SAP BusinessObjects™

SAP Customer Success Story
Automotive

A RAYMOND NETWORK
PILOTING GROWTH WITH ADVANCED PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT SOFTWARE

"With the implementation of the SAP BusinessObjects Planning and Consolidation application, we laid the foundation for a global business intelligence project."

Marie-Thérèse King, Business Division Manager, Raynet, Division of A Raymond Network

QUICK FACTS

Company
- Name: A Raymond Network
- Location: Grenoble, France
- Industry: Automotive
- Products and services: Fastening solutions and fluid connectivity
- Revenue: US$188 million
- Employees: 800
- Web site: www.araymond.com
- Implementation partner: Alti

Challenges and Opportunities
- Meet more complex requirements for management reporting despite continuous business growth
- Consolidate and harmonize heterogeneous financial information coming in from different countries
- Accelerate monthly closing process while maintaining compliance with regulations concerning operational reporting

Objectives
- Improve data quality
- Introduce performance tools to maintain productivity
- Perform detailed operational reporting with greater efficiency

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

Implementation Highlights
Went live in 5 months for 30 users

Why SAP
- Software with potential to support multiple currencies
- Integration potential with SAP software and non-SAP software for direct access to a comprehensive range of corporate data

Benefits
- Time savings through automated processes
- Centralized information
- More reliable data and increased security of reporting processes
- Faster, detailed operational reporting
- Reduced amount of manual tasks, allowing staff to concentrate on value-adding tasks such as detailed analysis
- Management information based on reliable data from a central source

Existing Environment
SAP ERP application

Third-Party Integration
- Hardware: HP
- Operating system: Oracle

Raynet

Since its inception in 1865, innovation has inspired A Raymond Network and fueled its business expansion. Regarded by many as the inventor of fastening solutions, A Raymond has grown rapidly in recent years through mergers, affiliations, and acquisitions. With some 50 corporations throughout Europe, Asia, and America currently in the group, A Raymond had to optimize the productivity of its teams. To realize this, it decided to deploy the SAP® BusinessObjects™ Planning and Consolidation application.

Founded in Grenoble, France, the family business has grown and advanced to become a leading expert in fastening solutions and fluid connectivity for the automotive industry. As A Raymond expanded, it steadily developed its information systems to support the business of the entire group. The work was performed by the Raynet business division, responsible for IT throughout the group. Division director Marie-Thérèse King remembers the impact the first deployment of the SAP ERP application had on A Raymond in France in 1999. "The success of the SAP ERP initiative motivated the company to embark upon a wide rollout to the affiliates in Europe, then to the United States," recalls King.

Complex Reporting Requirements with Focus on Compliance

As the company continued to grow, the group's reporting requirements became increasingly complex. Yet, the company was still gathering data for its financial reports in Microsoft Excel spreadsheets, with each country submitting its data in a different format. At the end of every month, effort peaked as the financial accounting team bent to the task of manually aggregating, correcting, and revising the data submitted in those spreadsheets. "While this process might be manageable for a small or midsize enterprise, we had become a large and diverse group. As a consequence, the month-end process was tedious work, a drain on resources, and a source of potential error and risk to the business," reflects King. "Also, we were in danger of noncompliance with the regulations surrounding detailed operational reporting." To keep productivity up to its normally high standards, A Raymond knew it had to invest in performance tools.

Centralized Financial Information

Well acquainted with the business intelligence solutions on the market, King chose to introduce SAP BusinessObjects software to underpin A Raymond's information management strategy. To accelerate the monthly closing process, the company also decided to deploy the SAP BusinessObjects Planning and Consolidation application for a number of its affiliates. The solution is available as a version for the SAP NetWeaver® technology platform and a version for the Microsoft platform, and A Raymond installed the version for SAP NetWeaver. To implement the solution, it selected implementation partner Alti to work in close collaboration with consultants at Raynet.

At the outset of the project, the team implemented a centralized data warehouse based on the SAP NetWeaver Business Warehouse component to store the group's financial data for use by SAP BusinessObjects Planning and Consolidation. However, as the project progressed through its early stages, the project team seized the opportunity to widen its scope. Initially intended for rollout to 30 affiliates, it quickly became apparent that all 49 companies in the group could be included, whether or not they were using SAP ERP. Accordingly, approximately 30 templates were developed for profit and loss reporting, and the team added reporting processes to extend the company's reporting capability to include investment management, revenue, and cash flow. "Thanks to an effective collaboration between A Raymond, Raynet, and Alti, the project unfolded smoothly and took only five months to complete – on time and within budget," confirms King.

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Accelerated Reporting and Immediate Time Savings

After an internal transfer of knowledge, the new solution's 30 users were able to work efficiently and confidently with the software. Benefits were as quickly realized. Relieved of time-consuming manual reconciliations, the financial team was able to produce the monthly group financial report much more quickly, freeing them up to perform value-added tasks such as detailed analysis. Ad hoc reporting is swifter and more accurate. Budget control has been greatly improved. The group's management information is now based on reliable data from a central source. The financial team can analyze, understand, and plan much better. In addition, the integration with SAP ERP and non-SAP software, based on the SAP NetWeaver technology platform, gives staff access to a comprehensive range of information with a simple mouse click.

Other benefits abound, including a much easier life for the controlling team. The reporting process is more reliable due to additional controls and the automation of tasks that were previously performed manually. Business users are empowered to take ownership of business processes, with the means to modify business processes themselves when and where necessary – without IT assistance.

Needless to say, the new software has been well received across the business group. "The combination of the solid knowledge of the business user and the intuitive character of the SAP BusinessObjects software allowed us to manage the change very simply," declares King.

The successful adoption of the SAP BusinessObjects Planning and Consolidation application and its integration on the SAP NetWeaver technology platform has given King a springboard from which to launch the next phase of the group's information management strategy. To realize this, she looks forward to acquiring additional SAP BusinessObjects solutions for the group. "Our most immediate objective is the deployment of the SAP BusinessObjects Strategy Management application, SAP BusinessObjects Web Intelligence® software, and SAP BusinessObjects Dashboards software," concludes King.

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www.sap.com/contactsap

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