SAP BusinessObjects™

SAP Customer Success Story
Retail

MAJID AL FUTTAIM RETAIL

SAP® BUSINESSOBJECTS™ SOFTWARE DELIVERS NEW DATA-HANDLING SPEED AND CONVENIENCE

"ROI information is now available to management much more quickly and is very accurate and dependable. Sales, stock, and customer KPIs are now available daily, with consolidation at management levels. And this is as early as 7:30 in the morning."

Shahrukh Dastur, Business Analytics Manager, Majid Al Futtain Retail LLC

QUICK FACTS

Company
- Name: Majid Al Futtain Retail LLC
- Location: Dubai, United Arab Emirates
- Industry: Retail
- Products and services: Consumer products
- Employees: 13,000
- Web site: www.carrefourme.com
- Implementation partner: SAP® Consulting

Challenges and Opportunities
- Rationalize available information
- Develop better security around data
- Establish single version of the truth
- Reduce or eliminate manual data handling

Objectives
- Establish a centralized financial consolidation system
- Develop a business analytics module facilitating ad hoc querying and analysis
- Provide for easy integration with JD Edwards enterprise resource planning (ERP) transaction software
- Distribute subconsolidation functionality at multiple levels
- Circulate a corporate dashboard with predefined key performance indicators (KPIs) reported periodically
- Institute secure, centralized administration of a unified database, with acceptable performance over a WAN
- Ensure software scalability

SAP Solutions and Services
- SAP BusinessObjects™ Financial Consolidation application
- SAP BusinessObjects business intelligence (BI) solutions

Implementation Highlights
- Phased implementation
- Migration and rollout in 3 months
- Pioneering integration of SAP BusinessObjects Financial Consolidation with SAP BusinessObjects BI solutions for ad hoc data analysis

Why SAP
- Cost, reputation, and long-term commitment
- Software maintenance and support
- Availability of local consulting
- Ease of use, scalability over a WAN, and volume data-handling performance

Benefits
- Faster and more accurate information; daily compilation time reduced from 3 hours at unit level to 15 minutes centrally
- Sales, stock, and customer KPIs available on a daily basis, with consolidation at management levels
- Single version of the truth
- Faster reporting; no dependency on manual processes to deliver results
- KPIs available even on weekends and holidays

Third-Party Integration
JD Edwards ERP software

MAJID AL FUTTAIM
RETAIL

Majid Al Futtaim (MAF) Retail LLC has succeeded in the retail shopping sector of the Middle East and North Africa. To improve on efficiency, the company needed faster and more automated access to analysis of company-wide information. MAF Retail chose the SAP® BusinessObjects™ Financial Consolidation application and SAP BusinessObjects business intelligence (BI) solutions to meet its requirements – with the scalability to accommodate further growth.

Headquartered in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, MAF Retail began operation in 1995 doing business under the name MAF Hypermarkets and was the first to bring the concept of the shopping mall and hypermarket – the "big box" retail store – to the region. A joint venture of Carrefour France and Majid al Futtaim LLC, MAF Retail stocks 100,000 items. Its first store opened in the prestigious Deira City Center Mall in Dubai. Currently the company operates 38 hypermarkets and more than 15 express supermarkets and employs over 13,000 people from more than 50 different nationalities in 11 countries.

Growth with Challenges

While every organization strives for rational growth, challenges will inevitably arise as the desired growth materializes. MAF Retail was no exception. "In 2006 we realized we had too much information, and it was too scattered about to make it conveniently accessible," recalls Shahrukh Dastur, business analytics manager at MAF Retail. In addition to financial consolidation and data reporting issues, there were security concerns with the information, and no single version of the truth was available throughout the organization.

"That's when we began to develop a project to remedy this situation," says Piotr Figarski, general manager of retail financial control at MAF Retail. From the discussions that ensued, multiple objectives came into view:

- Establish a centralized financial consolidation system with a business analytics module facilitating ad hoc querying and analysis
- Provide for easy integration with JD Edwards enterprise resource planning (ERP) transaction software
- Distribute subconsolidation functionality at multiple levels throughout the organization
- Circulate a corporate dashboard with predefined key performance indicators (KPIs) to be reported periodically
- Institute secure and centralized administration of a unified database, with acceptable performance over a WAN
- Ensure that the selected software would be scalable with the growth and diversification of the business

MAF Retail then undertook a market survey to determine which vendor's products would best meet these objectives. Software from several other vendors and SAP BusinessObjects Financial Consolidation were all evaluated. Selection criteria included such concerns as cost, reputation, long-term commitment, software maintenance and support, and availability of local consulting. Proof-of-concept trials were performed, with particular emphasis on the learning curve and ease of use, scalability, and volume data-handling performance over a WAN.

