SPAR shops with SAP BusinessObjects

Executive Summary

With increasing competition and growing price challenges within the retail sector, fast decision making is becoming critical. Privately owned AF Blakemore, one of the country's leading independent food retail and distribution companies, is embracing a more performance led culture, using Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to track the activity of each business area.

The company is a key player in the world-wide SPAR symbol group and currently supplies more than 700 stores across England and Wales. Following the acquisition of Tates Ltd in 1994, AF Blakemore also has a strong "ownstores" division encompassing more than 200 SPAR shops. Other parts of the business include cash & carry, food services for local authorities, prisons and schools and an organic food distribution service.

As a highly diverse organisation, AF Blakemore requires a flexible business intelligence tool that can rapidly support buying decisions, financial analysis and customer queries from organisations as varied as Tesco, Sainsbury's and Warwickshire Schools. For the past 12 years, AF Blakemore has used SAP BusinessObjects business intelligence tools to deliver company wide reporting. For the Tate Spar and independent retailers this includes basket level analysis across every store on a daily basis.

To deliver faster information access and support the performance management culture, AF Blakemore opted to migrate to SAP BusinessObjects. Key to the decision was the speed with which SAP BusinessObjects Web Intelligence delivers *ad hoc* reports to the company's 100 power users across the business, many of whom are

located either at numerous satellite offices or work regularly from home.

The migration from BusinessObjects 5.1.2 to SAP BusinessObjects XI was managed by SAP partner Edenhouse Solutions. Transaction level information from the company's multiple bespoke solutions was exported into a SQL Server data warehouse and Edenhouse migrated the reports to the new SAP BusinessObjects environment. The process, which included upgrading the server infrastructure and streamlining the extensive reporting infrastructure to reduce the number of weekly reports from 5,000 to just over 3,000, took only three months. Edenhouse also conducted training to ensure the users were familiar with the new features and functionality provided by SAP BusinessObjects.

The additional functionality within SAP BusinessObjects, including alert driven scheduling, allowed AF Blakemore to eliminate several third party applications, delivering an immediate return on investment. In addition, the company is gaining significant commercial benefit from a number of new developments, including the introduction of a loyalty campaign for its 400 independent retailer customers. Detailed basket level analysis enables AF Blakemore to offer each store a tailored incentive to buy more products, encouraging loyalty and boosting the company's turnover.

Leveraging the web-based technology has enabled AF Blakemore to transform the speed of standard reporting; key financial reports that previously took one hour to run are now available within three minutes. This speed is encouraging users to undertake far more 'what if?' analysis to assess the implications of purchasing decisions, discounts or promotions on sales and revenue.

SAP BusinessObjects also provides the platform for the introduction of dashboards to reflect AF Blakemore's KPIs, enabling the company to both continually monitor performance across the group and identify and respond to new business opportunities.

Call: **0121 767 9280**
Visit: **www.edenhousesolutions.co.uk**

Edenhouse
THE FIRST NAME FOR SAP