

# THE BLANCHARD GROUP CHOOSES BUSINESSOBJECTS EDGE

*"Thanks to BusinessObjects Edge, designed for companies of our size, we were able to choose a solution we thought was only for large accounts," Pascal Ruchat, IT manager and management controller, Blanchard Group*



## Industry

Distribution of agricultural and road-building equipment

## Challenge

- To be free of the limitations of Excel when faced with high volume and complexity of data.
- To give users secure access.
- To find a solution that matches an SME's investment capacities.

## Solution

BusinessObjects Edge

- Web Intelligence
- Crystal Reports
- Infoview

## About Blanchard

Family business created in 1919. Distribution and after-sales service of agricultural, landscaping and road-building equipment. Concession holder for top brand names: Ford, New Holland (exclusive), 2<sup>nd</sup> in French market. Turnover 2006: 95 M€. Over 20 agencies in the west of France. 300 employees.

## CHALLENGE

The Blanchard Group specializes in the distribution and servicing of equipment and spare parts for agriculture and road building. This SME, originating in Brittany (France), distributes top-brand tractors, combine harvesters and tractor loaders (including New Holland). Thanks to New Holland, the Blanchard group is pursuing a policy of sustained nation-wide development. For example, three new agencies were opened in six weeks. The company has decided to upgrade its IT in order to support this growth: a complete system overhaul around Citrix, new commercial servers and networks equipped with laptops. "We were short of high-performance reporting tools," declared Pascal Ruchat, IT manager and management controller.



The group raises around 3,000 invoices a month, covering some thirty different areas of equipment and parts coming from about fifty suppliers and manufacturers. Heracles, an application developed in Magic Software (SGBDR Oracle) can manage all the group's activities except payment: accounting, stock and planning, invoicing, sales of equipment and parts, after-sales service, warehouse repairs, etc. Monthly executive information systems are performed by OBDC extractions which supply over

50 Excel spreadsheets. Part of the reports is generated with Crystal Reports V8.

Pascal Ruchat explains: "When I arrived in 2002, my first job was to automate as much as possible the monthly management reports with tables of totals," a well-trying, satisfactory system for general management. On the second of each month, it produces all its management reports. Although this solution works, it has its technical and organizational limits. Excel cannot handle more than 65,000 lines, which is not enough when we have to compare and cross data over 200,000 references, 21 agencies, several different companies... The quality, security and confidentiality of the data are affected by it. On the organizational side, users depend on IT to supply and manipulate data, as only the IT team can make extractions from the Oracle tables. So Pascal Ruchat looked to the market for a solution that could handle the volume and complexity of their data, and keep it confidential.

## APPROACH

Pascal Ruchat confides: "I wanted a fast, user-directed tool that could reduce the demands on our IT team." We looked at other products, but they required us to review our whole architecture. That's why we were attracted to Business Objects with its simple global concept and secure access." But Business Objects' "big accounts" image was an obstacle for this SME. They thought their investment level did not permit them access to this sort of profile. "That was in April 2007, when Business Objects had just launched BusinessObjects Edge designed for

## About ASI Informatique

Created in 1993, ASI Informatique is active all over France through five regional offices. This computer services company with 250 employees specializes in the development and inclusion of company portals, web solutions and decision-making applications. Its expected turnover for 2007 is around 22M€. ASI is a Business Objects Gold Partner.

the SME / SMI market,” explains Rodolphe Raimbault of ASI Informatique, Business Objects’ partner.

ASI Informatique assembled a prototype with Blanchard’s data, with the results showing that the complex dynamic crossings that were impossible with Excel were performed easily with BusinessObjects. This is how Blanchard became the first company in France to implement BusinessObjects Edge, based on the principle of simultaneous, not named users. “A license of five simultaneous users is enough for an SME’s functional needs, since in the end it can permit access to reporting for 25 to 50 different users,” Raimbault continues. At the same time Ruchat went for conventional licenses with named users for technical requirements and the IT team. All users access Web Intelligence via the Infoview port and reports are generated transparently by Crystal Reports.

ASI Informatique completed the installation and technical confirmation of return solutions. Finally, it provided training for the IT team and the top managers of the SME responsible for generating the reports.



## RESULTS



Gains are to be expected on the investment level. Improved analysis of information will allow better control of the company’s development, because of the fast, easy integration of new entities. Better knowledge of the market and clients is also an important objective. For example, Blanchard opens its offices on Sundays during harvesting periods to perform repairs for its clients as quickly as possible. BusinessObjects Edge can analyze the different data at these offices, the activity level, the most-requested spare parts, the necessary resources, etc. As well as providing better knowledge of these

critical fields, the spreadsheets can perform regular analyses on all levels of the company, so the different services will see improved productivity and autonomy. In the end, warehouse managers, team leaders, retailers and traveling reps will be able to access decision-making data to control their activity better. “One of BusinessObjects’ great advantages is that it has a task-oriented language: all the fields are expressed in clear and comprehensible terms for any user,” Pascal Ruchat acknowledges. On his side, IT is freed from the burden of producing all the monthly reports which one person would raise over a whole day. Finally the automatically updated spread sheets will offer more recent and reliable information. “We hope to redo all our management tables for the beginning of 2008”.



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