









Organization

Vision

Why SAP

Implementation

Solution

**Benefits** 

**Future** 

### Organization

Áreas S.A.

### Industry

Restaurants and Retail

#### **Products and Services**

**Traveller Services** 

#### Web

www.areas.es

#### **SAP Solutions and Services**

SAP Crystal Server including SAP Crystal Reports



The diversity of business lines focused on delivering services to travellers, combined with the international presence in nine countries, where we manage more than 1.260 retail and catering outlets, implies for Áreas the challenge to provide and make available all the information that will subsequently be used to generate meaningful reports about the business. SAP's solutions in this area have provided our Organization with a high degree of autonomy.

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### 40 years of experience and leadership

While the company was born in 1968 as an undertaking operating service stops in highways in Catalonia, Áreas has evolved as a company to deliver a comprehensive, professional and top-quality service to travellers through their roadside retail and catering outlets. As such, in 1975 the company expanded its footprint and business lines in service stops, restaurants and catering, hotels and roadside service stations.

Ten years after the foundation of company, the Organization launched an extensive acquisitions programme that led to the purchase of General de Restaurantes, Serausa, Atasa, Multimarca, Carmen la comida de España, the catering business of Elior, Unitrato, Estagest, Food Port, Arco and Aerocomidas, among others.

Nowadays, the firm has become a multinational company serving more than 150 million customers, with a workforce operating 1,267 restaurants, coffee shops, outlets, hotels and gas stations located at population centres and communication routes of great relevance for travellers, such as airports, motorways, highways, train stations, shopping centres and exhibition grounds. The group is present in nine countries: Spain, Mexico, United States, Portugal, Chile, Morocco, Argentina, Dominican Republic and St Martin.

Areas´ corporate background is defined by its ability to capitalize a background of know-how and experience that has empowered the group with the necessary flexibility to undertake new projects and put up with the changing market conditions.

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## Centralized management of the business framework

One of Areas´ key values is its commitment to innovation, a business philosophy that is materialized in a proactive search approach and in its ability to implement best practices, processes, products, equipment and technology bringing growth, refinement, optimization and continuous improvement throughout the Organization.

In fulfilling this commitment, Areas' IT department faces a big challenge: being able to deliver timely and suitable solutions to the different business lines making up the group, from franchisees to inhouse developments, both in the catering and retail businesses. And doing so in a centralized manner, since this department is located in Barcelona, from where they deliver services not only to Spain, but also to the group's business operations in the nine countries where it is present.

Therefore, every day, the IT department must analyse and cope with an astonishing demand for support, while serving users with solutions enabling to optimize business operations. They are focused on providing tools that are versatile and flexible enough to meet the needs of the myriad of projects the company is putting in place: marketing campaigns, different solutions for product launches, etc., which are constantly changing according to the activity, the weather, or even the country.

The ability to look up and analyse information from any place and at any time is essential for the group's ability to take decisions affecting the business, an area for which the Spanish multinational has trusted SAP's business intelligence solutions.

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### A broadly supported standard

The group's business management operations are handled using a bespoke ERP system developed by Indra, and an accounting solution from Lawson Software, which have been meeting their needs so far. These solutions were perfectly complemented by SAP's business intelligence tools, trusted by the company to deliver users with a wide array of reports that cross-link information from their different systems, and act as a bridge or single point of access to their data warehouse.

After a thorough analysis of the products available in the market, Áreas opted for SAP because of its recognition as the market standard and its strong evolution potential. In fact, the functionality provided by SAP BusinessObjects, initially, and now SAP Crystal Server –the latest solution deployed by the company, which included SAP Crystal Reports–, provided a substantial added value to the company, by enabling users to easily and intuitively access the information, generate reports and share them in a secure manner.

Another criterion that influenced the decision was the broad customer base of this solution, which facilitated the selection of a technological partner, in this case Certia, since they bring over 15 years of experience with SAP Crystal solutions.

