

NORAUTO



“THANKS TO THE COGNOS APPLICATIONS, WE ARE GRADUALLY PUTTING IN PLACE A NEW DECISION-SUPPORT IT SYSTEM THAT’S EASIER TO MAINTAIN AND – MOST IMPORTANTLY – IS BETTER ADAPTED TO OUR EMPLOYEES’ NEEDS. USERS ARE MORE INVOLVED AND THE QUALITY OF THE APPLICATIONS HAS BROUGHT GREATER UNITY TO OUR PROCESSES, BOTH IN TERMS OF DATA QUALITY AND TRANSPARENCY.”

–FRÉDÉRIC MISPREUVE, AREA IT MANAGER, AND FLORENCE SANSON, FRANCE – HEAD OF CONTROLLING, AT NORAUTO

COGNOS PROVIDES GREATER TRANSPARENCY AND IMPROVED MONITORING AT NORAUTO

It was 35 years ago that Norauto created the “autocenter” concept in France. This consists of a self-service sales area and workshop with maintenance and repair bays to meet the needs of motorists in relation to equipment, maintenance, comfort, safety, and well-being. Now the leader in offering this type of service in France, Norauto has grown to become an international group. Today, the group trades under four names familiar to the motorist: Norauto, Maxauto, Auto 5, and Midas (in Europe and Latin America). It is active in 11 countries with a network of 1,000 autocenters, has a

workforce of more than 7,800, and on 30 September 2005 recorded annual sales worth Euro 1.2 billion.

CHALLENGES FACED

This level of growth naturally led Norauto to upgrade its IT system. Requirements of the project included:

- The gradual replacement and modification of the existing IT decision-support system: Norauto was eager to deal with its budgeting system as a priority, but the project has turned out to be much wider in scope and in the long term is likely to involve the use of indicators that reflect group strategy for every area of the business.
- An easy-to-use and straightforward interface: in order to gain user acceptance, Norauto sought out applications that were ideally adapted to its employees’ specific areas of work.
- A system that was simple to roll out: as an international group, Norauto has to roll out its solutions in different countries. A thin client architecture and multilingual interface were major prerequisites for the success of its decision-support projects.

During 2003, after taking time to research the solutions available and conduct a substantial campaign of interviews so as to identify user need, Norauto decided to introduce Cognos PowerPlay, Cognos ReportNet, and Cognos Planning.

Industry:

- Services

Geography:

- Global

Information Needs:

- Upgrade of decision-support system
- User-friendly performance management software
- Fast implementation time

Solution:

- Cognos Enterprise Planning
- Cognos PowerPlay
- Cognos ReportNet

Benefits:

- Shorter process times
- Greater user involvement
- Easier process management
- System optimization

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THE NEXT LEVEL OF PERFORMANCE™

The gradual renewal of Norauto's decision support system began with extensive consideration of the applications available on the market. Following this, Cognos was selected, thanks to the high performance and user-friendliness of its solutions. "Cognos Planning is the most user-oriented tool we found on the market," explains Florence Sanson, Head of Controlling at Norauto. "This was a fundamental factor in ensuring that users bought into the project. We don't, for example, have to rely on the IT department to build our models."

STRATEGY FOLLOWED

The project got underway with the deployment of Cognos Enterprise Planning. This initial deployment phase was to take place in three stages: planning, target-setting, and forecasting. The first planning stage involved designing a model that would allow group strategy to be planned out for a period of several years. For this activity, which was highly confidential in view of the type of information being dealt with, the software would be used only by the directors of the business.

In the meantime, the Group began to tackle the second phase with the implementation and roll-out of a budgeting solution for the 315 Norauto outlets and central offices in six countries. Developed with the help of the Analyst module in Cognos Enterprise Planning, the model envisaged only minimal levels of manual data input, as fields were pre-completed and settings optimized on the basis of the know how acquired during the research phase.

Norauto benefited from the Cognos Enterprise Planning thin client architecture to simplify access to the application, with data from each outlet being stored at head office and accessed via secure connections. This second part of the project went live in August 2005, and has quickly achieved real success. "We are now completing the budgeting process in one-third of the time taken previously," emphasizes Sanson. "In addition, we've achieved greater transparency thanks to the workflow system built into Cognos Enterprise Planning – we know precisely who has worked and who hasn't, and it's much easier to utilize the consolidated data."

The functional benefits have been further reinforced by substantial gains on the technical front. "We had to

take a new look at our management rules. This led us to bring more unity to our processes and at the same time do a lot of work on the quality of our data. Our information is now more consistent, much less work is needed to maintain the software, and everything has been centralized into a single application," explains Frédéric Mispreuve, area IT Manager at Norauto.

Pairing Cognos Enterprise Planning with Cognos ReportNet and Cognos PowerPlay also won particular favor. "We can link text, tables, and graphics at the click of a button – in other words, without needing complex knowledge or IT skills – to create a report," says Mispreuve. "In addition, Cognos ReportNet works very well in a multilingual environment – an important prerequisite for an international group like ours. What's more, we're so satisfied with this first experience that the Cognos ReportNet tool is being implemented in all of our decision-support and operational projects. We're even thinking about going further by moving quickly to implement Cognos 8 Business Intelligence."

BENEFITS REALIZED

With Cognos, Norauto has achieved greater transparency and improved monitoring capabilities. Other benefits include:

- Shorter process times: area managers and autocenter managers now take only one-third of the time required previously to set down their targets. By the same principle, the company's overall budgeting process can now be completed much more quickly.
- Easier process management: the renewal of the decision-support system has brought greater unity to management rules and has allowed data to be aggregated more consistently and rapidly.
- Greater user involvement: the user-friendly nature of the Cognos tools combined with the foundations laid by the project team has made life for users much easier.
- System optimization: the Cognos Planning workflow engine helps managers to monitor everyone's activities more easily and improves process management. The replacement of in-house applications with commercial solutions has also made it much more straightforward to maintain the decision support system.



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