

SESAME WORKSHOP



“COGNOS IS THE BEST TOOL ON THE MARKET FOR BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE AND DATA MINING. YOU CAN’T PUT A PRICE ON OUR ABILITY TO UNDERSTAND THE STRENGTH OF OUR BRAND AND SPEED TO MARKET.”

— SHERRA PIERRE, VICE-PRESIDENT OF INFORMATION SYSTEMS, SESAME WORKSHOP

Sesame Workshop is a non-profit educational organization committed to maximizing the power of all media as an educational force in the lives of children. Its products include television, online, CD-ROMs, magazines, books, film, community outreach, and licensing. Best known as the creators of Sesame Street — now in its 31st season on PBS — the Workshop produces programming that has been enjoyed in 148 countries, including 20 co-productions reflecting local languages, customs, and educational needs. With Columbia TriStar Television Group, the Workshop recently launched Dragon Tales on PBS. Several of the Workshop’s earlier award-winning programs, including The Electric Company, 3-2-1 Contact, and Square One TV, can now be found on Noggin, the new 24-hour-per-day kids’ thinking channel, a joint venture between the Workshop and Nickelodeon.

CHALLENGES FACED

- Needed ability to understand costs
- Unable to access data in legacy systems
- Single solution required

Sesame Workshop’s mission is to create innovative, engaging content that maximizes the educational power of all media to help children reach their highest potential. The question was how could the company make the best use of its resources?

“We first used Impromptu® Web Reports with our HR data,” said Sherra Pierre, Vice-President of Information Systems, Sesame Workshop. “Analysis for our people costs just wasn’t there. At peak time around Sesame Street production we’re working with 200 to 300 freelance puppeteers, cartoonists, musicians, and researchers who work on our productions. We needed to know the who and where in this building and how much it was costing us.

“We now use IWR for general ledger, accounts payable, and accounts receivable systems.”

Some of the legacy tools used within Sesame Workshop had awkward and cumbersome reporting tools and valuable data languished in the systems because there was no easy way to manipulate it. “We’re great at creating and building a fabulous product but on the back side we were pulling our hair out to get the data,” said Ms. Pierre.

After reviewing several companies, Sesame Workshop chose to implement Cognos because it is a comprehensive solution, its ease of implementation, manageability, flexibility of platform support and the ability to integrate Cognos into Sesame Workshop’s overall strategic plan.

COGNOS®

THE NEXT LEVEL OF PERFORMANCE™

BENEFITS REALIZED

- Immediate \$300,000 savings
- Reduced reporting time from two months to one week
- Complete view of the business

Sesame Workshop realized significant return on investment almost immediately after deploying Cognos. Using the Cognos analysis tools, the company discovered a double billing error. The company was able to correct the situation and saved itself \$300,000.

Cognos business intelligence has also saved Sesame Workshop significant time. Before implementing Cognos, it would take Sesame Workshop two months to close a quarter. Now the same data is produced in one week.

Cognos has also brought an added dimension to Sesame Workshop's understanding of the power of its brand. The most important thing Sesame Workshop produces is content whether it be online, television, DVD, games, or other media. At the core of this content is the data warehouse that contains information about the company's digital assets as well as HR, and rights and licensing information. The challenge was to create a platform for data management and insight into the organization. Using DecisionStream™ from Cognos, Ms. Pierre's team is building data that are integrated with each other and will connect to the company's digital assets.

“For instance we produce Elmo products, games, books, movies, and a segment on Sesame Street called Elmo's World,” said Ms. Pierre. “We need to know how well Elmo is performing, what we spent on Elmo productions, how many licensees we have, and how we can manage that worldwide.”

Each of the well-known Sesame Street characters and projects can be evaluated individually so executives better understand how the brands are performing globally, whether projects are on budget or are more successful than forecast.

“We now have the ability to manage business views across all channels including marketing dollars, licensing revenue for each project and the costs to produce the project in one single view,” said Ms. Pierre. “If I can quickly understand how the Elmo video is performing, I can go back to our partners and negotiate a better deal.”

“You can't put a price on our ability to understand the strength of our brand and speed to market.”

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.



WWW.COGNOS.COM

Cognos, and the Cognos logo are trademarks or registered trademarks of Cognos Incorporated in the United States and/or other countries. All other names are trademarks or registered of their respective companies. (07/03)