KATHOLIEKE UNIVERSITEIT LEUVEN

DEPARTMENTS FALL INTO STEP WITH SAP® BusinessObjects™ PLANNING AND CONSOLIDATION

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Veerle Stallaert, Senior Business Consultant, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven

QUICK FACTS

Company
- Name: Katholieke Universiteit Leuven (KU Leuven)
- Location: Leuven, Belgium
- Industry: Higher education and research
- Products and services: Educational services
- Revenue: €646 million (2008)
- Employees: Over 9,000
- Web site: www.kuleuven.be
- Implementation partner: CFObelux

Challenges and Opportunities
- Coordinate planning of KU Leuven's central services
- Eliminate duplicate work
- Simplify work performed by the central planning department

Objectives
- Integrate planning solution with the SAP® ERP application
- Introduce a single software solution to be used throughout university departments

SAP Solutions and Services
- SAP BusinessObjects™ Planning and Consolidation application, version for the SAP NetWeaver® technology platform

Implementation Highlights
- Released productive software in 2 phases to 2 distinct user groups
- Achieved high user acceptance through skilled, intensive training and preliminary coaching from CFObelux

Why SAP
- Consistent planning software that can be used throughout the university
- Existing customer, using SAP ERP and the SAP NetWeaver technology platform

Benefits
- Simplified support due to use of a single, consistent planning method
- Dramatic time savings for those who evaluated the planning of the groups and central services
- High user adoption through use of familiar Microsoft Excel front-end software
- High productivity due to availability of partially completed forms

Existing Environment
- SAP ERP
- SAP NetWeaver technology platform

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Managing a staff of over 9,000 is tricky. An additional challenge for Katholieke Universiteit Leuven (KU Leuven) in Leuven, Belgium, was managing its semiautonomous departments. Until recently each department applied its own planning methodology, which created a highly complex situation badly in need of a single planning tool to straighten it out. The university chose the SAP® BusinessObjects™ Planning and Consolidation application, version for the SAP NetWeaver® technology platform, which helped simplify matters for the central planning department.

Founded in 1425, KU Leuven is the oldest university in the Low Countries. After a long and turbulent history, the university today ranks as the largest in Belgium, a modern institution with over 38,000 students. Research has been an important focus for the KU Leuven alma mater since the 16th century, a fact that is reflected in the many successful scientific spin-offs the university has inspired.

KU Leuven consists of three groups, each subdivided into departments, faculties, and research groups. Personnel planning is performed independently at each level within the groups, although the university has a core of central services serving the groups. Until 2010 no single software package was in use throughout the organization. This was a particular problem for central services, which had the job of processing the various planning schedules. "All the different planning forms, usually Microsoft Excel files with no consistent subdivisions, had to be manually processed," says Veerle Stallaert, senior business consultant at the university. "This involved duplication of work, and it was logical to switch to one system that could be used by all departments."

Building on the Existing System

KU Leuven relies on the SAP ERP application to manage its entire human resource policy. The decision to use the SAP BusinessObjects Planning and Consolidation application was logical. "It was crucial for us to have the SAP NetWeaver version of software, because our enterprise resource planning software also runs on that platform," explains Stallaert. "By having both solutions in the same environment, we can create a direct link and share data."

KU Leuven already had sufficient experience with SAP ERP and the SAP NetWeaver technology platform, but SAP BusinessObjects Planning and Consolidation was unknown territory for the university. It therefore called on a consultancy partner. "CFObelux was able to convince us of their qualities at our very first meeting," says Stallaert. "They were clearly experienced with SAP BusinessObjects Planning and Consolidation. We therefore chose to perform the whole implementation in-house, coached by a consultant from CFObelux. Looking back, this was definitely the right decision."

SAP NetWeaver Enables In-House Developments

The project started in September 2009 with an analysis of the situation and an outline of the project plan. A consultant from CFObelux came one day a week to coach. Stallaert remembers, "This allowed us to do our own thing, but at the same time we were able to fall back on someone with a thorough knowledge of SAP BusinessObjects Planning and Consolidation. We were thus able to develop a number of important functions, which were not included in the standard planning tool, particularly data sharing between SAP BusinessObjects Planning and Consolidation and SAP ERP."

The university implemented special modules for the use of hierarchies, planning future personnel, and managing authorizations. It also developed functionality for proposing a plan based on human resources information for each personnel member. "This meant that users no longer needed to start from scratch each time," points out Stallaert. "This was very much appreciated."

Central services started using the tool in June 2010 following an intensive internal testing phase. With the help of the detailed manual produced by the IT department, this initial productive phase went very well. The second

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phase, when the functionality was made accessible to the groups, began just a few months later in October 2010. "At the moment the departments don't have to use the tool," Stallaert remarks. "Those who use SAP BusinessObjects Planning and Consolidation do so on their own initiative."

"Once all our central services use SAP BusinessObjects Planning and Consolidation, I expect that the evaluators will need only half the time for planning," observes Stallaert. "At the same time, the data will be better. Generating reports will become much easier thanks to premade templates, and that will make it easier to monitor the plans."

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The university expects the growth in the number of users to be gradual, because each faculty follows its own calendar and each has a different time frame for when switching over to the software would be most logical. Nevertheless, there is no doubt that in the long term the aim is to implement this method as the standard throughout the university.

Anticipated Time Gain of 50%

"Obviously, the fact that SAP BusinessObjects Planning and Consolidation uses Microsoft Excel to input data is an advantage," says Stallaert. "This ensures that the change is not too drastic." The university expects that the evaluators will benefit the most from SAP BusinessObjects Planning and Consolidation in terms of time gain. However, once everyone has become familiar with the software and everything is running smoothly, the university expects that the time needed to process planning will be halved.

Was it a problem-free launch? "No, not completely," says Stallaert. "The start-up procedure via the Windows terminal server is laborious, and performance can be further optimized. In this respect, we expect some additional assistance from SAP."

Future Plans

KU Leuven is planning several future projects in which the potential role of SAP will be investigated. An implementation procedure based on SAP BusinessObjects Planning and Consolidation and focused on the general policy budget has already been started. KU Leuven has also decided to entrust all the consultancy relating to this software to CFObelux for a period of three years.

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