



CUSTOMERS

Bigelow Teas Brews the Right Flavors at the Right Time with Business Intelligence



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Melanie Dower, Project Leader, Bigelow Teas

Industry

Manufacturer and distributor of fine teas

Business Pain

Bigelow Teas needed a user-friendly reporting tool that would allow non-technical users to update, create, and share reports without relying on its IT department. Users in sales, marketing, and finance use the reports to analyze the impact of promotions, compare consumer and sales trends, and improve overall product profitability.

Why Business Objects?

Bigelow Teas chose BusinessObjects Enterprise 6 as its enterprise standard to track, understand, and manage enterprise performance in its sales, finance, and marketing departments.

Business Objects Partner

Andrews Consulting Group

Why Andrews

Consulting Group?

A leader in ERP and business intelligence implementations, Andrews Consulting Group has a strong track record helping businesses achieve their goals through technology, process improvement, and design.

Challenge

Over 50 years ago, Ruth Campbell Bigelow perfected her signature tea blend, Constant Comment®. Since then, Bigelow Teas has perfected teatime with over 50 varieties of flavored, traditional, iced, decaffeinated, and herbal teas.

Introducing new tea flavors and products can be a risky business. Before Bigelow Teas delivers something new to the market, the company must first fully understand consumer and sales trends. Marketing, sales, and finance employees must be able to answer specific questions such as *who bought Mint Medley® tea last month, why did a supplier in Connecticut increase sales by 4% in June, or who are the largest/smallest resellers of Bigelow Teas*, to know which products to discontinue and which ones to promote.



For answers, employees turned to the IT department. But as the questions became more and more specific—and frequent—the IT department was quickly overwhelmed with reporting requests. Though the information was stored in an enterprise resource planning (ERP) system, users were unable to access the data, let alone draw accurate conclusions and take action on it. Melanie Dower, project leader at Bigelow Teas, sums up the pain, "Our existing end-user reporting tool wasn't user-friendly, so users simply weren't using it. Most users were unable to create their own reports, so we looked for a solution that offered self-serve business intelligence (BI) and to free up IT resources."

Approach

Bigelow Teas turned to Business Objects partner, Andrews Consulting Group, to develop a successful BI solution. "We trust Andrews Consulting," says Dower. "We enjoy working with them and have had success with their recommendations in the past. So when they recommended Business Objects, we were confident that this was the right choice for us."

Because usability was a must, Bigelow Teas chose BusinessObjects™ Enterprise 6 as its enterprise standard to track, understand, and manage enterprise performance across the sales, finance, and marketing departments. "Enterprise 6 looks and feels like Microsoft Excel, which speeds the learning curve for our end users," explains Dower.

Results

With Enterprise 6, IT no longer needs to send reports directly to users. "Users can now search for reports, refresh them, make updates, and create updates without help from IT," says Dower. "Even non-technical users are finding it much easier to analyze data on their own, which has dramatically changed the way we do business at Bigelow Teas."

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End users are just as excited about the new functionalities as the IT department. Chris Costello, category management analyst, has never considered himself as a technical person but using Enterprise 6 has changed his mind. "Enterprise 6 is much easier to use than anything I've seen before," says Costello. "It makes users want to drill deeper into the information and better understand the numbers behind the business issues."

Costello and his coworkers use Enterprise 6 to analyze sales metrics such as factory sales and compare trends against other data. "From a sales perspective, we can now more accurately predict sales forecasts based on shipment levels," explains Costello. "And we can identify where we need to increase sales before it's too late. For example, if sales are soft with a certain reseller, we can figure out why and work with the reseller to boost sales back to higher levels."

Stronger trend analysis capabilities mean more profitable products. With Enterprise 6, Bigelow Teas can now compare consumer, sales, and market trends with data that is up to five years old. Before, the company could only compare trends with data that was up to a year old, which didn't give the full picture. Bigelow Teas then uses this data to discontinue products that are no longer profitable and identify market opportunities for new products.

Likewise, Bigelow Teas uses this same capability for promotional analysis to learn how specific promotions affect sales. This helps Bigelow Teas determine which promotions are the most effective, whether they should be used again in the future, or how well geographically-based promotions work in different regions during different times of year. For example, a hot tea promotion may be more profitable in the cold winter months on the east coast of the U.S., while a promotion campaign for iced tea will be more successful during the spring months in the southern U.S. The finance department also benefits from promotional analysis for an immediate pulse on the financial impact and expected revenue resulting from targeted campaigns.

Suppliers and partners also benefit from Enterprise 6. Each month, suppliers and partners receive a BusinessObjects report detailing sales and marketing metrics such as sales by item, product inventory, delivery times, regional gross profit margins, and new promotions. Dower says that since Bigelow Teas started sharing this information with suppliers and resellers, sales and IT employees now spend less time on the phone answering questions and more time adding value to the organization.

Greater understanding of the business affects every part of the organization. For employees like Dower, the greatest advantage of using Enterprise 6 is that users better understand company information. "Before Enterprise 6, users didn't understand where metrics came from, what they meant, or how to use the data. Lights are now turning on across the organization," says Dower. "As users create more reports on their own, they finally understand how sales and customer data is reported—and how they directly affect one another. Our business can only improve with this deeper understanding."

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