



# Laurel Pub Company

Laurel Pub Company delivers financial data on tap “how Cognos and change++ are ensuring access to corporate data following the acquisition of Yates Group”

## Introduction

The fast-moving retail and leisure sector has experienced much merger and acquisition activity.

When the Laurel Pub Company acquired Yates Group, it added over 150 pubs and bars to its existing estate. As soon as the acquisition was completed, one of the most urgent projects was the integration of Yates’ financial reporting systems that both companies were using.

## The company

Laurel is one of the UK’s leading and most respected managed house operators, with around 420 town centre pubs and bars, spread throughout the UK.

Its pubs and bars are amongst the best known in the country with famous high street names such as Hog’s Head, Yates’, Litten Tree, Slug & Lettuce, Santa Fe, Forno Vivo and Fiesta Havana and Ha! Ha! Bar & Canteen. The company also manages a large number of popular and individual unbranded venues.

## The challenge

Following the acquisition of the Yates Group, the priority was to bring together financial reporting for the separate groups so that senior management had a clear view of the business’ overall performance. This is always a major challenge as companies will typically report under different account headings and use different financial calendars.

## The solution

Laurel uses a CODA finance system combined with Cognos analysis solutions. Although in the medium term Yates’ financial data will be transferred to the Laurel CODA system, there was an immediate need for a reporting solution that would allow one view of company finances for the interim period.

Working with Cognos partner change++, which had developed Laurel’s original financial reporting system, Laurel set up a company-wide financial reporting solution for use in the short term.

### *Industry:*

- leisure

### *Geography:*

- UK

### *Information Needs*

- Centralised financial reporting for all groups

### *Platforms:*

- Microsoft

### *Solution:*

- Cognos analysis solution

### *Users:*

- 55 operations and head office staff

### *Benefits:*

- one view of group wide performance

The Cognos solution was selected for its speed, flexibility and analysis capabilities in meeting Laurel’s financial reporting requirements.

## The results

The Yates’ data was extracted from its finance system and fed into a new SQLServer database. Account code and calendar lookup files were used to realign the data with the existing Laurel financial data, then CSV files created to feed the Cognos solution.

Extracting, interrogating and reporting on data from the CODA finance system to provide a range of financial reports – to whatever level of detail finance managers require – is facilitated by Cognos analysis and reporting solutions. Reports for area managers and other remote staff are accessed via the Laurel intranet, meaning staff have access to information at any time and from any location.

The speed with which solutions can be deployed using Cognos analysis solutions means that organisations like Laurel can quickly gain an accurate ‘one single view’ of group-wide performance. As a result, analysts do not even have to rewrite their reports to incorporate the Yates’ data; it is transferred automatically into existing



company-wide reports. Complex data transformations can be achieved using the SQLServer database, which realigns the Yates' data to Laurel structures and financial calendar. The use of the Cognos reporting tool enables financial analysts at Laurel to compare and contrast the Yates' and Laurel figures, plotting trends and rates of growth in different business and geographic areas.

Laurel's finance projects manager, Kathryn Jackson, emphasises how useful Cognos reporting software has been to the business, "We were pleased with the initial reports we could deliver to finance, but the fact that we can use the existing solution to streamline the integration of our new acquisition into the enlarged group is a significant benefit. Cognos technology provides a sophisticated but user-friendly solution to our reporting and analysis requirements. Combining Cognos tools with support from change++ if we need help, gives us the right solution for our needs."

### Going forward

Based on the work achieved to date with change++ and the Cognos technology, Laurel is currently reviewing how it can achieve even more value from these relationships. One area being considered is how to achieve a centralised solution for reporting and for different data sources to be combined for one single version of the truth. Laurel is looking to implement Cognos 8 BI to meet this need and deliver higher reporting capabilities which will continue to improve information availability within the company.

### About Cognos

Cognos, the world leader in business intelligence and performance management solutions, provides world-class enterprise planning and BI software and services to help companies plan, understand and manage financial and operational performance.

Cognos brings together technology, analytical applications, best practices, and a broad network of partners to give customers a complete performance system. The Cognos performance system is an open and adaptive solution that leverages an organization's ERP, packaged applications, and database investments. It gives customers the ability to answer the questions — How are we doing? Why are we on or off track? What should we do about it? — and enables them to understand and monitor current performance while planning future business strategies.

Cognos serves more than 23,000 customers in more than 135 countries, and its top 100 enterprise customers consistently outperform market indexes. Cognos performance management solutions and services are also available from more than 3,000 worldwide partners and resellers. For more information, visit the Cognos Web site at <http://www.cognos.com>.