

# VESUVIUS GROUP



**“BY CHOOSING THIS INTEGRATED, VERY WELL SUPPORTED, SINGLE VENDOR SOLUTION, WE SHORTENED TIME-TO-RESULTS CONSIDERABLY.”**

**–NICOLAS MATHEÏ, INTERNATIONAL IS PROJECT MANAGER, VESUVIUS GROUP**

Refractory products control, protect and monitor the flow of high temperature liquid substances in various industrial processes. Vesuvius Group, a division of the Cookson international materials technology group, is one of the two world’s largest suppliers of refractory and flow control systems for iron and steel making, glass production, foundries and other industrial processes. Its four divisions - Iron and Steel, Glass, Foundry, Industrial Products - can offer full turnkey solutions to its global customers, including refractory design, supply, installation, and field service.

## **CHALLENGES FACED**

- Fulfill the information needs of a fast-growing and rapidly changing global company
- Build a data warehouse and Business Intelligence solution exploiting diverse data sources
- Put together a successful project team

Vesuvius Group sells its products into every steel, glass or foundry market throughout the world. The company also supplies technical, engineering and process systems support. Major technological advances are placing greater demands on specialty refractory materials. In addition to withstanding higher temperatures and more rigorous processing environments, refractories must also achieve new levels of cost-effectiveness.

Due to its fast growth in previous years (including various mergers and acquisitions), in 2001 Vesuvius Group felt the need to build a data warehouse. It would allow the company to support all of its departments in analyzing management information. The outcome of the Business Intelligence project had to enable Vesuvius to:

- query large amounts of data
- create a wide variety of reports
- perform powerful and fast analyses
- share information among decision-makers
- unite people behind common goals

A major difficulty was the data fragmentation in sources such as JD Edwards, Lotus Notes (Sales and Marketing Information), financial data consolidation software and other operational systems. For Nicolas Matheï, Vesuvius Group’s International IS Project Manager, a well-balanced, dynamic project team and a powerful Extraction, Transformation and Loading (ETL) system are two fundamental requirements for a successful data warehouse and Business Intelligence project.

## STRATEGY FOLLOWED

Nicolas Matheï believes that an ETL system is essential for success, because it:

- ensures better productivity  
(no need for extensive coding)
- leads to easy knowledge transfer
- extracts and merges data from disparate sources into a coordinated view
- provides consistency and re-usability of the information
- delivers integrated Business Intelligence metadata to the front-end Reporting & Analysis solutions

It very soon became clear that the selection of the ETL system had to be linked to the choice of the Business Intelligence system. Cognos' ETL software DecisionStream emerged as a clear winner. Cognos offers the broadest and best-integrated Business Intelligence portfolio, from ETL over Reporting and Analysis to Scorecarding (including common security, metadata and portal functionality). Cognos solutions are also tightly integrated with JD Edwards software. Moreover, Cognos DecisionStream is easy to learn. The fact that Cognos is a financially sound and stable organization, offering a strong support and partner network, was also taken into account.

Nicolas Matheï: "Cognos DecisionStream reduces development time and increases our productivity. Automation of processes was an important argument for us, since we have to reload data very often in the budget phase. By choosing this integrated, single vendor solution, we also wanted to reduce risks and limit time-to-results."

## BENEFITS REALIZED

- Everyone shares the same information
- Users are encouraged to explore underlying realities
- Total independence of the nature of original data source

The Business Intelligence system at Vesuvius has now more than 200 users. Each month, about 1.2 million records of financial information – income statements, invoice lines and balance sheet analyses – from 80 sites are loaded into the system. Cognos Multidimensional Analysis PowerPlay Web & Cognos ReportNet are used for easy access.

While the Executive Committee before had to rely on a bundle of paper to prepare its decisions, they now immediately share the same information when reviewing business results and discussing budgets. Users feel encouraged to perform analyses without bothering about the nature of the original data source.

Nicolas Matheï: "Our Business Intelligence solution makes people feel comfortable exploring new possibilities and discover the underlying realities. Cognos DecisionStream even revealed the existence of certain minor problems in our transactional systems. We are also happy to have found in Cognos more of a partner than a vendor."

## TECHNICAL ENVIRONMENT

- Windows 2000 on Dell
- Microsoft SQL Server 2000

## COGNOS SOLUTIONS IMPLEMENTED

- Managed Reporting & Ad hoc Query
- Multidimensional Analysis
- Scorecarding & ETL

## INDUSTRY

- Manufacturing

For any further information, please visit [www.vesuvius.com](http://www.vesuvius.com) or contact Cognos at +32 (0)2 712 10 42 or at [infobelux@cognos.com](mailto:infobelux@cognos.com).



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