



CONSARC

SAP AND CNE HELP LEADING VACUUM FURNACE MAKER TURN UP THE HEAT ON INSIGHT

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Mark Mahon, IT Manager, Consarc Corporation

QUICK FACTS

Company

- Name: Consarc Corporation
- Headquarters: Rancocas, New Jersey
- Industry: Industrial machinery and components
- Products and services: Vacuum and controlled atmosphere furnaces and service
- Revenue: Over US\$30 million
- Employees: 140
- Web site: www.consarc.com
- Implementation partner: CNE Inc., an SAP partner

Challenges and Opportunities

- Support decision making with reliable reporting
- Increase operational efficiency
- Ensure IT security

Objectives

- Deliver timely, reliable reports with powerful reporting and business intelligence (BI) functionality
- Leverage scheduling tools to alleviate reporting demand
- Support automatic generation of sales orders and other forms to support business operations
- Mitigate risk of security breaches

SAP® Solutions and Services

- SAP® BusinessObjects™ Edge BI software
- SAP Crystal Reports® software

Implementation Highlights

- Speedy upgrade with minimal training required
- Strong working relationship with implementation partner
- Positive experience with SAP to resolve initial issues

Why SAP

- Market-leading BI functionality
- Expertise provided by implementation partner
- Scalability and support for shared-services model

Benefits

- Greater visibility into business data, leading to better decision making
- Improved control over security
- Greater end-user productivity and satisfaction, due to faster queries
- Streamlined operations, due to automatically generated forms
- Higher availability and less demand on IT, due to software stability
- Easy maintenance, freeing up IT to focus on other activities

Existing Environment

Earlier version of software now known as SAP Crystal Reports

Third-Party Integration

- Database: Microsoft SQL
- Hardware: HP Proliant
- Operating system: Microsoft Windows Server 2003

Consarc Corporation makes custom-built, high-performance vacuum and controlled atmosphere furnaces that are used by component manufacturers to make alloy parts for aircraft and other sophisticated machinery. To improve business intelligence (BI) and streamline operations, the company worked with CNE, an SAP partner, to implement SAP® BusinessObjects™ Edge BI and SAP Crystal Reports® software. “We’ve made a giant step with SAP and CNE,” says Mark Mahon, IT manager at Consarc. “Today, our business runs much better.”

Service and Success

Rancocas, New Jersey-headquartered Consarc is one of the companies of the Inductotherm Group – which was founded in 1954 by Henry Rowan. A World War II bomber pilot, Rowan built a solid reputation for his company by delivering the best service possible – often flying his own aircraft to personal-ly visit customers around the world.

To this day, this tradition of service still lives on in more than 40 companies that make up the Inductotherm Group. For Mahon, this means delivering the best IT services possible to the employees of Consarc – so that they, in turn, can serve Consarc’s customers better.

Failure to Report

Like all of Inductotherm’s group companies, Consarc runs almost like an independent small business that is allowed to rise or fall on its own merits. The

company’s IT team, accordingly, is small as well – just two full-time employees including Mahon and his colleague Rob Deeds, IT support specialist at Consarc.

One of the team’s responsibilities is to deliver business reporting capabilities to more than 100 users throughout the Consarc organization (Rancocas and Scotland). Unfortunately, the company’s reporting tool – based on an earlier solution now known as SAP Crystal Reports – was starting to falter. Far too often, users overwhelmed the tool with multiple hits to the server, causing a crash. With no report scheduling capabilities, the IT team found it difficult to mitigate this problem. Security was also an increasing concern.

“Don’t get me wrong,” says Mahon. “We were getting the job done. It’s just that it required more and more time and effort to fix problems and keep up with maintenance as the system got older.”

A Sharper Edge via Better Business Intelligence

Fishing around for a new way to approach enterprise reporting, Mahon attended a seminar on business intelligence delivered by CNE. There he met up with Herb Hess, senior consultant at CNE, who convinced him that Consarc needed to change its approach to BI.

