


“By integrating Cognos into our SAP BI system, we can react to our customers’ wishes and respond quickly and smoothly to the requirements of our individual departments. IBM Cognos 8 BI in combination with our business warehouse has proved its commercial benefits, and not only enables cost and time savings to be made when obtaining information, but also provides better knowledge about sales, markets, and revenue potential.”

Ismute Tews, Data Warehouse Project Manager at Mainova AG



Tradition and innovation form the basis of the corporate philosophy of Mainova AG. As a reliable service provider, Mainova delivers consistent quality to its customers. To ensure that it has current data available at all times, and to enable financial and business management planning and tracking with sustainable control, the company has been using tried and tested business intelligence (BI) solutions from Cognos, an IBM company, for many years. Mainova has now migrated to IBM Cognos 8 BI, ensuring that it keeps pace with state-of-the-art technology.

Mainova Aktiengesellschaft, headquartered in Frankfurt am Main, is a modern energy provider. The company supplies electricity, gas, heat, and water to approximately 500,000 private and business customers in the Rhein-Main region. Mainova subsidiaries also supply 16 towns and communities in Hesse, Bavaria, and Thuringia with electricity or gas. Thanks to the wide-ranging know-how of the 2,800 employees in all of the supply areas and its many years of business experience, the energy supplier is able to provide products and services according to customers’ requirements. For this, the company uses innovative approaches to ensure individual and safe energy supplies. To satisfy the requirements of the deregulation of the energy market and to comply with the new regulations, Mainova depends on sound information about customer groups and company results: which products are having success on the market? What customer groups are using them? Which products are not doing so well?

Here too, the company has shown its innovative strength and pioneering spirit: eight years ago the energy provider introduced a BI solution to assess the consumer behaviour of customers on the basis of sales statistics. The SAP Business Information Warehouse (SAP BW) is used as the source system, and traditionally the Cognos reporting tools are used at the front end. This combination provides the Marketing, Controlling, Sales

Industry:

- Energy provider

Geography:

- Germany

Information needs:

- Migration of reports to IBM Cognos 8 BI
- Compatibility with SAP BI 7.0

Platforms:

- SAP BW 7 (Netweaver 2004s)
- Oracle

Solutions:

- IBM Cognos 8 BI
- Cognos Professional Services

Users:

- 400

Functional areas of deployment:

- Sales and Distribution
- Marketing
- Accounts
- Controlling
- Technical departments

Benefits:

- Predefined reports and convenient editing
- Proven user interface
- Central access to information
- Service oriented architecture (SOA)

and Distribution, and Accounts departments in particular with the necessary information. But the company’s technical sections, including those involved with capacity planning, also benefit from the BI solution.

Challenges faced

In order to consolidate its heterogeneous application architecture in 1999, Mainova started to construct a data warehouse. In parallel with the introduction of mySAP ERP and the branch solution SAP IS-U, the system was extended the following year with the implementation of SAP BW. At this time, the company already had the solutions IBM Cognos Impromptu, IBM Cognos PowerPlay, and IBM Cognos DecisionStream in use. The aim was to offer a user-friendly interface enabling analysis of customer data on a company-wide basis. Thanks to the Web-based architecture of the Cognos solution, SAP BW was integrated and connected to the Cognos analysis tools already in use without any problems. Little by little, Mainova built up a reporting system which was initially implemented through the Cognos Upfront Web portal. Standard reports could now be distributed company-wide, as and when required.

Strategy followed

Mainova has continually extended and updated the BI platform in recent years. So, for example, the portal application Cognos Upfront has been superseded by IBM Cognos ReportNet with the portal interface Cognos Connection. And development of the SAP system has not stopped either. At the beginning of 2007, with the latest SAP BW release, SAP BI 7.0, Mainova introduced components of the SAP NETWeaver platform. Since the new version of Business Warehouse included some technology changes, Mainova decided to migrate from the existing Cognos platform to IBM Cognos 8 BI.

Benefits realized

Using Cognos solutions has become a tradition at Mainova. With the implementation of IBM Cognos 8 BI, the energy provider is counting again on the proven quality of the BI provider.

"We have had very good experience with Cognos," says Ismute Tews, Data Warehouse Project Manager at Mainova AG. "Our users are comfortable operating the system, the product is well established in our company, and can also be integrated into the future strategic platform, the SAP portal. It was important for us to ensure the compatibility of the new SAP solution with the Cognos platform." Mainova is one of the first companies in the world to work with IBM Cognos 8 BI on SAP BI 7.0.

IBM Cognos 8 BI is based on Web services and service oriented architecture (SOA), an architecture that has already been proven in IBM Cognos ReportNet. IBM Cognos 8 BI is also certified for integration with SAP BW, thus ensuring speedy, smooth implementation of the new solution at Mainova. Within a very short time the migration was complete, and the reports were transferred to IBM Cognos 8 BI. Mainova can now access data in the SAP BW and use IBM Cognos 8 BI on the SAP Web application server. To make this possible, the Cognos Professional Services team set up an interface that enables the SAP Web application server to communicate directly with IBM Cognos 8 BI. This link ensures stable performance and data transparency.

With the combined BI solution, Mainova provides its employees with central access to the information that is relevant to them, whether they are in Sales and Distribution, Marketing, Accounts, or Controlling. Specifically, IBM Cognos 8 BI completes the SAP NetWeaver BI solution in three ways. Firstly, it provides convenient distribution of standard reports through the Cognos Connection portal. Secondly, it enables automatic updating of customized reports. For example, there may be around 100 reports available to accounts management, with predefined criteria such as customer groups, sector, or credit-worthiness, which can all be called with one click—without any waiting time. And thirdly, IBM Cognos 8 BI is ideal for providing well prepared attractive reports—including those on paper.

Have the users noticed the release change and the modifications? "No, not really—and that is good," says Ismute Tews. "This is just what we wanted. With IBM Cognos 8 BI the employees have a proven and convenient user interface, as well as the tried and tested functionalities. For us, this kind of continuity saves a considerable amount of time and expense, both for training and familiarization. The administrative expenditure also remains manageable."

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 www.cognos.com.