

Inter-American Development Bank (IDB)

IDB Turns Data into Business Intelligence

CASE STUDY

The IDB, located at Washington D.C., is flooded everyday with raw business data from Headquarters and its offices in Latin America and the Caribbean. As the amount of data grew, pouring through systems to unlock critical business intelligence was becoming increasingly time consuming and inefficient. The search was on for a solution that automatically consolidated data and delivered the right information and analytics to the right people quickly and reliably. Thanks to the development of a Management Alert System (MAS), based on Microsoft technology, IDB's executives are now receiving personalized, graphical information on company performance every time they open their Web browser.

Situation

The Inter-American Development Bank is the principal source of multilateral financing for economic, social and institutional development projects in Latin America and the Caribbean. These include policy and sector reform programs and support for public and private investment. The Bank provides loans and technical assistance using capital provided by its member countries, as well as resources obtained in world capital markets through bond issues. The Bank also promotes and participates in a significant number of project co financing arrangements with other multilateral, bilateral and private organizations. In its four decades of operations, the Bank has helped to transform Latin America and the Caribbean.

The Bank's total lending over 1961-2000 was more than \$106 billion for projects with a total cost of over \$263 billion. IDB loans have supported the construction and expansion of thousands of schools and hospitals, as well as more than 100 universities and scientific and technological institutions; installation of potable water and sewerage in thousands of communities; irrigation, agriculture and fisheries, industry and tourism projects; construction of tens of thousands of miles of roads; and installation of other transportation and communications infrastructure, as well as energy production facilities and transmission lines.

Nevertheless, IDB's Headquarters was suffering from an information overload. Its Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) systems groaned under the weight of raw data on

financial transactions, loan development events and institution's performance. Extracting meaningful information was a time-consuming and labor-intensive job, often involving manual extractions through spreadsheets and loan related documentation. The result was that decision-makers often received outdated reports, key performance indicators were not analyzed and lack of information on loan development process hindered IDB's ability to provide the very best levels of service to the Region.

Solution

Under the assumption that there should be a better way to manage information, a data analysis and distribution solution was designed that integrated seamlessly with IDB's existing applications. Using proven Microsoft products like Microsoft Enterprise Manager, Microsoft Analysis Manager, and Microsoft SQL Server™ 2000, a set of monitoring tools for performance control, via the Web, were developed to meet IDB's unique requirements.

These solutions give IDB's managers full Online Analytical Processing (OLAP) functionality in a graphically rich 'dashboard' interface. The system not only extracts, analyses and stores data, but also automatically identifies anomalies and dispatches alerts to key managers via e-mail. The application, called "Management Alert System" (MAS), is able to find critical data and determine a time and place where it belongs. There's no clutter; the data goes to precisely who needs it.

Given the current IT infrastructure at the IDB, Microsoft products were the logical choice as the foundation of the business intelligence solution. The objective was to make these tools easy to use, easy to deploy and graphically enticing. With Microsoft software it is possible to achieve reliability and compatibility with IDB's existing productivity applications.

Other pluses for IDB were low cost and rapid implementation. Built on accessible Microsoft applications, the entire system took just three months to set up and cost the equivalent to one year staff-work. This was considerably less than competing business intelligence application that didn't offer the same levels of customization and scalability.

The challenge now is to convince the rest of the IDB conglomerate to adopt similar systems. By delivering the right data to the right people more efficiently, dramatically increased knowledge dissemination and productivity was achieved.

Benefits

Deliver the Right Data

Poring over spreadsheets for critical business intelligence is a thing of the past. MAS, built on the SQL Server 2000 relational database, can perform analysis, extraction, transformation, processing and storage of data, slashing man-hours and reducing the risk of error. An intuitive target-setting algorithm enables users to rapidly and effortlessly set data-driven thresholds and triggers.

To the Right People

The best information is worthless if it doesn't reach the people who need it. MAS tools integrate closely with the Exchange and Microsoft Outlook messaging and collaboration client, automatically identifying the data each IDB decision-maker requires and dispatching it via e-mail or by Web portal. Data can also be sent to mobile platforms, including pocket PCs and via SMS to mobile phones.

At the Right Time

Up-to-the-minute information is vital at the IDB, where identifying interruptions and bottlenecks in the lending process, allows for the implementation of timely corrective measures to achieve annual lending goals. With a robust technology foundation from Microsoft and data management by MAS, secure, accurate, real-time information is just a click away for IDB's decision makers.