

SIRVA PROJECTS INCREMENTAL REVENUE OF \$1 MILLION – THANKS TO BUSINESS OBJECTS

“The business intelligence solution is giving our agents a competitive advantage over other companies in the marketplace, especially given the financial climate.”
 David La Rue, Director of Business Intelligence, SIRVA



Industry
 Transportation

Business Process
 Performance management, sales, capacity and operations, quality, marketing and branding

Challenge
 SIRVA required Web-based external agent access to a balanced score card performance, with accurate, timely information, and a way to define and disseminate best practices based on agent assessments.

Why Business Objects?
 Business Objects emerged as the obvious choice based on SIRVA's decision/requirements evaluation matrix.

Business Objects Products and Services
 BusinessObjects Enterprise XI

BusinessObjects Data Integrator

BusinessObjects Metadata Management

Crystal Reports

BusinessObjects Web Intelligence

Universe Designer

CHALLENGE

As one of the world's largest relocation and moving solutions companies, spanning more than 175 countries, Illinois-based SIRVA, Inc. serves more than 1,000 families every day – 365 days a year. The company's well-recognized brands include Allied, DJK Residential, Global, northAmerican, SIRVA Mortgage, SIRVA Relocation, and SIRVA Settlement, among others.

To maintain market leadership, SIRVA needed tighter alignment of the performance of its agents within its non-franchise business model. David La Rue, SIRVA's director of business intelligence, explains, “There were three questions that we needed to address: How do we determine the best agent? How do we align our strategic goals with execution at the agent level so they are all pulling in the same direction? And how do we establish a sustainable improvement in the agents' performance? One challenge SIRVA faced was the result of its rapid growth through acquisition. La Rue recalls, “We accumulated a large variety of back-office systems, and the business rules were all different.” Lacking a consistent way of viewing the metrics between each of the brands, SIRVA sought a holistic perspective across the whole business with access to timely, dynamic, and accurate information. “We wanted Web-based access to enable information to be pulled up on an as-needed basis, and a best-in-class agent diagnostic tool so that we could benchmark each agent, and then disseminate best practices for everyone's benefit,” he says.

Inconsistent data definitions and an array of data sources posed another challenge. “We had some of the data located in custom-written applications, and generally it was inconsistently defined,” says La Rue. “A portion of the information – including survey results, demographics, and marketing data – was located outside the company with third parties, and it was important to be able to access and analyze this alongside all of the other data that we collect in-house.” Deciding that the optimal solution would be a sophisticated business intelligence (BI) data warehouse, La Rue and his team evaluated the top BI vendors before choosing Business Objects, an SAP company.

APPROACH

When creating the balanced scorecard approach that would show their agents' performance against corporate goals and their agents' performance against the network of agents--their peers, SIRVA adopted a rigorous technology and tool set selection process. The business and applications team defined a set of metrics to steer the company towards its overall strategic and operational goals, using as a scorecard a decision/requirements matrix that embraced a variety of metric reporting needs. The team carefully defined the data requirements for each metric and determined which elements already existed. Each metric was ranked in its importance to the business to identify the critical drivers. La Rue explains, “We effectively created a balanced scorecard approach and rolled up 23 metrics into five key performance indicators (KPIs) – sales, operations, quality, safety, and ‘people, equipment, and facilities.’” The latter KPI captures the facilities, labor, advertising, and other elements that support, represent, promote, and encapsulate each brand. “As we reviewed solutions against our decision criteria – reporting, data access, formatting, accessibility, completeness of the toolset, industry acceptance, existing experience, and support – Business Objects emerged as the best fit for us,” says La Rue.

Previous knowledge of Business Objects software was also a plus. Says La Rue, “Our decision to go with Business Objects was further reinforced by the very good past experiences we had with Crystal Reports®.”

SIRVA set up BusinessObjects™ Data Integrator software for daily runs, processing over 30 GB of data from internal and external sources. The company uses BusinessObjects Data Integrator with open database connectivity (ODBC) standards, flat files, XML, COBOL, Web services, mainframe applications, and other data sources to consolidate a wide range of data sources. All data from BusinessObjects Data Integrator is transferred to the data warehouse. To solve the company's need for quick reports for internal users and to provide users with the ability to swiftly visualize extracted data, SIRVA uses BusinessObjects Web Intelligence®, along with BusinessObjects Metadata Management.

