ZAP

benefit
SAN FRANCISCO

> "It's refreshing that ZAP is an application that can be configured and doesn't have to be customized, meaning anyone can work on it."
>
> —Art Collins, IT Director

Industry

cosmetics

No. of employees

201-500

Product

ZAP Data Hub for Microsoft Dynamics AX

Website

benefitcosmetics.com

Background

Benefit is a boutique cosmetics, fragrance, and skincare company based in San Francisco with a global wholesale, retail, and online sales presence. Benefit manufacturers and distributes luxury cosmetic products worldwide and is a subsidiary of Louis Vuitton Moet Hennessy.

When Art Collins came onboard as the IT Director in June 2009, Benefit was outsourcing their business intelligence reporting to a consulting firm. The cost of this outsourced reporting was about $40,000 per year for just the Americas. It would be another $30,000 per year for the consultants to produce reports for the UK, France, and China. Art decided to review the process and determine if making a change in how Benefit conducted their reporting was warranted.

After reviewing their business intelligence reporting, Art decided he wanted to move it in-house. Cost was obviously one factor in Art's decision, but, as a self-described control-freak, Art also didn't feel comfortable outsourcing the "brains" of his organization. He wanted the control and flexibility to create and produce reports in-house without acquiring expenses each time a new report was requested. Art knew that mining data from his very complex data warehouse was not going to be easy.

Business Problem

The top management team at Benefit was particularly interested in receiving reports on the sales data that was flowing into the data warehouse every day from a variety of sources including the POS channel (Retail Pro), online sales, and the wholesale channel. Art decided that in order to limit the scope of what he believed could easily turn into a massive BI project, he wanted to focus the project exclusively on the sales data. Once the North American sales data reports were established, he wanted to be able to expand to data from the U.K., France, and China.

Art knows his internal clients at Benefit very well— top executives,sales and marketing folks. These people are not data analysts, so he wanted a solution that would present the data in easy-to-interpret chart format. He was looking for a fixed-bid approach as business intelligence projects can have a tendency to blow the budget. Art received three fixed bids with his project limited to just sales data.

One more requirement for the project was that users should be able to run the reports on their own without the daily assistance of IT personnel. IT would create the report framework and then hand it over to the users who can run the reports as frequently as they need.

Solution

Art chose ZAP Data Hub to build a solution specifically for Dynamics AX. ZAP was not the least expensive tool that Art evaluated, but he selected it because it fulfilled all of his requirements and he felt comfortable with the Microsoft partner that would spearhead the project. It would also provide a cost savings over the current outsourcing of the reports to the consultants.

ROI

Art has a lot of experience using consultants for a variety of IT projects. "When you work with someone on ERP upgrades, they lean heavily on tools that they've developed and they

like to customize solutions. This locks in future business, since customized solutions use proprietary technology and if a new solution provider comes in, they must rewrite all the proprietary codes."

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Art anticipates that the ROI on the ZAP project will be three years. Dropping the outsourcing expenses of $40,000 per year for the consulting firm, as well the consultant's additional expenses of adding the UK, France and China to the reporting structure ensures that Benefit will be spending a lot less on business intelligence solutions by using ZAP.

Benefits

- Above and beyond lower costs and more control over data, Benefit is realizing additional benefits using ZAP Data Hub

- With limited IT staff, Benefit needed a "user tool supported by IT, and not an IT tool and so far it looks like this can be done with ZAP Data Hub"

- Art has been setting up the reports and users are running them. But the best part for Art is that he has the ability to change reports and to create new ones without incurring additional consultancy fees