“The reason Consarc struggled with its legacy system was because its employees had come to see the value of business reporting,” says Hess. “The more they used the system, the more they pushed it to its limits. What they needed was a more robust solution for business intelligence – but one that suited the requirements of a small-to-midsize business.”

CNE recommended an implementation of SAP BusinessObjects Edge BI and an upgrade to the latest version of SAP Crystal Reports, and Consarc agreed. The company liked the fact that SAP BusinessObjects Edge BI was specifically designed for smaller companies – offering flexible ad hoc reporting and analysis tools, dashboards for tracking at-a-glance key performance indicators, keyword search tools, and powerful data integration functionality. Consarc also saw that SAP Crystal Reports would help it quickly develop interactive reports and schedule popular reports to run at off-peak times to better manage server demand.



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Consarc also enlisted CNE to supervise the implementation. "I can't say enough positive things about CNE. The consultants worked diligently to put together a licensing agreement that fit our budget," says Mahon, who then adds, "They were there with us every step of the way, and their advice was spot on. And when it comes to BI, they really know what they're talking about."

Light Footprint, Speedy Implementation

Because of the light footprint of the software, implementing SAP BusinessObjects Edge BI and SAP Crystal Reports for a company of Consarc's size is measured in days rather than weeks or months. To get the project done right, Deeds worked

which is a good thing," Deeds recalls. "This had a lot to do with the intuitive functionality of the software and the fact that we were able to recreate the look and feel of our preexisting Web pages."

Mahon and Deeds, however, did experience a glitch several days after the installation. "We were running out of capacity much sooner than anticipated," says Mahon. "Based on the number of licenses we had secured, this shouldn't have been happening. After a while, I was able to speak directly with a developer at SAP who quickly resolved the problem."

It turns out that the problem had to do with tabs in Windows Internet Explorer. If a person moved to a new tab, leaving

Faster, More Stable, Easier to Run

Today, Consarc enjoys a far more robust – and easy to maintain – BI solution that alleviates demand on its overtaxed IT team of two. "As an IT manager for a small business," says Mahon, "I like the fact that SAP BusinessObjects Edge Business Intelligence and SAP Crystal Reports software is pretty much maintenance free. I don't really have to pay much attention to it at all. And if something does go wrong, the software triggers an alert and tells me what the problem is so that I can fix it quickly."

Mahon finds managing security to be easier as well. "With our legacy system, security involved a bit of guesswork and a lot of complexity. With SAP BusinessObjects Edge BI and SAP Crystal Reports, we have much greater control over security, which makes us far less vulnerable to security-related risks."

Scheduling functionality, meanwhile, enables the IT team to more effectively manage demand. For example, Mahon can schedule popular reports to run in the evening and have them ready for use as PDF files each morning. This helps reduce hits on the server during business hours and allows the company to use its available licenses in the most optimal way.

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with Hess from CNE for two days to back up all relevant data and execute the install.

Almost immediately, employees were able to start using the software for reporting purposes. "For the end users, the transition was fairly uneventful –

the old tab open, the browser would not close out the session. "With a little end-user education to work around this issue, we were able to resolve this problem quickly," says Mahon. "It's good to know that you have a place to turn to when you need an issue resolved."

Business users see the benefits of the new software as well. One of the primary advantages – when compared to the legacy system – is consistent availability. Employees know that the software is there when they need it, so they can do their jobs more effectively. Queries are returned much more quickly as well – which has helped improve user satisfaction. People can also maintain their own shortcuts to run common reports on a regular basis.

The implementation, however, was not limited to reporting. Consarc also introduced the software to help increase operational efficiency. “We use the available forms to generate sales orders and shipping documents,” says Mahon. “All the data from these forms is stored centrally. We can then use this data for subsequent analyses to gain insight into trends and customer needs.”

An Eye on the Future

Given its success to date, Mahon is eager to spread the advantages of SAP BusinessObjects Edge BI and SAP Crystal Reports throughout the Inductotherm Group. The ultimate vision is a shared service for the delivery of BI capabilities. Says Mahon, “I think we’ve gained a great deal from the implementation, so why not deliver these benefits to the rest of the companies as well?”



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