The BI implementation process involved regular participation from agents, which resulted in good buy-in from all key constituents. "We used BusinessObjects Dashboard Builder and the Universe Designer component to create mockups of each report, at all levels of roll-up, to ensure that the supplied data was as expected," says La Rue. "We put everything together into one comprehensive portal, where everyone can get to the data and access action plans and best practices. We wanted to make certain that the data given to agents, and the way it was presented, was meaningful to them. Also, we added a scoring system where we ranked and evaluated each agent's performance against that of their peers to help them understand their performance relative to other agents in their marketplace."

RESULTS

SIRVA's BI project was especially noteworthy as it was the first time the company achieved a successful data warehouse implementation. La Rue recalls, "We had a couple of attempts in the past, but it wasn't until we established BusinessObjects Enterprise XI as the underlying platform that we successfully deployed an enterprisewide data warehouse. This was the first successful enterprisewide deployment spanning all key functional groups. Most importantly, it met all of our goals. We now are able to instantly recognize our best agents, they understand how their actions contribute to the company's goals, and we have a sustainable set of measures of their performance."

The Business Objects solutions have yielded several quantifiable benefits. "We anticipate a reduced dependency on existing reporting tools and the associated costs of licensing by consolidating to one set of rules and tools," La Rue enthuses. "We eliminated the time used to reconcile disparities in data due to subtle differences in the sources. Overall, this program is projected to improve service quality and agent retention, resulting in a .5% increase in moves in 2011 and 1% in 2012, equaling \$1 million in incremental revenue."

Transitioning all of its quality-related information to the data warehouse from a custom application, SIRVA has seen product and data usage increase dramatically. "Our reputation is driven by the quality of products and data that we provide – and by our customers recommending us to others. We have already seen a very nice increase in our 'net promoters' scores," says La Rue.

La Rue is proud that SIRVA is the first in its industry to create a balanced scorecard for agents. He says, "Another first is our custom portal that we've wrapped around the scorecard with context-based reference to best practices. By utilizing BusinessObjects Web Intelligence®, we've created a very user-friendly interface to the system and we can react much quicker to business needs than we could in the past. For example, if there is a report that we run for corporate, we can make that immediately accessible to anybody else that has a legitimate need for the data."

Summarizing key business benefits for SIRVA, La Rue concludes, "BusinessObjects Data Integration and the overall business intelligence solutions are giving our agents a competitive advantage over other companies in the marketplace, especially given the financial climate. On the northAmerican Van Lines Web site, we're actually holding up the BI solution and portal as a way to recruit new agents because it is such a unique and differentiating tool. We help a lot of the Fortune 500 companies relocate their employees, and when they see us optimally managing our agency network that perform the moving and storage portion of the relocation with BI, it becomes a true differentiator for us in that market, too."

businessobjects.com



© 2008 Business Objects. All rights reserved. Business Objects owns the following U.S. patents, which may cover products that are offered and licensed by Business Objects: 5,555,403; 5,857,205; 6,289,352; 6,247,008; 6,490,593; 6,578,027; 6,831,668; 6,768,986; 6,772,409; 6,882,998; 7,139,766; 7,299,419; 7,194,465; 7,222,130; 7,181,440 and 7,181,435. Business Objects and the Business Objects logo, BusinessObjects, Business Objects Crystal Vision, Business Process On Demand, BusinessQuery, Crystal Analysis, Crystal Applications, Crystal Decisions, Crystal Enterprise, Crystal Insider, Crystal Reports, Desktop Intelligence, Inight, the Inight Logo, LinguistX, Star Tree, Table Lens, ThingFinder, Timewall, Let there be light, Metify, NSite, Rapid Marts, RapidMarts, the Spectrum Design, Web Intelligence, Workmail and Xcelsius are trademarks or registered trademarks in the United States and/or other countries of Business Objects and/or affiliated companies. All other names mentioned herein may be trademarks of their respective owners. Part # CS415-A