SOFTCHOICE CORPORATION

GAINING AN ANALYTIC ADVANTAGE WITH SAP® BUSINESSOBJECTS™

QUICK FACTS

Industry
Professional services – IT service providers

Revenue
CAN$1 billion

Employees
950

Headquarters
Toronto, Canada

Web Site
www.softchoice.com

SAP® Solutions and Services
SAP® BusinessObjects™ Business Intelligence platform, SAP BusinessObjects Web Intelligence® software

Implementation Partner
First Spike Inc.

With sales data residing in multiple sources, and with no unified aggregation and analysis tools, IT reseller Softchoice Corporation was having trouble getting an accurate picture of how much business it was doing with any given customer. To eliminate its data dilemma, the company implemented SAP® BusinessObjects™ solutions to improve sales reporting and to enable better decision making.

Key Challenges

- Increase market share; build better vendor and service partnerships
- Gain better insight into customer trends and IT needs via enhanced business intelligence tools
- Aggregate sales data from multiple sources to create a single version of the truth
- Reduce time and effort needed to produce sales reports
- Gain a better understanding of sales performance

Why SAP Was Selected

- Comprehensive reporting and analysis tools
- Usability of software
- Compelling product road map
- Ease of integration with SAP® software and other SAP BusinessObjects™ solutions

Implementation Best Practices

- Completed project in 10 months
- Teamed IT experts and business analysts to maintain focus on objectives
- Targeted user base of 500 sales and marketing professionals

Low Total Cost of Ownership

- Minimized IT effort needed to design and build reports
- Simplified integration to data source systems
- Offset initial IT investment and reduced overall total cost of ownership by using standard software

Financial and Strategic Benefits

- Enhanced revenue potential by improving sales-force productivity
- Enabled better decision making via more accurate, timely reports
- Strengthened partner relationships
- Improved ability to take advantage of M&A opportunities
- Enabled a more unified strategy via consistent information

Operational Benefits

- Reduced time needed to produce monthly sales performance reports by 80%
- Gained a common view of the business via standardized operating definitions and key performance indicators
- Redeployed 6 IT people to more value-added activities
- Accelerated reporting (hours versus days), boosting analysts' productivity
- Reduced sales administrative tasks for generating reports by 30% to 50%

"SAP BusinessObjects solutions help our sales and business development organizations make better decisions – thanks to improved analytical insight that's based on timely information."

James Corless, Head of Business Intelligence, Softchoice Corporation

www.sap.com/contactsap

With more than 40 branch offices across the United States and Canada, Softchoice Corporation works closely with technology vendors to meet the needs of more than 15,000 clients. However, to move beyond its reseller roots and become a one-stop IT shop, the company needed to put current, accurate sales data in the hands of its decision makers.

Data Rich – Information Poor

Like many companies, Softchoice was having trouble pulling data from multiple sources and producing timely reports. "We had a team dedicated exclusively to advanced analysis and ad hoc reporting," says James Corless, head of business intelligence (BI) at Softchoice. "They had to manually extract and cleanse data from source systems and then aggregate it using spreadsheets. The process was time-consuming, and it didn't provide results our people could trust."

To help solve this dilemma, Toronto-based Softchoice chose SAP® BusinessObjects™ solutions. "The software provided superior usability in all areas," says Corless, "and it gave us the reporting, dashboards, and ad-hoc analysis tools we needed." Softchoice was also impressed with SAP's overall product portfolio and the high level of integration between SAP BusinessObjects and other SAP software.

A Better BI Platform

With help from systems integrator, First Spike Inc., Softchoice deployed the SAP BusinessObjects BI platform and SAP BusinessObjects Web Intelligence® software. The targeted user base included some 500 people in sales, marketing, and business development. Integrating data on sales, customers, product lines, and vendors took some effort, but the team brought the project in on time and within budget.

After deploying the solutions, Softchoice experienced a dramatic improvement in sales performance reporting. "We can now provide a holistic, timely view of sales," says Corless. "Previously, we were waiting a few days after each monthly or quarterly close to report to our sales organization on how they performed. Now we can do it in just a few hours after close of business."

Productivity has also improved in other areas of the company. For example, sales people used to spend a substantial amount of time processing data to create reports. Now, they can do it 30% to 50% faster, leaving more time for customer-facing activities. Similarly, a group of six IT professionals, who had been doing manual data translation tasks, have been reassigned to value-adding jobs as data modelers, report developers, and business analysts.

A Unified View of the Business

Softchoice also uses SAP BusinessObjects to standardize many operating definitions and key performance indicators – enabling the company to make more informed decisions. And, with an enhanced ability to identify customer trends and profitable products, Softchoice is better able to pinpoint revenue opportunities. Equally important, improved information management makes Softchoice a stronger player in the M&A arena because the company is better equipped to integrate and analyze significant amounts of newly acquired sales data.

Another benefit of improved BI: stronger relationships with vendors. Armed with current data, the company can now give partners up-to-date reports on sales performance. "Our data wasn't always timely, nor was it always in the format our vendors wanted," says Corless. "Today, we're a lot easier to do business with, and that leads to more opportunities."

Looking ahead, Softchoice is planning to roll out reporting and analysis tools to purchasing, procurement, and supply chain teams. Overall, Corless is pleased with the implementation: "With SAP BusinessObjects we can now deliver consistent, timely information – and that is key to creating a focused team and ensuring better alignment company-wide."

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