

LOGIX USES THE BUSINESSOBJECTS EDGE SME SOLUTION TO CONTROL COMPUTER BRAND DISTRIBUTION

“Operational reporting and performance analysis are central in the computer distribution business. BusinessObjects Edge provides us with a quality tool that is simple and ideally suited to both our type of business and our size as an SME; the solution allows about 60 users to monitor the company’s purchasing, sales and margin indicators in real time and in addition provides reporting that is customized and at varying frequencies to suit both our suppliers and customers.” Eric Nowak, Managing Director Logix France, Belgium and Luxembourg



Industry
Distribution of IT products and solutions

Challenge
To broaden access to reporting without increasing computer department costs.

Business Objects products and solutions
BusinessObjects Edge

CHALLENGE

Constant adaptation of an extensive, complex and changing reporting suite

Logix is a VAD (Value Added Distributor), which distributes over a hundred computer brands throughout Europe. In France, about twenty of these brands are supplied exclusively to resellers who use them as the basis for their own software solution offerings to customers.

In addition to monitoring the company’s own indicators, Logix has to provide all its suppliers, developers/manufacturers and vendors alike, a mass of data and detailed reports: sales volumes, turnover by product, by region, by reseller, names and details of end users for software license management and much more besides. Each manufacturer or vendor has their own specific requirements on report formats and the frequency of deliveries. These suppliers’ business models are constantly evolving as the markets change: sales promotions, sales area changes, different customer segmentation etc. All these changes involve modification of each individual reporting framework. Logix therefore needs the ability to react swiftly to incorporate these changes in reports.



Up until 2003, Logix used Excel to manage the data used for reporting. Several people could access and make changes to the Excel spreadsheets which meant that it was not unusual for the resulting figures to be inconsistent. General Management wanted to implement automated tools which could rapidly provide reliable figures and consolidated reports. The various European companies in the group all had different ERP systems. At one time, Logix was proposing to implement a single ERP system to provide consolidated reports for Europe, but the solution would take time to implement and be expensive. The chosen solution, using Business Objects, was developed in three phases. *“In the first phase, we set up a data warehouse which interfaced with BusinessObjects, and cleansed the data ensuring that the information was both reliable and consistent between the various group companies,”* explained Xavier Donche, IT Director at Logix. Then the IT team commenced the task of building the first universes for General Management and the Executive Committee. Over a period of two and a half years, approximately 200 reports have been developed. *“From the start, we needed a fine level of detail because of our information system so that we could produce the consolidated reports required by General Management. In the second phase, using BusinessObjects 6.5 in a client/server environment, we increased the universes and provided access to the reports for product managers, sales executives and business unit managers. The reports were refreshed automatically and published via Infoview”.* The team then looked at how they could further expand the user base and provide users with autonomy, without increasing IT costs and the IT team’s workload. It was at this stage that Logix moved to BusinessObjects Edge.

APPROACH

BusinessObjects Edge: The right solution enabling expansion of the BI user base without increasing costs

We needed new reports all the time and could not increase our IT resources. *“When BusinessObjects Edge appeared in April, we were immediately interested in it,”* said Xavier Donche. Not only because of its price, but also because it contains three products packaged as a single offer: Web Intelligence, Xcelsius and Crystal Reports. The development interface in Web Intelligence mode is especially ergonomic and easy to use and we were able to immediately allow some users the report development capability. *“80% of reports are simple and can be created by users with Web Intelligence. We trained a pilot group of three users on the structure of the universes and then gave them the tool”.* The IT team now also has the option to choose the most appropriate tool, either Web Intelligence or Crystal Reports, to create reports in the most effective way, depending on the nature of multi-universe and multi-requests data and the complexity of the cross-referencing to be performed. In parallel with this, Logix has continued to enhance and develop the universes. These were originally very technical, but are now more adapted to users needs. *“When it’s handed over to a product manager, he has to be able to link sales data to purchase data which are in different systems (purchasing, sales, margins) for example. The universes need to be explicit and the relationships between the different sources totally transparent, whilst at the same time retaining consistency controls. This has led us to simplify our universes and structure the data model in a different way”.*

About Logix

VAD (Value Added Distributor) founded in 1992.

Logix supplies hardware, architecture software, applications and services to IT professionals.

Logix works with all the major brands, vendors and manufacturers in the IT industry.

The Logix group distributes about a hundred brands in twelve European countries.

Logix has over 2000 current customers and almost 150 partners in France.

RESULTS

A tool that is suited to all the company’s business functions

At Logix, there are now 58 users of BusinessObjects Edge. Their access is via 10 floating simultaneous user licenses and 5 dedicated user licenses. *“We can increase the number, depending on the success of the tool and training,”* is Xavier Donche’s expectation. This software tool is especially well suited to a distributor’s operating methods as the distribution business requires constant daily tracking. Reports provide us with the ability to analyze purchases and sales by product, region, segment, customer profile all the time. *“Progressing from a General Management analysis tool, BusinessObjects Edge is intended to become an operational tool to motivate the sales force”* Eric Nowak emphasizes. At Logix, we have gradually enhanced the reports and distributed them to different user populations including Purchasing, Accounting, Finance, Budgeting and HR.

General Management is particularly impressed with Xcelsius which gives them the facility to just point and click to access charts which use visual indicators and score counters so that they can easily identify any problems and new opportunities. It’s interactive and simple to use.

There is a vast improvement in the reports that Logix partners and suppliers now receive. Sophie Daval, Manager of the Software Business Unit at Logix commented, *“It used to take the Product Managers between one and three hours a week to compile the data, which they obtained from the various operational systems such as sales, purchasing, stocks and deliveries. Today, creating the dashboards and charts and e-mailing them to suppliers is all done automatically”.*

“IT hardware and software distribution is a specialist business requiring complex reporting on purchases and sales for both the company’s internal teams and our product suppliers. BusinessObjects Edge has given us a solution which meets the challenges in our business. It’s a competitive product and matches our usage needs perfectly.”

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