



## JOHNSON OUTDOORS

### IMPROVING BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE REPORTING WITH SAP® BusinessObjects™

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Ron Hamilton, Director of Business Solutions,  
Johnson Outdoors Inc.

#### QUICK FACTS

##### Company

- Name: Johnson Outdoors Inc.
- Location: Racine, Wisconsin
- Industry: Wholesale distribution
- Products and services: Manufacture of outdoor recreational equipment
- Revenue: US\$420 million (2008)
- Employees: 1,500
- Web site: [www.johnsonoutdoors.com](http://www.johnsonoutdoors.com)
- Implementation partner: Andrews Consulting Group

##### Challenges and Opportunities

- Replace a legacy system no longer able to keep up with the business intelligence (BI) demands of a growing company
- Overcome significant data integrity issues in transaction processing
- Provide key business users with self-sufficient access to accurate and timely information with only minimal impact on operational processes
- Present data to accurately portray actual state of business at any given moment

##### Objectives

- Deploy new solution quickly during short off-season window
- Replace legacy system with a solution easily understood and manipulated by business users

##### SAP® Solutions and Services

- SAP® BusinessObjects™ XI solutions
- SAP BusinessObjects Data Integrator, SAP BusinessObjects Desktop Intelligence™, SAP BusinessObjects Web Intelligence®, and Xcelsius® software

##### Implementation Highlights

- Positive prior experience with implementation partner
- Implementation partner’s ability to deliver dependably on promises
- Completion of project within planned time frame

##### Why SAP

- Robust BI functionality with ad hoc and Web-based reporting
- Optimal fit against reporting requirements
- Confidence in industry-leading BI solutions

##### Benefits

- Ability to run reports with integrated, consistently accurate data
- Empowerment of users to be self-sufficient
- Reduced cost of creating reports
- Management of company more effective because of access to accurate reporting

##### Existing Environment

Legacy reporting systems

Founded over 30 years ago, Wisconsin-based Johnson Outdoors Inc. – headquartered in Racine, Wisconsin – is a leading provider of innovative, top-quality recreational products specifically designed for people with a passion for the great outdoors. Johnson Outdoors is responsible for producing many brands that are commonplace names for open-air enthusiasts. The brands include Ocean Kayak, Carlisle Paddles, MinnKota trolling motors, Humminbird Fishfinders, Scubapro diving products, and Eureka! tents.

Despite Johnson Outdoors' innovative and visionary ideas in the world of outdoor recreation, the company's legacy data systems didn't quite measure up to the standards set by its own products. Ron Hamilton, director of business solutions at Johnson Outdoors, elaborates, "Our old reporting application was directly connected to our live systems, with zero replication of data. The problem was that when users tried to run ad hoc reports, they would frequently cause everything to lock up. This resulted in significant data integrity issues with the processing of transactions."

### **Crafting a New Reporting Solution**

This untenable situation clearly had to be addressed, so Hamilton, a business intelligence (BI) industry veteran, crafted a set of requirements for a solution. Any new reporting system would have to impose nominal overhead on the live operational applications, but at the same time it needed to present data that accurately portrayed the actual state of the business at any given moment. Additionally, the solution had to empower business users to feel confi-

dent enough to become self-sufficient in creating custom reports. Hamilton reflects, "Because our businesses are so dynamic, the demands for tailored reports also share the same volatility. The team was constantly being asked to create new reports and amendments to existing routines. It was imperative that any replacement solution be very simple to understand and easily manipulated by our business users."

The new solution had to be deployed quickly and during the off-season. Hamilton explains, "As a seasonal company, we didn't want to impact business during our peak season. However, it was imperative that we implement a new solution as soon as possible, because the legacy system was causing too many problems to the manufacturing process."

### **Confidence in Industry-Leading Solutions**

Drawing on his extensive BI experience, Hamilton selected from the comprehensive SAP® BusinessObjects™ portfolio of solutions to address the company's needs. He recalls, "Our design cen-

tered on the deployment of two industry-leading SAP BusinessObjects solutions – SAP BusinessObjects Data Integrator and SAP BusinessObjects Web Intelligence® software. My faith in SAP BusinessObjects is so high that I literally stood up in front of the chairman of the board and said, 'I guarantee that this will work.' That's how confident I was."

Because of the extremely small window available for deployment before the onslaught of the company's peak season, Johnson Outdoors called on the services of Andrews Consulting Group for implementation assistance. Hamilton notes, "Having worked with Andrews Consulting Group in the past, I knew they could be relied on to deliver exactly what they say they will deliver, within the agreed-to time frame. And they did. We have every major business function now immediately accessible within the SAP BusinessObjects software environment. Our business users range from the customer service managers who run and review daily sales reports to the financial controllers who analyze spending trends from our general ledger reporting mart."

In addition to SAP BusinessObjects Data Integrator and BusinessObjects Web Intelligence, which is used for Web-based query and reporting, Johnson Outdoors uses SAP BusinessObjects XI solutions as its BI platform, SAP BusinessObjects Desktop Intelligence™ software for query and analysis, Xcelsius® software for dashboarding and visualization, and an add-on to SAP BusinessObjects XI for auditing.



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Ron Hamilton, Director of Business Solutions, Johnson Outdoors Inc.

## No More Inconsistent Data

Because Johnson Outdoors' organization is structured around autonomous business units, business rule intelligence was integrated into each of the 12 separate units. By defining which order types make up sales reporting, the BI team was able to incorporate

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into the sales mart predefined filters that are reusable for all reports and by all users. These predefined filters add consistency in reporting, resulting in accurate data query results. Commenting on the improvements, Hamilton says, "Now when we run a consolidated report, we get a real 'apples-to-apples' comparison – we have eradicated the inconsistencies that were due to subtly different data definitions between businesses. The accuracy of the information the company uses to manage the overall business has increased phenomenally."

Because its four major business units are spread across the United States in 10 different locations, Johnson Outdoors benefits from the fact that the Web-based interface makes it easy to support remote users from a centralized location. The company has also streamlined the process of integrating newly acquired business entities. Ham-

ilton explains, "Anytime we roll in a new business unit, from day one they immediately have access to predefined reports. This is a huge benefit, especially when helping users transition from one ERP system to another. Instead of having to develop reports from scratch, they get access to information right away – on day one – cutting out

several days and sometimes weeks of repetitive development time." He adds, "I really like the tiny footprint of SAP BusinessObjects Web Intelligence – it enables us to minimize our support costs by centrally supporting multiple plant locations around the United States and Canada."

## Empowered Users, Lower Reporting Costs

In the 15 months since implementation, in addition to being able to use the library of 300 stock reports built up over that time, the 150 users at Johnson Outdoors have generated 40,000 ad hoc queries – the majority without directly involving the BI team. While most users run predefined reports, Johnson Outdoors also has power users – mostly analytical users within each business function – who define reports according to their own business reporting needs. These power users are able

to develop an entire monthly business process around fiscal reporting time periods. The use of these reports aids in the ongoing daily processes of sourcing, manufacturing, selling, distributing, and collecting revenue for Johnson Outdoors.

"We achieved everything with the SAP BusinessObjects software implementation that we set out to accomplish. We've empowered users to be self-sufficient, offloaded the live production systems to enable them to perform appropriately, and lowered the costs of generating reports," Hamilton concludes. "People now have faith in the timeliness and accuracy of the data they use to make critical business decisions. The SAP BusinessObjects solution delivered exactly what it promised to, and our business users recognize the implementation to be an unqualified success. In fact, I've had zero complaints from my users. When they're happy, I'm happy."

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