

ADVANTIS TECHNOLOGIES



“WE CAN NOW CONDUCT ANALYSIS WE COULD NOT DO BEFORE - AND SEE THINGS WE HAD NOT CONSIDERED BEFORE. COGNOS PERFORMANCE APPLICATIONS WAS A VERY GOOD MATCH BETWEEN WHAT WE WANTED AND WHAT IT DID. ALL THAT AND CASH NEUTRAL IN YEAR ZERO.”

– KEITH LEWIS, VICE-PRESIDENT OF BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT, ADVANTIS TECHNOLOGIES

Advantis Technologies, Inc. manufactures surface water chemicals, pool and spa chemicals, and accessories. Headquartered in Alpharetta, Georgia, the company markets the flagship swimming pool and spa chemical brands GLB Pool & Spa, Leisure Time, Robarb and Applied Biochemists.

With three divisions, three manufacturing plants, over 2,000 branded and private label products, and 20 sales territories, Advantis needed to get a better understanding of its historic and current sales records and their product and customer profitability.

CHALLENGES FACED

In 1995, Advantis consolidated its multiple operational systems resulting from acquisitions into one central J.D. Edwards ERP system. “The transactional system resulted in a good sales history database but it was difficult to extract summary and comparative information,” explains Keith Lewis, Vice-President of Business Development at Advantis. “To generate our management reports, we were re-keying data from J.D. Edwards. Inevitably mistakes were made so instead of interpreting and analyzing our business, a lot of time was wasted figuring out whose numbers were right, and we still could not articulate sales performance by territory.”

Furthermore, because it took two weeks to prepare and send monthly reports to sales managers, the information was always out of date by the time it reached the sales force. “Our sales reps never felt comfortable walking into a customer for an order because orders could have already been placed yesterday or last week,” said Mr. Lewis.

The company investigated a number of options, including hiring a full-time programmer to generate custom reports, but the time required to produce and maintain the reports was prohibitive. Advantis turned to its technology partner, C.D. Group, an EnabledWorlds partner (a Cognos center of excellence focused on providing best-of-breed business intelligence products,

INDUSTRY:

- Manufacturing

GEOGRAPHY:

- US

PLATFORM:

- J.D. Edwards ERP system
- Other transactional and proprietary systems

INFORMATION NEEDS:

- Difficult to extract sales information from ERP system
- Provide timely and accurate sales reports to territory managers
- Streamline custom reporting process

SOLUTION:

- Cognos Performance Applications

BENEFITS:

- Immediate and rapid integration with J.D. Edwards ERP system
- Reduced monthly reporting time from two weeks to two hours
- Improved reporting accuracy



THE NEXT LEVEL OF PERFORMANCE™

services, and information developed exclusively for J.D. Edwards customers) for a solution and they recommended Cognos Performance Applications.

BENEFITS REALIZED

Advantis chose to use Cognos Sales Analysis Performance Application, part of the Performance Applications foundation, which provided a pre-configured information asset to capture the business metrics and reports they needed and more. The Performance Application solution also includes mappings into J.D. Edwards' file structure to speed up implementation, enabling Advantis to leverage pre-defined valuable business reports within the space of one month. "This was a major benefit and our previous experience trying to get this data proves it," said Mr. Lewis.

The monthly reporting process has also improved dramatically allowing Advantis to redeploy a resource to higher value-add activities. Reporting time has been cut from two weeks to two hours and the reports are being distributed twice per month. Instead of mailing bulky reports, they are now emailed to territory managers the same day. And because the reports are based on the transactional records from the ERP system, there are no discrepancies between transactional information and report information. "This has improved accuracy," said Mr. Lewis. "Everyone is working from the same numbers, driving confidence and increased productivity. It has been a good morale booster too because we are more responsive to the salespeople. Receiving near real-time answers to their questions increases their ability to work their territories with confidence. We are giving people the support they need."

As a result of the Sales Performance Application, Advantis has identified opportunities to restructure product offerings and is changing sales force compensation from its historical focus on revenues on a system based on profit margin. "It's something we always thought about doing but discarded before because it was too much work given the reports we had. The data was there but we just couldn't get to it," said Mr. Lewis. Now the company can quickly and easily analyze profitability of products, product types, and customers and uncover the effects of price, cost, volume, and product mix using the packaged reports and the flexibility for ad-hoc queries inherent in the Cognos solution.

"We can now conduct analysis we could not do before – and see things we had not considered before. Cognos Performance Applications was a very good match between what we wanted and what it did. All that and cash neutral in year zero."



WHY COGNOS?

Only Cognos delivers a complete range of integrated, scalable software for corporate performance management. Cognos products let organizations drive performance with enterprise planning and budgeting, monitor it with scorecarding, and understand it with business intelligence reporting and analysis. Founded in 1969, Cognos now serves more than 22,000 customers in over 135 countries.



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