



Kawasaki Motors Corp., U.S.A.

Gearing up for sophisticated business planning and accelerating analytics with Aviana and IBM

Overview

The need

Sales of powersports vehicles depend on a complex web of seasonal and product-related factors. How could KMC gain the insight it needed to enhance planning and reporting to boost sales performance?

The solution

By working with Aviana to enhance an existing IBM® Cognos® TM1® application and re-design its IBM Cognos Business Intelligence environment to meet current business needs, KMC has been able to simplify and accelerate reporting for more than 200 users.

The benefit

BI enhancements provide a single view across all KMC's data sources while enhancing insight into seasonal sales. The solution saves weeks, eliminates manual data entry, and has encouraged over 40 percent of the business to become users.

The market for high-performance sports vehicles is a complex one. Some products may sell well at particular times of year; others may be more popular in some parts of the country than others. Sometimes production scheduling may need to be adjusted to match an anticipated rise or fall in retail sales.

Kawasaki Motors Corp., U.S.A. (KMC) realized it needed clearer visibility of how all these factors interact in order to create effective business plans and react more responsively to changing business conditions. By working with Aviana to re-design its business analytics environment, the company has put itself in an even stronger position to optimize its operations and capitalize on emerging opportunities.

Setting the scene

KMC markets and distributes Kawasaki motorcycles, ATVs, Side x Sides, and Jet Ski® watercraft through a network of almost 1,200 independent retailers, with close to an additional 7,400 retailers specializing in general purpose engines. KMC and its affiliates employ nearly 3,100 people in the United States, with approximately 300 of them located at KMC's Irvine, California headquarters.

Introducing enterprise analytics has been a huge step forward for KMC. Jay Martinez, Business Intelligence Analyst, says: "When we first demonstrated the tools, people were saying: 'this is going to save me a week of my time'. Thanks to those savings and the additional enhancements we've delivered, more than 40 percent of our employees are now enthusiastic analytics users."



Solution components

Software

- IBM® Cognos® Business Intelligence 10
- IBM Cognos TM1®

IBM Business Partner

- Aviana
-

Kawasaki's tagline, "Let the good times roll.™" is recognized worldwide. For five decades, the Kawasaki brand has become synonymous with powerful, stylish and category-leading vehicles. Information about Kawasaki's complete line of powersports products and Kawasaki affiliates can be found on the Internet at www.kawasaki.com

Several years ago, the company realized that its existing spreadsheet-based business reporting and planning processes were becoming too laborious and inflexible to support its growing organization.

By working with IBM Business Partners to deploy a suite of IBM Business Analytics software (including IBM Cognos Business Intelligence and IBM Cognos TM1), KMC was able to retire the majority of its spreadsheets and give users in its sales, marketing and business planning teams a much greater level of insight into its operations and finances.

Jay Martinez, Business Intelligence Analyst at KMC, comments: "The initial introduction of business analytics was successful. But it wasn't until we completed an assessment of our IBM Cognos Business Intelligence environment with Aviana and decided to re-design some aspects of the original deployment to deliver more flexibility and even better performance for our users that we were able to improve user adoption.

"We now have a user base of more than 200 employees who are empowered to create their own ad hoc queries."

Enhancing the analytics environment

Working with Aviana, an IBM Business Partner and specialist in business analytics and performance management, the KMC team upgraded to IBM® Cognos® Business Intelligence 10, and re-organized its reporting environment, replacing 35 separate packages with a single enterprise package. It also upgraded its IBM Cognos TM1® implementation to automate several key aspects of its business planning processes.

Mike Infiesto, Senior Programmer/Analyst, comments: "Aviana is a great partner for our organization, and a good percentage of what we have achieved with analytics is due to their knowledge, diligence and willingness to go the extra mile for us. They are experts in their technical field, but they're still able to work directly with our executives and communicate how and why a given approach is going to deliver the greatest value to the business."

Powerful, flexible analytics

Unifying business reporting requirements into a single IBM Cognos package has given KMC's users a much more powerful and flexible analytics capability, as Jay Martinez explains:

"Previously, it was difficult for users to pull in data from different data sources into a single report for analysis. Now it's easy. For example, we can now look at sales across both retail and wholesale, and match them against current inventory – which is a huge advantage when we are looking for ways to optimize our operations."

All ad hoc analysis is now performed in an exclusive user environment installed with the latest version of Cognos, which has dramatically improved response times for users. "There were users who didn't like how queries worked in the original analytics environment – and we're now seeing them come back to us and sign up for training sessions," comments Jay Martinez. "It's a much friendlier environment and the performance is fantastic even when users in California and at our Michigan subsidiary are logged in at the same time."

“Automated reporting against plan metrics has helped us promptly identify areas where corrective action can be made to help us achieve our sales targets.”

— Julie Walsh, Director, Sales Administration, Kawasaki Motors Corp., U.S.A.

Better management of purchase orders and invoices

Paul Jollineau, Director, Parts & Accessories Marketing and Sales, comments: “We have many success stories, but the most significant is the reporting and communications we have set up with our accessories vendors.