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# Gradual implementation of the reporting capability

In order to provide the Organization with improved visibility into all the information available in their systems, and enable users to retrieve and analyse, on a self-service basis, the data they require for their daily work, Áreas' IT department, in cooperation with Certia, launched a project aimed at deploying a business intelligence solution.

Once the product was purchased, the joint team conducted an initial definition phase, lasting six months and covering the configuration and programming work required to tailor it to the needs and enable users to generate reports on a self-service basis. Later on, a second phase was started where the performance of the tool was measured by generating reports in an stepwise fashion. Initially, about 20 to 50 reports were generated, but, once the structure was completed, the organization speeded up and, as of today, it has an inventory of 300 reports.

SAP Crystal Server runs on HP servers virtualized with Microsoft Windows Server 2008 as the operating system, and the Microsoft SQL Server, Oracle and mySQL databases. The tool is used by the financial, technical, marketing, procurement, sales and human resources departments, and serves 1,000 users in the corporate headquarters, at the points of sale, where it is mainly used by the outlet managers, as well as third parties such as partners, providers and franchisees, accessing the system through a web portal.

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### Interactive and automated reports

With the support of Certia, Áreas has tailored SAP Crystal Server to turn it into a multi-company, multi-environment and multi-language tool which, by enabling to automatically generate interactive reports, has made it possible to release the IT department from the burden of delivering ad-hoc reports on demand to each user. Now, reports are created beforehand with rich format and connected to all data sources. This degree of interactivity enables business users to manipulate data and reduces the number of reports required to be managed by the IT staff.

Additionally, in terms of information storage, this solution from SAP has provided the multinational company with a strong foundation for information access and analysis, by making it possible to collect, store, transform and manage data in an scalable, flexible and agile data warehouse, thus enabling the company to quickly analyse the evolution of its operations and take informed decisions in a consistent and agile manner, while consolidating the information throughout the organization.

"What matters most is that internal customers benefit from a degree of autonomy that they did not enjoye before in terms of information lookup and analysis. The IS department has removed the reporting backlog, since users now fulfil their data needs on their own on a fully self-service basis".

Eduard Pascual. IT Demand Manager. Information Systems Department.

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# Improving service without using more resources

The Return on Investment is not easy to measure for Áreas. However, thanks to these tools, and despite the growth and expansion experienced by the company, the IT department has managed to deliver a better service without having to allocate more resources to ensure a smooth flow and distribution of the most valuable information across the corporate group.

In addition to empowering users with greater autonomy in accessing information and generating reports, the company has attained its main objective: increasing the visibility of the information held in their systems that can be useful the business.

Equally remarkable is that it has provided partners, customers and franchisees with the ability to look up the purchases and sales figures, and, in summary, their evolution, in a quick, reliable, simple and graphical fashion. This represents an added value for the public calls for tenders the Organization takes part in.

However, the benefits do not end there. It has also allowed to:

- Simplify information lookup from any data source, through a user-friendly browsing mechanism.
- Fully exploiting the ability to automatically generate professional-looking reports that, in addition, can be customized by the user.
- Saving time in report design.
- Delivering reports to a dynamic list of recipients.
- Enabling the end user to explore reports by adjusting parameters.
- Releasing IT resources that can now be allocated to other key tasks.

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# Moving forward with SAP Dashboard Design

What started out as an initiative aimed at furnishing the Organization with a system enabling to improve the visibility of the information held in their systems has resulted in a close relationship with SAP and a project that continues to grow, thanks to the broad array of functionalities that the vendor's solutions deliver in this area.

Thus, after the deployment of the business intelligence suite and SAP Crystal Server as a solution providing intuitive, easy and self-service access to the information to generate reports and analyse data, the next step will be the deployment of SAP Crystal Dashboard Design. This solution will bring more interactive and impressive dashboards, and enable to create corporate dashboards and data presentations from corporate databases and spreadsheets, in addition to sharing them in real time via SAP Crystal Reports, Microsoft Office, Adobe PDF and the Web.

This will provide Áreas with a broader and global perspective on the performance of the company.

