

Success Story

Performance area: Business Intelligence

Industry: Energy

Customer: Axpo AG, Sales and Marketing Division



The way to a new business intelligence solution, with iNFORMATEC expertise

Together with its IT partner iNFORMATEC, Axpo AG replaced their existing business intelligence software with a modern, sleek solution – which includes financial benefits and increased flexibility.



The Axpo Group is one of Switzerland's "lifelines": along with the electricity plants in the cantons, it supplies approximately 2.5 million people with electricity in North-eastern Switzerland.

To manage energy supply and transfer, the management of reservoirs, power plants and electricity declarations for clients, the "Sales and Marketing" division of Axpo AG relies on accurate data from various sources and readily adaptable bare reports. These had been previously generated with a business intelligence software based on a data warehouse. A system that was inflexible and expensive, according to Urs Mathis of Axpo AG.

Urs Mathis is project manager and as such responsible for

the intradepartmental project. His team of 10-15 people and the external IT partner iNFORMATEC rapidly achieved the implementation of QlikView, the new business intelligence platform. The idea of replacing the existing platform had arisen and in QlikView an ideal solution was found, explains Mathis:

"With the old system, we would have had to undergo a release upgrade, which would have meant adapting the reports again. We definitely did not want to do that." Nik Borer, who over a long period coordinated the project as technical manager at Axpo AG, adds: "Previously, we always had to go all round the houses. A small change in a report required two or three weeks for implementation. "

"We had already become aware of iNFORMATEC during evaluation at a QlikView practical workshop."

(www.qlikview-praxis-workshop.ch)

QlikView was one of several business intelligence solutions which the Axpo AG tested GE during their 2011 software evaluation. During the implementation phase, the decision was made for an IT partner who would include consulting and implementation in the package. "We had already become aware of iNFORMATEC during evaluation at a QlikView practical workshop (www.qlikview-praxis-workshop.ch). The iNFORMATEC staff made a very competent impression. We saw that they understood the functions of QlikView extremely well and would be able to develop optimal solutions for us," says Urs Mathis.

The previous reports were inflexible, says Mathis, and figures are central to their business. Besides reports for

controlling, for the evaluation of the sales/marketing transactions and for energy procurement, Axpo is also bound to the Federal Office of Energy. To cover the different needs of various internal and external contacts, the company is reliant on highly customisable reports.

Complex implementation

"We already received excellent advice in the development stage of the data base and the data model."

Urs Mathis explained that the implementation of the new Business Intelligence platform placed special demands on everybody. "The complexity was a challenge, even for iNFORMATEC." However, Axpo relied on the first-class advice from the IT service provider from the outset. "We received excellent advice, even for the design of the data base and the data model. The experts at QlikTech also confirmed that the solution proposed by iNFORMATEC was very apt." To replace the existing data warehouse,

Axpo and iNFORMATEC had to design a new structure. Project leader Flávio Soares of iNFORMATEC explained the approach in basic steps: "We have deliberately avoided a classic data warehouse solution and must ensure accordingly that the data is brought together from the base system in QlikView. Before we can use data for analysis, it needs to go through several processing steps. There are caches, transformations, quality controls. All this is brought about with QlikView."

"We also appreciated the fact that iNFORMATEC offered the necessary support, even during critical phases ..." says Urs Mathis, Project Manager

"... and with spirit and enthusiasm which went above and beyond," affirms Nik Borer, Systems Manager

Axpo and iNFORMATEC are working under time pressure, because from June 2012 the previous data warehouse will no longer be available. "It is clear that when the existing business intelligence system is shut down, the reports from QlikView must be absolutely reliable," says Mathis. There were apparently some difficult moments during implementation, but the IT partner responded quickly and when

necessary put in 10-hour days: "We very much appreciated that iNFORMATEC offered the necessary support, even during critical phases," reiterated Nik Borer: "and with spirit and enthusiasm which went above and beyond the call of duty."

Greater independence, lower costs

"Users have taken this flexibility and run with it to discover new areas, such as analysis queries. This was not the case previously."

With QlikView, data sources are worked on directly, which is much more efficient, explains Urs Mathis. The newly won freedom was already apparent during the implementation phase, as Flávio Soares of iNFORMATEC

points out: "The users have taken this flexibility and run with it to discover new areas, such as analysis queries. This was not the case previously."

One reason for this is the surprising performance power of QlikView.

Company

Axpo AG employs more than 1,800 people and is 100% owned by Axpo Holding AG. Along with the electricity works for the cantons and their business partners in North-eastern Switzerland, Axpo AG supplies around 2.5 million people with electricity.

Targets

- Replacement of the data warehouse
- Back-up and improvement of reports
- Cost savings

Solution

With the implementation of QlikView, a modern BI suite was provided which is more cost-effective, has a higher performance and whose reports can be tailor-made to the most diverse requirements. QlikView acts as a data integration and analysis platform. Applications range from controlling to reports for clients and the Federal Office for Energy

Advantages

- Working directly with the data source without going through the data warehouse
- Minimization of expenses for customising reports
- Cost efficiency

Data Sources

Trading system iOPT, Generis energy data management system

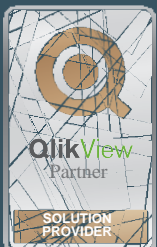
"At the outset, the need for a replacement for the existing reporting arose and in QlikView we found a good solution. Thanks to iNFORMATEC, this could very well be implemented on schedule and very rapidly started delivering complex reports".

"Previously, we had to wait one and a half minutes for a report. The same loading procedure now takes 5-8 seconds," says Nik Borer with satisfaction. Soares explains that the responsible department can now provide reporting support from the first to the third level themselves. There are of course still server operating costs, but these are much lower, because the data warehouse no longer needs to be actively maintained.

For Urs Mathis, the far lower cost is a key point. He assumes that ROI will be achieved after a transition period of two to three years, and that every year a five-digit sum in Francs will be saved by the lower software costs and shorter implementation times.

Axpo managers Mathis and Borer are proud of the implementation. The enthusiasm of all those involved in the project for the new solution was appreciable. Nik Borer summarises: "It was a completely successful project. Very positive, from start to finish." Urs Mathis agrees: "At the outset, the need for a replacement for the existing reporting arose and in QlikView we found an excellent solution. Thanks to iNFORMATEC, this could be very well implemented on schedule and very rapidly started delivering complex reports".

Further information



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