

MERCEDES-BENZ



Mercedes-Benz

COGNOS DRIVES RESULTS AT MERCEDES-BENZ CUSTOMER ASSISTANCE CENTER

Mercedes-Benz Customer Assistance Center N.V. (MB-CAC) is an independent undertaking within the DaimlerChrysler group responsible for managing contact with all European drivers of Mercedes-Benz private cars, buses, and commercial vehicles. From Maastricht, in the Netherlands, MB-CAC uses Cognos Enterprise Business Intelligence (EBI) to keep national organizations and Mercedes-Benz dealers in 17 European countries on top of the market, and to gain insight into its own performance and into data quality at source.

SITUATION ANALYSIS

- DaimlerChrysler was seeking “One Voice to the Customer”
- Heterogeneous customer service reporting systems used in 17 European countries
- Volume of calls logged made for a staggering amount of data
- Siebel CRM/Oracle environment was suitable for operational reporting only
- No clear insight into call center performance or customer relationship management

“At Mercedes-Benz, we want to advise and assist every customer in the same way and deliver the same level of high-quality service,” explains Ingrid Posthuma, a research and planning manager at MB-CAC. “No matter where he or she may phone from, regardless of their query.”

To achieve quality and consistency in customer relationship management, MB-CAC centralized its European customer service organization. When it was

created in August 1998, MB-CAC was responsible for providing assistance with breakdowns or accidents—twenty-four hours a day, three hundred and sixty-five days a year.

Wherever they may be, Mercedes-Benz drivers know they can rely on an answer from one central access number. When a call comes in, call center operators can see where the caller is located, and in what language they should be answered. The call center operator then switches to the nearest Mercedes-Benz dealer. They too are available 24 hours a day. The dealer can then respond quickly to the customer’s needs and later reports back on what the problem was and how it was dealt with—providing Mercedes-Benz with a potentially valuable feedback loop.

A GOLD MINE OF OVER TWO MILLION RECORDS

The MB-CAC now also provides other forms of assistance and information to customers and the public alike—from questions about newly introduced models, to requests for input for talks. Ms. Posthuma adds, “We record each contact with individual customers in the Oracle database of our Siebel call center application. This amounts to hundreds of conversations, faxes, e-mails, or letters per day. On average, a case entails five contacts. Two years after starting up MB-CAC, we will already have recorded over two million contacts, which will all be recorded for reference in reports and analysis; we’ll use this

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information to keep our commercial organizations in each country informed of the cases that we accept and deal with on their behalf, and of the extent and way in which their dealers—through some 3,000 European support centers—contribute to this knowledge base.” As a research and planning department, MB-CAC has to ensure that their customers can perform the analyses they require and therefore, MB-CAC needs to take note of its own teams’ performance. This requires a high-powered reporting and analysis system. Ms. Posthuma explains, “We initially investigated the reporting functions of our Siebel and Oracle call center software, but found that these were limited to the operational aspects of the application.”

SOLUTION FOR SUCCESS

- Standardize on Cognos EBI for robust CRM analysis and reporting via the Web
- Begin with a proof-of-concept
- Extend implementation of Cognos EBI to organizational performance management reporting

“Various units within Mercedes-Benz’s European Customer Relationship Management group had already selected Cognos EBI from a wide range of OLAP vendors,” explains Ms. Posthuma. “Because we wanted to standardize our software as much as possible, we only had to look for the best Cognos application for our situation. To make reporting available easily and cost-effectively to our national organizations, we selected Web-enabled Cognos EBI. This solution enables us to make reports available to our 60 or so managers and coordinators throughout Europe—with nothing more than a Web browser.” MB-CAC started with a test database in the summer of 1998 to discover what was needed in the way of reporting. They then started building Cognos PowerCubes®—multidimensional cubes of aggregate data—from the live database. The organization currently works with a large number of reports, varying from overviews of the number of conversations to data quality analysis. “I’m frequently reminded of the amount of time and money we save by using the Web since we no longer need to print and dispatch reports,” adds Ms. Posthuma. “We’re now installing a Cognos EBI reporting solution in our own department so we can see whether each call center team is supplying complete and correctly-entered data.”

BUSINESS BENEFITS

- Analysis and reporting tailored to each user’s needs
- Online clicking to the desired level of information
- Critical insight gained into customer behavior and wants
- Highly improved data quality
- Consistency and quality in European customer contact

“Thanks to our Cognos EBI solution, we now have much better insight, at both management and operational levels, into our customers’ behavior and wants,” says Ms. Posthuma. Managers can easily make comparisons between national organizations, dealers, or entities. Each user can progress from his or her own reports to the individual case level. The organization regularly assesses the information needs of users—and refines PowerCubes—to ensure that the answers users need are available on demand, so they can make better decisions. Ms. Posthuma comments, “Our Cognos EBI Web solution is quite ideal because we can customize a cube or outline a report for each individual user, without having to change or upgrade the user’s workstation.” Cognos’ built-in security ensures that each user is still only shown the data they require, as defined by the central administrator. At the other end of the reporting spectrum, the organization sees a growing need for yet more consolidated overviews, like scorecards, for which they may be able to use Cognos Visualizer. Ms. Posthuma concludes, “With this we should be able to show all kinds of performance indicators simultaneously in graphical forms, like geographical maps, which would be especially pertinent to our 17 country concerns. We’ll continue working on data quality, the importance of this is one of the greatest insights that we ourselves have acquired, thanks to Cognos EBI.”

WHY COGNOS?

Only Cognos delivers a complete range of integrated, scalable software for corporate performance management. Cognos products let organizations drive performance with enterprise planning and budgeting, monitor it with scorecarding, and understand it with business intelligence reporting and analysis. Founded in 1969, Cognos now serves more than 22,000 customers in over 135 countries.



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