

Meijer improves reporting with Infor10 Corporate Performance Management




Setting the strategy.

Jeff Powers, director of financial reporting at Meijer, notes that feedback from the business areas helped Meijer determine that its existing financial reporting processes needed to be changed. "The business areas were asking if they could have more data, as well as get it in a more standard format and in a central location," he says. "We used to distribute profit and loss statements in hard copies. The information was available electronically but not via a web delivery method."

According to Powers, "Our budgeting process was done completely in Microsoft® Excel® and Access. It wasn't directly connected from a reporting standpoint into the financial reports, which is what the business areas needed and wanted."

Powers knew that a central repository for data had become a necessity. "We wanted to have our operating results in the same place as our plans," he says. "Having a web delivery piece was crucial in order to provide easy access for our users. We also wanted to get rid of the spreadsheets and be able to slice and dice the data automatically within the tool itself."

Getting business specific.

Meijer's finance and IT teams worked together to determine the process by which a software vendor would be chosen. "We set up a series of demos with several vendors," says Powers. "We asked the same questions of all of them and focused primarily on planning, but we also wanted to be able to dovetail that into the reporting side. We knew we wanted to have one database for all of our information instead of multiple databases, and we wanted to be able to import data in and out of it. We also wanted to be able to drill through and out of the database into supporting documentation, and we wanted the web view."

Finally, we were concerned with how quickly we could develop the new system and get it up and running."

"The package we bought had to enable us to improve the quality of our financial reports while driving down costs."

—JEFF POWERS, DIRECTOR OF FINANCIAL REPORTING, MEIJER, INC.

About the company.

Grand Rapids, Michigan-based Meijer, Inc. is one of the largest private retailers in the United States. Founded in 1934 as a supermarket chain, Meijer earned credit as the pioneer of the modern supercenter concept in 1962. It now operates more than 175 retail supercenters comprising more than 40 departments across Michigan, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, and Kentucky.

To learn more about Meijer, Inc., visit www.meijer.com.

A 20-year Infor™ FMS M Series customer, Meijer narrowed the initial group of products to three, and from there selected Infor10 Corporate Performance Management (PM10). “Our filters during the evaluation process centered on cost, number of databases involved, and ease of data integration,” says Powers. “We were also concerned with the reliability and track records of the vendors and their products. Infor was our choice. We felt comfortable that the data integration with our Infor FMS M Series general ledger would go very smoothly.”

The implementation began within eight weeks from the time of purchase, and the first set of profit and loss statements was published within six months.

Seeing results.

With Infor10 Corporate Performance Management (PM10), business area users can now go to the web for the information they need. As they sign onto the web, they see messages about the availability of financial reports, key scorecards, or other information posted by the finance team.

“Our more than 200 users are happy to be able to go to a central spot, pull the information, have it immediately go into Excel if they want to work with it, and be able to pull the past history,” Powers notes. “They can page through their profit and loss statements and drill into further detail that supports the individual P&L lines, and they can flip between actuals and budgets. Their ability to drill into the support data eliminates some of the emails that we would have sent to them manually in the past so they’d have their backup data. Now they have it right in front of them.”

Becky Vanderploeg, corporate accounting team leader, notes that she’s had a positive experience with Infor’s customer support group every time she’s worked with them. “The customer support staff is excellent,” she says. “They are very timely. As soon as a case is posted, I get either a phone call or a web response. We also had a group come to our site to help us determine how to get our process to run and consolidate and report as quickly as possible, which is very important to us given our three-day close.”

Facts at a glance

Solution

Infor10 Corporate Performance Management (PM10)

Industry

Retail

Country

USA

Powers notes that Meijer often tests new processes, products, or store layouts and designs. “We use different stores as laboratories to test these new processes or layouts, and we are always asked to show what the performance was before, during, and after one of these tests. Obviously, the system that we use has to be fairly nimble to allow us to create that type of reporting,” he says.

Doing business better.

States Powers, “The package that we bought had to enable us to improve the quality of our financial reports while driving down costs. From an accounting department standpoint, we needed to be sure going forward that we would be able to be more efficient in producing financial statements. Infor10 Corporate Performance Management (PM10) is going to allow us to continue to increase the amount of reporting that we do, in a timely and efficient manner, yet still be able to hold down our costs in the process. That will be even more important to Meijer in the future as we continue to grow.”

About Infor.

Infor is a leading provider of business software and services, helping more than 70,000 customers in 164 countries improve operations and drive growth. To learn more about Infor, please visit www.infor.com.

Infor Corporate Headquarters
13560 Morris Road
Suite 4100
Alpharetta, Georgia 30004
USA
Phone: +1(800) 260 2640

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www.infor.com