

Dryen Case Study



Dryen Cleans Up Reporting with Microsoft BI

Dryen designs and creates a comprehensive range of soft home textile products, specialising primarily in bed linen. Operating a state of the art design facility, Dryen accelerates the latest design, fashion, colour and product trends to market. Combined with world class procurement, shipping, distribution and administration, Dryen provides a full turn key product solution for retailers.

Part of Dryen's success comes from a philosophy of collaboration. The company regularly meets with clients, providing in-depth reports to help them better manage stock holdings and to ensure a thorough understanding of upcoming commitments.

Dryen's product sets account for between 1000 and 1500 stock keeping units (SKUs) and fall into two main ranges: plain dyed items, and seasonal fashion designs. The plain dyed products tend to have a high turnover and are sold on a replenishment basis. As a store runs low on stock, more is ordered. To avoid stock-outs it's critical that both the retailer and Dryen identify trends in demand and that they understand how sales are going down at any given time.

The printed range however changes with each season as new designs are developed and manufactured. Large department stores place their orders for a specific quantity. Once the stock is sold, Dryen's commitment comes to an end. Capturing sales data from these clients is important as it informs future manufacturing plans.

Problem

Until recently the majority of Dryen's sales and stock holding reports were prepared in Microsoft Excel spreadsheets. Every week sales data about each retailing group was collated and then manually assembled into an Excel document.

According to Andrew Carrazzo, Information Systems Manager at Dryen, the problem with this was, "Excel didn't have the robustness or functionality to deal with the quantity of data that we required."

The degree of manual effort meant that on occasion it could take up to 24 hours to receive a report. Accuracy had become an issue. Changes to spreadsheets resulted in errors creeping in to formulae. Sometimes information relating to new designs was overlooked and failed to make it onto the reports. "People began to conclude that the reports were inaccurate," Carrazzo explains.

DRYEN AUSTRALIA

At a glance

Business Objective

To improve the accuracy and timeliness of reports, particularly those relating to the management of stock.

Solution

- Microsoft Business Intelligence
- Microsoft SQL Server
- SQL Server Integration Services
- Microsoft SQL Server Reporting Services

Business Benefits

- Sales and stock data is automatically refreshed daily
- Standard reports can be accessed on demand
- Estimated staff savings of 25 hours per week.

Implementation Partner

Professional Advantage



Dryen Case Study



Solution

To resolve the problems and to replace the reliance on Excel, Carrazzo and Dryen Finance Director, Brian Churchill, were tasked with identifying and implementing a Business Intelligence solution. Three project goals were established: to reduce labour costs; dramatically improve accuracy and timing of reports; and to create a system whereby reporting would no longer be reliant on a few key staff. Instead reporting had to be capable of being delegated to the entire organisation.

After researching possible packages Carrazzo selected a Microsoft Business Intelligence (BI) solution. "Microsoft has a proven reputation of quality and they have a strong market presence. This was important because we wanted software that we knew could be easily supported. Through internal staff we also already understood SQL Server Integration Services (SSIS) and SQL Server Reporting Services (SSRS)."

Having identified the software, Carrazzo's next task was to select a technology services company capable of developing the BI solution that Dryen envisaged.

"Professional Advantage understood our requirements right from the word go. Their expertise very quickly became apparent and they challenged me about the structure of how we were going to develop a solution. We bounced off each other really well," Carrazzo notes.

Besides providing a firm understanding of project requirements, the early questioning by Professional Advantage was instrumental in ensuring an expedient design for the Business Intelligence system. "There were no major problems during the project. We got everything right at the front end," Carrazzo says, "so it all worked quite seamlessly."

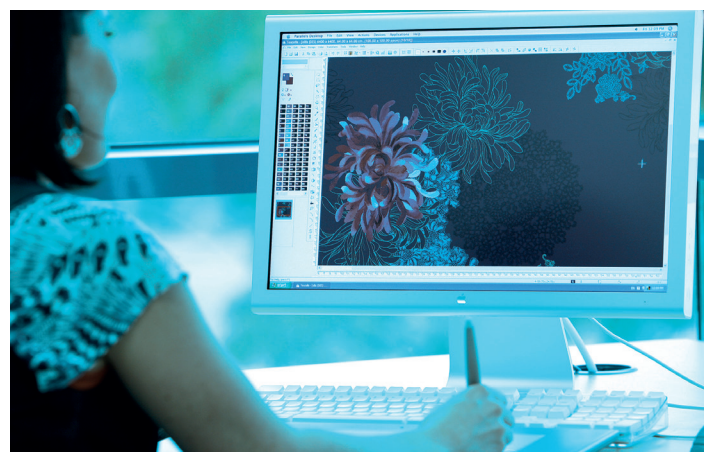
Carrazzo believes that the committed involvement of Dryen's finance department played a major role in the Business Intelligence solution's success. "The project was managed and planned by IT in conjunction with Finance. This was critical in terms of getting sponsorship for the project."

All up, establishing the specifications, developing the system, integrating data feeds and creating the reports took approximately six months. By mid 2009 the new Business Intelligence system was almost ready to go live but before the old Excel reports could be turned off, Carrazzo carried out extensive testing.

"Comparative data was generated from the old reporting system and the new web-based system. Speed and accuracy testing was undertaken. Also key users were trained in the system, monitoring their level of acceptance and ease of use. All results exceeded our expectations. User acceptance was very high, and timing and quality of data was exceptional."

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Andrew Carrazzo,
Information Systems Manager



Dryen Case Study



Benefits

Now, twelve months down the track, Carrazzo says, "From a potential 24 hour turnaround in the past, reporting has become instantaneous. Data is automatically refreshed daily and all reports are available to users on demand via a web browser."

The majority of reports are product- and customer-based, covering data such as invoice sales histories, current stock on hand and weekly stocks cover. Integration with Dryen's EDI [electronic data interchange] system also means that for the first time, data can be easily interrogated beyond buying group level, providing insights into individual store activities.

"This gives us the intelligence to even better manage stock outages and overstock positions at store level," Carrazzo says. "Having the ability to consolidate invoicing, stock holdings and customer register sales for like customer groups has totally removed the cumbersome process of manually adding data. Conservatively this has shaved three to five hours per week off the task load of our logistics manager."

Customer product review meetings are coordinated with less lead time as reports can be generated quickly and with far less effort. Being able to meet more regularly has strengthened Dryen's unified approach to stock management, resulting in optimum stock positions for all parties concerned.

"Having important reporting information readily accessible to our key sales and marketing team has strengthened their dealings with key customers. It provides the perception of an improved sense of professionalism from our team and is resulting in greater business opportunities," Carrazzo notes.

"All of this has taken a lot of the noise out of the IT area. It has freed up our key administrator of the old Excel reporting system, so that they are now available to do other more productive duties. I'd say conservatively that the new system has saved us 20 to 25 staff hours per week," he adds.

Future

To date Dryen's use of Business Intelligence has predominantly focussed on management of stock but Carrazzo acknowledges there is potential for further development. "We have a robust, powerful tool at our disposal now. The opportunity is there to analyse and interrogate other factors such as sales trends."

"We've always had a good reputation with our customers for our quality of data and for our ability to give pertinent reports. This project has strengthened that reputation. We can now provide to both our internal and external customers key information which is accurate, relevant, timely and web enabled," Carrazzo concludes.

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For more information
visit: www.pa.com.au/microsoft
email: microsoftinfo@pa.com.au
call: 1800 126 499