

MOBILE PHONE COMPANY SFR MIGRATING 10,000 USERS TO ITS BUSINESSOBJECTS™ XI RELEASE 2 SOLUTIONS PLATFORM

“With BusinessObjects™ XI Release 2, we have implemented a true common business intelligence platform to cover the needs of all our departments and business divisions, potentially up to 10,000 users. Our productivity in BI projects has improved along with the performance of some of our applications.”

Jean Nembo, Business Intelligence Competency Center Manager at SFR.



Industry

Mobile telephone operator

Business Process Operations

Challenge

In a competitive market with fickle customers, SFR needed better knowledge about customers to retain their loyalty, and sought to reduce maintenance and deployment costs.

Why Business Objects?

Business Objects provides a common business intelligence platform for all of SFR's departments and business divisions.

Business Objects Products and Services

BusinessObjects™ XI Release 2

BusinessObjects Dashboard Builder

BusinessObjects Data Integrator

BusinessObjects Web Intelligence®

Crystal Reports®

Business Objects Global Field Services

CHALLENGE

With 18 million customers, 8,000 employees, and €8.6 billion in turnover, SFR is the second largest mobile telephone operator in France. SFR is structured into the main business divisions of marketing, sales, customers, network, and information systems, which are supported by the central departments of human resources (HR), finance, and IT. Prior to 2003, each business division had its own business intelligence (BI) system. In 2005, the company deployed its first common BI platform using software from Business Objects, an SAP company.

SFR wanted to move to a fully Web-based environment to facilitate deployment and maintenance across its user base. When the BusinessObjects™ XI solutions platform was launched, SFR was eager to implement the new platform. The new BI project commenced at the end of 2005 and 12 months later, SFR's common platform BITOOL was operational – along with associated best practices and standards for development and integration. The new platform includes about 50 applications, 80 universes, and 800 reports for approximately 5,000 users.

“An innovative product with a number of remarkable functions, I consider BusinessObjects XI to be a radically new platform,” says Jean Nembo, BI competency center manager at SFR. “With BusinessObjects XI Release 2, we can cover everything our departments and business divisions need. It's a very great improvement as many users work at the same time on operational reports using Crystal Reports® software and BusinessObjects Dashboard Builder charts for analysis. All of this is performed in a fully Web-based environment.”

Another function that is essential in the SFR environment is multisource synchronization and online analytical processing (OLAP) access. “We have 50 or more data sources,” says Nembo. “BusinessObjects XI offers us a single access point to these sources, which are relational and multidimensional.” SFR has especially welcomed the new functions of BusinessObjects XI Release 2, such as widespread distribution and broadcasting for field sales executives, and integration of the Microsoft Office Live tool, for example. Also worthy of note is the optimized export to Excel with enriched formatting, the Encyclopedia component for better understanding of relationships between BI documents and ease of finding information, and the concept of collaborative BI for interactive communication between users. For example, this can be used if a user thinks that an indicator is abnormal, a colleague can be immediately alerted without the user leaving their environment.

APPROACH

As a beta site for BusinessObjects XI Release 2, SFR had the opportunity to gain in-depth knowledge of the new version and be in a strong position to develop the functions tested. The migration of SFR's platform was a two-phase operation. The first phase was to implement BITOOL, the common platform, along with the development, security, and integration standards. In the second phase, existing applications were transferred in parallel with some new project developments.

Business Objects Global Field Services was on hand throughout the project. Nembo says, “The involvement of the software vendor is essential in a migration project of this scale. Without the Business Objects Field Services team's support, we would not have been able to keep to our

project timetable.” The switchover was made on an application-by-application basis, after a period of running both versions in parallel. Users and the BI team worked together on acceptance testing and then agreed on the final date for switchover. To date, SFR has migrated 40% of its applications. SFR migrated the applications on a like-for-like basis, relying on usage statistics to identify which reports are used and which have become redundant.

The first major project to be developed was a reporting system for the 5,000 users of the customer services department. This is both a mass and customized reporting system with hierarchies of regional users and national (head-office) users. The function of this system is to provide improved management of the activities of the 5,000 customer account managers: management of their schedules, call flows, setting up a segmented structure for their working days, resource planning, and so on. This project also relates to customer satisfaction, giving SFR the capability to measure the quality of responses, waiting times, and problem resolution rates.

With a large number of confidentiality and security requirements, HR reporting is the next application to be migrated. HR is provided with a system allowing SFR to track and optimize the overall workforce in terms of training, career plans, and salary costs.

SFR now has a common reporting platform that is shared by all the business and support divisions of the company. The BI competency center, created shortly before migration, provides support across the company for the implementation of projects. The center’s role is also to define BI usage standards and best practice for incorporating new functionality, presentation standards for reports, and object naming rules.

RESULTS

“With BusinessObjects XI Release 2, business intelligence has gone public across the company,” relates Nembo. “We’ve got the answer to all our needs by integrating data with BusinessObjects Data Integrator, operational reporting with Crystal Reports, advanced analysis with BusinessObjects Web Intelligence software, and performance management with BusinessObjects Dashboard Builder. In terms of reliability of operation, administration, and security, we have all that we need to guarantee maximum service to our users.”

Implementing a shared platform on BusinessObjects XI Release 2 along with defining standards for development and integration have enabled the BI team to improve its productivity. For some applications, SFR measures performance improvement in double figures. Nembo says, “Prior to the migration, access to the portal, user identification, and entry to the portal used to take approximately one minute; with BusinessObjects XI Release 2, the process now takes 15 seconds. The time taken to format some reports has been reduced by two-thirds.”

SFR has opened its new BI platform outside the company, mainly to its partners and vendors. Nembo says, “Some of our call centers are outside the SFR network. Their reports are accessible on our portal with no additional development work. They can access indicators that relate to business activity, outgoing and incoming call flows, and audit of call responses.”

SFR now has a true BI portal and each business division has an expert user who is responsible for the reporting facilities provided on the platform. Longer term, 10,000 users will be able to view and see updated reports directly on the SFR BI portal. Nembo concludes, “With BusinessObjects XI Release 2, we have implemented a true common business intelligence platform to cover the needs of all our departments and business divisions, potentially up to 10,000 users. Our productivity in BI projects has improved along with the performance of some of our applications.”

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