," acknowledges Mike Shepard, financial IS manager for Easynet. "We want to provide network solutions to top-tier customers without compromising the quality of service we offer to our smaller customers. This type of restructuring calls for enhanced reporting to support global sales, marketing, and service efforts."

**“Information Builders
simply tried harder.”**

BI at the Crossroads

A subsidiary of British Sky Broadcasting Group (BSkyB) – the UK’s number one pay-TV provider – Easynet is a managed-network, hosting, and telepresence solutions provider firmly established in ten European countries. As the company acquired bigger clients and uncovered more substantial business-to-business opportunities, Easynet needed an all-encompassing data warehouse and business-intelligence (BI) environment to identify and manage lucrative sales opportunities.

Led by Shepard, Easynet sought a BI solution that was scalable enough to support its European operations as well as a new facility in China and a growing U.S. market. It was a tall order: each country uses different applications and data sources for everything from finance and billing to service delivery and customer resource management. In order to consolidate information from these disparate systems, Easynet needed a highly flexible reporting system that could be customized as the organization continued to develop.

“Our strategy is to create our own BI environment anchored by highly functional dashboards for sales, profitability, service, and other core business functions,” says Shepard. “Our data sources and business needs are changing too rapidly for a turnkey solution.”

In their search for a solution that would be powerful, flexible and scalable enough to fulfill Easynet’s needs, Shepard and his team were drawn to Information Builders WebFOCUS business-intelligence environment. They saw great potential in WebFOCUS Active Reports, which combine data and analytics into customizable, highly modular presentations that can be sent by e-mail. WebFOCUS also includes robust dashboard-development capabilities as part of its basic BI package and Information Builders had a team of reporting experts on hand to answer Shepard’s questions. “Information Builders simply tried harder,” he sums up.

Building International Consistency

Easynet purchased WebFOCUS, built a data warehouse, and began using the BI software to create reports for finance, sales, service delivery, and fault management.

“We took some formal courses, worked with Information Builders Professional Services, called the support desk a few times, and monitored the highly useful Focal Point forum,” recalls Shepard. “We also did some self-directed training, and now we are comfortable with the flexibility that WebFOCUS offers.”

Easynet’s first big WebFOCUS project involved building a dashboard to track customer profitability. By combining sales and cost data from eight countries into one continuously updated display, Shepard and his team made it easier for the company to organize and understand vast amounts of information. This dashboard features nearly 70 parameterized reports.

Shepard believes this profitability dashboard will pave the way for better relationships with the organization’s top 200 customers by identifying opportunities to deliver complete network solutions to these corporations, rather than the individual network services that many of them rely on today.

Next up is a service assurance dashboard that will disseminate information – culled from Easynet’s fault-management system and service-delivery program – to about 40 customer service personnel throughout the organization. The initial reports created for this dashboard reveal the average number of day-sales-outstanding across all countries as a gauge of how quickly each

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“As our competence and confidence with WebFOCUS grows, the floodgates are opening and everyone wants a dashboard!”

customer is paying its bills. Other reports compute customer service margins and rate how well Easynet is responding to issues.

“The quicker we can bring in revenue the more it will boost our finances on every level,” Shepard points out. “Clearly, customers with poor margins who pay slowly don’t merit the same level of attention as high-margin, fast-paying customers – at least from a sales point of view.”

This knowledge enables Easynet to identify its top 200 customers and restructure business development activities accordingly, with separate sales efforts for larger and smaller companies. “We’re using BI to identify our most important customer relationships and provide better, more sophisticated services to these customers,” says Shepard.

WebFOCUS combines data from international service histories, profitability reports, fault-management indexes, and the CRM system to create a complete customer hierarchy. “All of these elements are coming together,” continues Shepard. “The service assurance dashboard combines lots of useful information into one intuitive display. As other departments catch wind of the power of analyzing and disseminating information, I predict we will be fielding requests for similar dashboards throughout the enterprise.”

Improving Data Quality to Maximize Results

In the meantime, the team is confronting a related information management challenge: the need to improve data quality and enforce consistent reporting practices.

“If people aren’t using sanctioned data management processes, it means that the data they give you is incomplete,” explains Shepard. “We can’t truly analyze cost and sales data unless we are certain that the information is accurate and in line with company-wide business intelligence standards.”

To achieve this goal, Easynet is instituting enterprise-wide process changes and eliminating the manual processes that lead to information discrepancies. Shepard believes having consistent data-management and reporting practices will enhance efficiency and effectiveness at every level of the business. “Managers can use standard reports to identify faulty data, streamline customer management systems, and offer better services to customers,” he notes.

Additionally, Easynet plans to create WebFOCUS Active Reports to deliver sales reports, route help desk inquiries, and provide service-delivery information to remote offices. For example, daily progress reports will acquaint the international sales team with current margins, receivables, and service issues – so they are always prepared for each call.

“We are still in the early stages of creating reports, dashboards, and other analytical tools,” Shepard admits, “but we will soon have everything we need to maximize our profits and maintain a high level of international success. We have kept a low profile to avoid raising expectations that we could not fulfill. Yet as our competence and confidence with WebFOCUS grows, the floodgates are opening and everyone wants a dashboard!”

“We tell them the keys to success are user commitment, a sound understanding of the data sources, and unwavering data quality to keep everybody on the same page. Once they take care of those issues, we have the BI tools to deliver outstanding results.”

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