Single-Platform Access

Ultimately, MAF Retail selected SAP BusinessObjects Financial Consolidation and SAP BusinessObjects BI solutions, the latter for their data-handling and analysis functionality. The financial software was implemented in three phases, beginning with migration from a stand-alone consolidation system. "We rolled out the financial software in just three months," says Dastur, "because it was essentially an out-of-the-box implementation." This was followed by another 12 to 18 months of phased revamping of the chart of accounts, upgrade and automation of existing reports, and enhancement of financial consolidation processes. The final phase saw the deployment of financial data to business intelligence software for ad hoc analysis. This software currently has over 100 users.

The SAP BusinessObjects BI solutions MAF Retail selected – SAP BusinessObjects Data Integrator software, SAP BusinessObjects Web Intelligence® Interactive Viewing software, and software for performance and dashboard management – were also piloted for three months and then rolled out across the region in six to nine months. In two years the user base has grown from 80 to over 500. What helps make MAF Retail so successful is this tight

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Piotr Figarski, General Manager, Retail Financial Control, Majid Al Futtaim Retail LLC

integration of the financial consolidation software with business intelligence software. MAF Retail is one of the first companies to enjoy this integration, which provides single-platform access to all the information in the organization.

"Both SAP BusinessObjects Financial Consolidation and SAP BusinessObjects BI implementations were 100% successful in terms of deliverables, timeline, budget, and acceptability," says Figarski. "Subsequently, we have found that the subconsolidation functionality of the financials software was a big hit with the users."

"Certainly we can identify SAP BusinessObjects Web Intelligence software as a technical solution that is helping users to get all the information they want when they want it, the way that they want it."

Shahrukh Dastur, Business Analytics Manager, Majid Al Futtaim Retail LLC

From 3 Hours to 10–15 Minutes

"In the past, we were compiling our daily information manually, and it would take some three hours," says Dastur. "With the SAP BusinessObjects BI platform, it takes us about 10 to 15 minutes, and it's completely automated. Distribution of the dashboard is almost instantaneous."

Implementation of SAP BusinessObjects analytic solutions allowed MAF Retail to eliminate Microsoft Excel spreadsheets entirely. "These solutions provide us with the single version of the truth that was one of our objectives at the outset," says Dastur. "Our daily KPI dashboard seems also to be a big hit with the users, especially with the operating part of the company. And our business analysis department was the biggest beneficiary, with information now available at its fingertips."

The effects of this implementation continue to manifest themselves throughout the organization. The new financial and analytical software is now facilitating a much faster business decision-making process inside MAF Retail. Tools provided by these solutions have enabled improvements in the organization and structure of the reporting and analysis processes. "We now have common reporting packs for all countries," says Figarski. "And we have achieved accurate and timely reporting, which was possible before but much more difficult to achieve, requiring much more staff and time. The new solution assists in faster financial closing and daily KPI reporting and analysis to all operational management."

"ROI information is now available to management much more quickly and is very accurate and dependable," adds Dastur. "Sales, stock, and customer KPIs are now available daily, with consolidation at management levels. And this is as early as 7:30 in the morning, where previously we had to wait until 11 or 12 o'clock to get the results consolidated. And of course, on weekends – forget it."

With its operational data now integrated across the organization, MAF Retail now spends less time preparing analyses; more time can consequently be spent on qualitative functionality. "Certainly we can identify SAP BusinessObjects Web Intelligence software as a technical solution that is helping users to get all the information they want when they want it, the way that they want it," Dastur notes.

MAF Retail is not resting on its laurels. For 2010, management is planning to implement the dashboard functionality of SAP BusinessObjects Xcelsius® Enterprise software. The company also intends to implement a planning module. "We are in the process of establishing more cross-industry data warehouses to complete our data accessibility project," says Dastur. "We are well along with that and expect to have it completed within the next two years."

To wrap it up, Dastur cites the efficiency gains. "The SAP BusinessObjects solutions have definitely provided us with the ability to improve our efficiency," he says. "And we feel fortunate to have had access here in the UAE to the level of competence provided by SAP Consulting services."

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