



Port floats Business Intelligence framework



“Our new solution creates a single source of information where information is available faster, can be shared across business teams, ensures longevity of our information and puts powerful reporting tools at our disposal.”

THE SITUATION

At the hub of Lyttelton Port Company’s (LPC) 24/7 shipping service to exporters and importers are complex harbour management and finance systems, and from these they needed ‘one source of truth.’

THE PAIN

As the major deep-water port in the South Island, LPC offers a full array of shipping services, handling over nine million tonnes of containerised cargo, bulk products and imported vehicles annually from over 1,200 visiting vessels. Multiple and complex source systems needed to be consolidated into a data warehouse as a first step on a business intelligence path.

Supported by a staff of over 400 in operational, management and administrative roles, LPC’s challenge was to bring the many mechanisms and systems that supported different reporting and analysis tasks together into one centralised and consolidated framework, thereby empowering managers with improved, accurate information for decision making.

Wanted: a partner with a track record in business intelligence.

LPC went to the market, and began an initial data warehouse build in WherescapeRED 5. The complexities and magnitude of the task alerted LPC’s Technical Analyst Katherine Deacon to the need to find a partner with the “muscle to make it happen.” She says, “Intergen was selected because of their track record, their business intelligence capability and their focus on Microsoft tools. We wanted local people with a commitment to our business goals who could put company-wide resources at our disposal.”

Clarity and consolidation across complex systems.

The initial challenge was to extract and consolidate data from several source systems and transform them into dimensional models, optimised for reporting and for analysis. Wherescape RED delivered a significant benefit to the project by enabling rapid iterations and thereby reducing the overall time and cost of the project. The Report Centre component of MOSS (Microsoft Office SharePoint Server) was used as the portal through which the business users could see their reports. The scope of the Port’s business is substantial, ranging from marine and container terminals to bulk port services. The business tools at work include Lawson M3 Finance systems (ERP), Sparcs N4 terminal operations, Pay Global, Flexitracker container invoicing and Capp, a coal management application, and many other systems.

By pulling these systems into line within the central data warehouse environment, a number of key improvements have already made an impact. Big picture gains are high visibility and transparency across the business and streamlining of complex tasks to produce cost savings. CIO Darrin Bain confirms that structured reporting means information is available to managers significantly faster than before. He says, “The ability to drill to lower levels of detail empowers managers to get information that was previously not available, improving our revenue information, forecasting and budgeting capabilities.”

LPC’s finance team notes several gains. According to Business Analyst, Christine Wright, accounts previously had to be generated in the accounting system and printed. These were then manually split into different business units which were separately scanned to .pdf files and placed on the intranet for viewing by staff. Now individuals can select which business units accounts they wish to run (and for which period) and run them themselves through the report centre. “Through our report centre we have created detailed reports that effectively pull information from various parts of the accounting system to provide users with an extremely detailed view of the performance of their business units. This is a major improvement as it has increased the transparency of accounts to budget holders.” She adds: “The report centre is user friendly which has encouraged widespread usage.”

Wherescape RED 5 and MOSS have set the scene and LPC sees massive opportunities moving forward.

THE GAIN

Darrin Bain says, “We have the impetus down a BI track and Intergen has been a great partner. They have gained a strong understanding of our business and recommended approaches to our BI implementation that have resulted in better solutions.”



ENGINE ROOM:

- >> Wherescape RED 5
- >> Microsoft SQL Server 2005 suite, subsequently upgraded to 2008
- >> Microsoft Office SharePoint Server (MOSS)