“We were able to create queries to report on the status of open purchase orders with each vendor. This is important because we need to reconcile orders with vendors to maintain accuracy.

“This has resulted in reducing most of the supply problems that are caused by mismatches between vendors’ purchase order databases and our own. This has helped raise our dealer order fill rate from 85 percent to 97 percent.”

More automated business planning

Kawasaki’s business planning capabilities have also been augmented by using seasonality tables in IBM Cognos TM1 to automate the distribution of sales figures across months of the year.

Ryan Shirley, Program and Planning Analyst, explains: “Each product has its own seasonal sales patterns – for example, personal watercraft tend to sell very well at the start of the summer because that’s the best time to be out on the water, while motocross bikes sell better in cooler months and when the racing season begins.

“Our new solution allows us to just enter the top-line figures for sales targets, and the numbers automatically get spread across the months in an intelligent way.”

This spreading used to be a manual process, which took the planning team at least two full days each year. Now it happens instantly and the results are much more consistent, because the calculations are based on the historical sales data held in the seasonality tables, rather than the experience and intuition of individual users.

Driving more targeted marketing

Ryan Shirley comments: “By making it easy to leverage the massive amount of data at our fingertips, we are better able to analyze current retail trends at a more regional and district level. Previously, we were hindered by a lack of data, so we were only directing our marketing efforts at a national level; now we can dive deeper and target marketing efforts to specific areas of the country to make sure they get the perfect program for their market.

“This does not necessarily save us any money, but it helps us make better use of our marketing budget and achieve more of our sales goals, because we are targeting retail customers with promotions that really fit their market. Our dealer network has appreciated this change in strategy because it helps them sell to the people who walk into their dealerships.”

Rapid response to changing conditions

Ryan Shirley adds: “Looking at Cognos TM1 from a higher-level perspective, it’s a huge advantage to be able to create a draft business plan and then generate financial reports on-the-fly that we can take to the management team.”

“We can also instantly create a copy of the plan and update it with actuals from retail, wholesale and production, so if there are any variances, we can see them instantly and adapt our strategy. For example, if there’s going to be a shortfall in the availability of a certain product because the production schedule changes, we can start promoting alternative products to make sure we still hit our sales targets.”

Jay Martinez concludes: “The more powerful our analytics capabilities become, the more essential they become to our business users. We already have more than 40 percent of the company using analytics, and for most of them, the ability to see the latest figures on a daily basis has transformed the way they work – giving them the data-driven insight they need to work more efficiently and make better, more informed business decisions.”

About Aviana

Since 1994, Aviana has built a solid reputation as a preferred custom solutions and consulting partner for clients in healthcare, entertainment, finance, insurance, state and local government, retail, hospitality and gaming, and manufacturing.

Over the years, Aviana has empowered its customers with increased control and flexibility through a variety of best-in-class performance management solutions and strategies. As a result, it is now one of the fastest-growing IT consulting companies in Southern California.

To learn more about services and solutions from Aviana, please visit avianaglobal.com



About IBM Business Analytics

IBM Business Analytics software delivers data-driven insights that help organizations work smarter and outperform their peers. This comprehensive portfolio includes solutions for business intelligence, predictive analytics and decision management, performance management, and risk management.

Business Analytics solutions enable companies to identify and visualize trends and patterns in areas, such as customer analytics, that can have a profound effect on business performance. They can compare scenarios, anticipate potential threats and opportunities, better plan, budget and forecast resources, balance risks against expected returns and work to meet regulatory requirements. By making analytics widely available, organizations can align tactical and strategic decision-making to achieve business goals.

For more information

For further information please visit ibm.com/business-analytics



© Copyright IBM Corporation 2014

IBM Corporation
Software Group
Route 100
Somers, NY 10589

Produced in the United States of America
July 2014

IBM, the IBM logo, ibm.com, Cognos and TM1 are trademarks of International Business Machines Corp., registered in many jurisdictions worldwide. Other product and service names might be trademarks of IBM or other companies. A current list of IBM trademarks is available on the web at "Copyright and trademark information" at ibm.com/legal/copytrade.shtml.

"Kawasaki" and "Let the good times roll." are trademarks of Kawasaki.

This document is current as of the initial date of publication and may be changed by IBM at any time. Not all offerings are available in every country in which IBM operates.

The performance data and client examples cited are presented for illustrative purposes only. Actual performance results may vary depending on specific configurations and operating conditions. It is the user's responsibility to evaluate and verify the operation of any other products or programs with IBM products and programs. THE INFORMATION IN THIS DOCUMENT IS PROVIDED "AS IS" WITHOUT ANY WARRANTY, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, INCLUDING WITHOUT ANY WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY, FITNESS FOR A PARTICULAR PURPOSE AND ANY WARRANTY OR CONDITION OF NON-INFRINGEMENT. IBM products are warranted according to the terms and conditions of the agreements under which they are provided.



Please Recycle