



▶ Sales Portal/Dashboard— Life Sciences

Utilizing Sales Data for Multiple Functions

Life Sciences companies share many similarities with IT high technology companies - most significantly, they incur heavy R&D costs. The time and costs of clinical trials and FDA approval are substantial. As a result, once a new drug is brought to market, measuring market share and acceptance by healthcare providers is a key metric pharmaceutical companies track to measure their success.

Background

A client needed a sales portal/dashboard environment for use by clinical specialists, regional, national and corporate sales associates, and by brand marketing managers. Each job function required viewing the data in a different way. Clinical specialists wanted access to the current sales data, measured down to individual dosages, for each healthcare provider. They also wanted a mobile application that provided full functionality from any location. Sales management wanted to view, compare and contrast sales performance at several levels of aggregation. Brand marketing managers wanted to compare sales volume over time, against their business models, and against the competition.

Business Challenges

What appeared on the surface to be a relatively simple data warehouse and dashboard application actually was much broader in scope than a traditional dashboard deployment as the final product had to meet a diverse group of business users. The data warehouse and dashboard functionality had to accommodate new product families and brands without a fundamental redesign—requiring the design to be future-proof. The dashboard application was to be delivered to over 2,000 users, so the design had to be user-friendly and very intuitive.

Senior management and brand managers wanted highly summarized data to be displayed in the dashboard so a balance needed to be found between usability and the desire for an unlimited ability to drill into detail, and across multiple product brands. The client also required access to any level of detail to be achieved in less than five mouse clicks.

Emtec had to lay out a realistic project roadmap—adopting an agile approach to incremental deliverables and demonstrating elements of the dashboard as they were completed. Also, Emtec was required to manage functional change in the project—because a minor change in the architecture would have major technical implications.

Technical Challenges

Emtec adopted a release level approach for deliverables to manage scope creep. Once the functional design and technical specs had been signed off, any change was regarded as a Ver.2 enhancement. Emtec assembled a multi-disciplinary project team that included business subject matter experts and Emtec programmers. The client's knowledge of its business practices and Emtec's expertise in technical deployment we both required for the completion of a successful project.

Solution Overview

The dashboard was designed around three product families and nine brands. Emtec worked in a collaborative project environment to deliver a sales portal/dashboard for use across the different functions of the company. The project team consisted of a client team responsible for the back-end data warehouse, a team responsible for operations and performance, and a consulting team that was responsible for all elements from initial dashboard design, to build, deployment and user adoption.

The company wanted a 100% user adoption rate without having to enforce acceptance. To influence the high user adoption rate, the dashboard was integrated with the single sign-on corporate portal, to include all dashboard displays appearing as additional (DHTML & Java) portal pages.

Project Approach

The project was divided up into 5 work streams:

- ◆ Project planning and architecture: includes business analysis and business user adoption workshops
- ◆ Data infrastructure; includes all data related efforts to support business intelligence
- ◆ Business intelligence; using and incremental value-based development approach
- ◆ User acceptance testing (UAT) and performance test team
- ◆ Testing, training, deployment and go-live support

Technologies Deployed

- ◆ Business Intelligence—Business Objects Enterprise—Crystal Xcelcius and Plumtree Portal
 - Ab Initio—GDE and EME, SQL scripts
 - Source data—DB2, flat files & XML (external data feeds)
 - Target DW—Oracle
- ◆ Integration with single sign-on (SSO with customer's RSA security implementation)
- ◆ Java methods to provide tight (bi-directional) integration between the portal and dashboard displays.

Business Impact

Emtec created a dashboard application that has become a single trusted source for sales data. The application was completely integrated into the daily routines of clinical specialists. The client achieved a 100% user adoption rate due to the implementation of workshops and a user-friendly dashboard.

The application also achieved a consistent sub-5 second response time for all dashboard displays and maintained 99% or better availability. An “always on” environment let the client access information on-demand. The new platform could also easily extend to new product brands and also expand into new areas of functionality.

As a result of better access to information, the clinical specialists were able to sell additional products on a monthly basis. The client saw a return of investment of over 3000% in the first year as incremental revenue rose due to more knowledgeable specialists.

About Emtec

Established in 1964, Emtec, Inc. is a systems integrator that provides IT services and products to the federal, state, local, education and commercial markets. Our market leading value-based management methods, coupled with best-in-class IT technology, application development services and strategic IT consulting, address a wide range of specific client needs, as well as support broader IT transformation initiatives. Emtec's service capabilities span the United States, Canada and countries around the globe.