



“ An ERP system is essential, but it does not provide consistent or intelligent information. I felt that we needed to implement a decision-support platform, since this was the only way to obtain meaningful data. Cognos offered the best solutions and a very user-friendly format.”

Christophe Desroy, CFO of Flexico



Established in 1950, the Flexico group has become the European leader in the field of flexible resealable packaging. With one of the widest ranges of technical solutions on offer, Flexico is in a position to satisfy the requirements of most markets—foodstuffs, textiles, hygiene, health and beauty, gardening, electronics—as well as freezer bags for the consumer market.

Thanks to its highly structured Research and Development department, Flexico is able to adapt to the customer's packaging requirements and guarantee them the most competitive and innovative turnkey solutions. Today, Flexico has a European workforce of 700 people, offering reliable solutions to meet its customers' international requirements.

Challenges faced

“The company has expanded significantly over the last few years, mainly through external growth,” explains Christophe Desroy, Flexico's CFO. “We realized that our processes had not developed at the same pace as the company. In view of this finding, we began to implement tools to centralize the group's processes in 2004, starting with an ERP solution. However, as soon as I joined the company, I defended the idea that a decision-support platform was an essential complement to an ERP system.” Christophe Desroy feels that too many people believe that an ERP system can do everything, “but it cannot provide consistent and intelligent information, only a decision-support system is capable of this.” So in 2006, Flexico launched its decision-support project, opting for a solution from Cognos, an IBM company: IBM Cognos Query, IBM Cognos ReportNet®, and IBM Cognos 8 Planning.

Strategy followed

In May 2006, five months after the launch of the project, the first phase was operational. Implemented with the assistance of Cognos certified partner, BGFI Consulting, and an in-house team consisting of a

Industry:

Industrial packaging

Geography:

Europe

Information needs:

- Homogeneous, reliable information that can be rapidly accessed from the ERP system
- Cross-referencing of information based on objective and relevant criteria
- Data availability for sales field staff

Solutions:

- IBM Cognos 8 Planning
- IBM Cognos Query
- IBM Cognos ReportNet

Benefits:

- Acceleration of design and construction phases
- Fewer requests to the information systems department
- Considerable reduction in production lead-times
- Rationalisation and increased reliability of data: uniqueness and longevity

sponsor project manager, Christophe Desroy, a functional project manager, and an IT expert, this first phase covered the commercial aspect of the system: turnover by product line per year, sales statistics by sales person, and so on. Designed for 25 users, these initial applications were based on IBM Cognos Query and IBM Cognos ReportNet.

To implement this first step, Flexico used tried and tested methods, as Christophe Desroy explains. “Interviewing users before drawing up the specifications is a proven method, why reinvent the wheel?” Although new to this

type of project, the company did not encounter any real difficulties, mainly due to the expertise of its integrator.

“It’s not always easy to identify needs,” explains Christophe Desroy. “BGF I Consulting provided valuable assistance in this respect. In addition, our company is complex, in particular as a result of its background of external growth. The implementation of our ERP system is not yet complete, which raises problems of data consistency and other issues. As a result, the first version of our data warehouse was not complete, but we responded very quickly and made the necessary additions.”

Benefits realized

Having already had an opportunity to try out the Cognos solution in his previous company, Christophe Desroy wanted to repeat this experience at Flexico. “Cognos offers some very user-friendly tools, which promote acceptance among users,” says the company’s CFO. “Its offering is very rich and above all integrated, which makes it easier to implement, and reduces development costs. Finally, Cognos is particularly effective for multi-dimensional analyses, a very important aspect for us.” Flexico needs to analyze its business on the basis of a whole range of criteria, such as customers, market, and production sites, which is why the company opted for IBM Cognos Query from the very start.

In the future, the company plans to extend coverage to new functional areas, and to implement IBM Cognos 8 Planning. “However, we are already reaping the benefits of our first applications,” states Christophe Desroy. “Users have more confidence in their data. They now rarely call me up to check something. What’s more, they can cross-reference their data as required to obtain more relevant information to manage their customers more effectively. In other words, there has been a clear increase in efficiency.” And last but not least, according to Christophe Desroy, users no longer depend on the IT teams to manage their reports, which means that these specialists have more time to devote to purely IT tasks.

About Cognos, an IBM Company

Cognos, an IBM Company, is the world leader in business intelligence and performance management solutions. It provides world-class enterprise planning and BI software and services to help companies plan, understand and manage financial and operational performance. Cognos was acquired by IBM in February 2008. For more information, visit <http://www.cognos.com>.