STRATEGIS

SAP® CRYSTAL DASHBOARD DESIGN HELPS A GREAT SMALL COMPANY LOOK EVEN BETTER

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Hans Schevers, Partner, StrateGis Groep BV

QUICK FACTS

Company
- Name: StrateGis Groep BV
- Location: Utrecht, The Netherlands
- Industry: Engineering, construction, and operations
- Products and services: Financial and sustainability assessment for urban development
- Employees: 5
- Web site: www.strategis.nl

Challenges and Opportunities
- Win more business by impressing potential clients during sales presentations
- Promote company expertise online
- Maintain control over existing calculation models

Objectives
- Add value to existing software
- Quickly develop visually powerful dashboards
- Enable users to intuitively manipulate parameters for urban development cost-estimation projects
- Hide Microsoft Excel–based calculation models from end users

SAP® Solutions and Services
SAP® Crystal Dashboard Design software

Implementation Highlights
- Downloaded evaluation version of software over the Web
- Imported existing calculation model and built first dashboard in under 2 hours

Why SAP
- Leading solution available on the market
- Ease of use
- Ability to reuse existing calculation models

Benefits
- More business due to more effective presentations
- Faster planning cycles with ability to run through multiple cost scenarios quickly
- Positive company image thanks to visually attractive online dashboards that serve as effective promotional tools
- More control over calculation models with ability to hide Excel-based functionality from end users
- Increased market value for internally developed software

StrateGis | Groep

To get an urban development project off the ground, you have to know the costs ahead of time so that all parties involved can plan accordingly. This is where StrateGis Groep BV, a young Dutch company based in Utrecht, comes into play. This company uses sophisticated calculation models and its own 3-D building software to generate accurate project cost estimates. To augment its software with visually attractive dashboards, StrateGis uses SAP® Crystal Dashboard Design software. This helps the company impress its clients and win more business.

Best Face to the Customer

As a small company with just five employees, StrateGis needs to make the most out of all of its assets. Next to its people, the company's biggest asset is the StrateGis Urban Developer solution. The company touts the solution on its Web site as "the world's first interactive 3-D software that links complete urban development designs to sound financial and sustainability calculation models."

Much of the value of the software can be attributed to the calculation models that allow StrateGis and its clients to manipulate parameters for key aspects of an urban development project. These can include land use, building costs, revenues, parking space, energy use, water management, and much more. By attributing cost to each area of a proposed project, StrateGis can quickly generate an amazingly accurate estimate for the end-to-end project. This helps to speed the front end of the planning process while controlling up-front costs and improving the overall quality of the plan.

Because it delivers a visual representation of a proposed project, StrateGis likes to put Urban Developer in front of potential clients to demonstrate what the solution can do. However, StrateGis used Microsoft Excel as the original interface for entering and manipulating parameters. This lacked the visual attractiveness that the company desired. Ideally, StrateGis wanted an interface that matched the visual quality of the rest of the solution.

The company also faced a related problem – maintaining control over plans generated using its software. Because Urban Developer was used in conjunction with Microsoft Excel, users throughout the process had direct access to the calculation models. This allowed any party involved in the process to make changes – which could easily wreak havoc if not strictly controlled.

Download and Done

To help address these issues, StrateGis decided to use SAP Crystal Dashboard Design – which enables users to quickly create business dashboards and data presentations from spreadsheets and corporate databases.

"We wanted something that would really add to the look and feel of our existing offering," says Hans Schevers, partner at StrateGis. "SAP Crystal Dashboard Design was by far the best solution out there."

After coming across SAP Crystal Dashboard Design, Schevers downloaded an evaluation version and imported one of StrateGis's existing calculation models. This trial run demonstrated how the software works with Excel-based models and convinced the company to move forward.

"Within a couple of hours," Schevers reports, "we were up and running with new dashboards that added a dramati-

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The Look and Feel of Success

Since adopting SAP Crystal Dashboard Design, StrateGis has created multiple dashboards. One dashboard for Urban Developer serves as an overview interface for calculating total project costs. This includes parameters that range from land acquisition cost to demolition cost for existing buildings on the acquired land.

Other dashboards drill down to focus on specific aspects of the project. One, for example, allows users to estimate the costs of specific buildings. Still another focuses on the exploitation of rental dwellings. This helps developers make informed decisions about what type of structures to build based on criteria such as local income averages, rental demand, and family size.

"When we use this software with our customers," says Schevers, "it helps them make decisions quickly. They can run through multiple scenarios in just minutes. This helps us serve our customers better."

StrateGis has also created stand-alone dashboards that work independently of Urban Developer. One of these dashboards, serving as a promotional tool on the StrateGis Web site, works with Google Maps to provide a quick calculation of land use values in the Netherlands. Users simply type in a Dutch zip code and Google Maps returns the relevant map, complete with average house prices for the area. Next, users drill down further by drawing a polygon for the targeted plot of land to be researched. From there, they enter the cost parameters for multiple structures (residential housing, industrial property, and so on) and receive a cost estimate.

"It's not designed for real-world scenarios," says Schevers, "but it gives potential clients an approximate figure. More important, it helps us give the world a taste of what we can do as a company. This helps us build our client base and generate a positive company image."

"SAP Crystal Dashboard Design keeps our calculation models intact. Nobody can make a change without our consent. This enforces standardization, centralizes control, and ultimately helps to minimize project risk."

Hans Schevers, Partner, StrateGis Groep BV

More Control, Less Risk

Another benefit that StrateGis receives from SAP Crystal Dashboard Design is the fact that it hides the underlying calculation model from the other participants in the planning process. This helps maintain control throughout the early stages of the project.

In the past, StrateGis had trouble with people changing existing models in the middle of the planning process. While modification may be justified, changes could be made without coordinating with other participants in the process. This can create a lot of confusion.

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New Directions

Based on its success thus far, StrateGis is making plans to sell its Urban Developer software to local municipal authorities and commercial developers who find it useful. One of the selling points of the software is the interactive dashboards made possible with SAP Crystal Dashboard Design.

"It all comes down to meeting customer needs," says Schevers. "With SAP Crystal Dashboard Design, we're able to meet those needs more effectively. The software gives us a look and feel that we're excited to share with our customers. It helps put our company in the best possible light and, in the end, helps us land more business."

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