

SIMMONS & SIMMONS MEASURES PERFORMANCE, PROFITABILITY WITH BUSINESSOBJECTS™

“Simmons & Simmons has developed a strategic performance management culture that is delivering insight into key business performance measures and processes across the firm. Reporting covers all areas of activity, from HR to finance and CRM.”

David McLaughlin, Finance Director, Simmons & Simmons



Industry Law

Business Process
Financial, human resources, customer management, corporate, planning

Business Pain
Improve real time financial reporting across 21 offices and create a platform for performance management

Why Business Objects?
The end-to-end solution has provided a single source of the truth that is delivering detailed profitability, billing and performance reporting

Business Objects Products and Services
BusinessObjects™ Data Integrator

BusinessObjects Web Intelligence®

CHALLENGE

Simmons & Simmons is a leading international law firm with over 2,000 people and 21 offices located in major business and financial centers throughout Europe, the Middle East, and Asia. The firm is one of the top 10 in the United Kingdom by turnover, and acts for around 50 of the FTSE 100 companies.

Over the past two years, the firm has developed a strong industry focus, aiming to be the first choice firm in the world's fastest growing sectors, including energy and infrastructure, financial institutions, life sciences, and technology, media, and telecommunications (TMT). To support this strategy, Simmons & Simmons needed to improve firm-wide financial reporting and planning to gain cross-discipline insight into profitability and performance in each of these sectors.

“The firm needs to be able to assess better the profitability of different clients, partners, and fee earners in line with the strategic aims of the business plan,” says Michael Dreyer, project manager, Simmons & Simmons. “A flexible business intelligence solution will enable the firm to measure the performance of each department and the contribution to the development and profitability of business in each key target sector.”

APPROACH

Working with Blueprint, a partner of Business Objects, an SAP company, Simmons & Simmons has created a strategic business intelligence (BI) project supporting the company across its 21 international offices. This multicurrency solution uses BusinessObjects™ Data Integrator software to load information into one central data warehouse, with Web-based reporting provided by BusinessObjects Web Intelligence® software.

The data warehouse holds information from financials, customer relationship management (CRM), and human resources (HR) software. Using BusinessObjects Web Intelligence, Blueprint developed a range of reports to provide detailed insight into work in progress (WIP), billings, cash collection, and debtors.

This information is analyzed by department, partner, fee earner, and client to provide insight into profitability and resource utilization across the firm. Simmons & Simmons is also using the warehouse to provide partners with real-time HR, CRM, and finance information to help monitor performance across a range of financial and nonfinancial areas, supporting the annual appraisal process.

“The end-to-end business intelligence solution from Business Objects provides a platform for strategic reporting, planning, and performance management,” Dreyer says. The firm is now working with Blueprint on further BI development. This includes the use of the data warehouse to produce management accounts and the implementation of BusinessObjects Planning software to streamline the budgeting and forecasting process across all offices.

RESULTS

All partners at Simmons & Simmons now have secure access to a partner dashboard providing their own billing information via the corporate intranet, and enabling real-time monitoring of performance, profitability, and resource utilization.

“The ease of use and depth of information is empowering partners, releasing them to spend far more time on client-facing activity,” Dreyer says. “Furthermore, this detailed profitability analysis provides Simmons & Simmons with in-depth understanding of the success of the sector-based business focus.”

Benefits of the data warehouse include:

- **Financial Reporting – Billing.** Using BusinessObjects Web Intelligence, billing information can now be analyzed by partner, fee earner, and by client and business area, while also providing a sector view to support the strategic plan. Simmons & Simmons is analyzing billing based on work-in-progress, bills sent, cash collected, and debtors.
- **Financial Reporting – Profitability.** Analysis of fee earner utilization rates is being used to enhance profitability, maximize utilization, and support forecasting of resource requirements across different business areas. “At a time when law firms are looking to offer a better work/life balance by removing traditional peaks and troughs in workload, the ability to track utilization and realization rates for each fee earner is improving Simmons & Simmons’ resource utilization,” says Dreyer.
- **Online Appraisal.** Combining information from HR, CRM, and financial systems, Simmons & Simmons now has an online partner appraisal system that measures both business development and fee earning performance.
- **Planning.** Using the workflow inherent within BusinessObjects Planning will streamline the global budgeting and planning process.
- **Performance Management.** The development of key performance indicators and balanced scorecard will provide Simmons & Simmons with cause and effect linkage between key strategic KPIs and all business functions.

David McLaughlin, finance director at the firm, concludes, “Simmons & Simmons has developed a strategic performance management culture that is delivering insight into key business performance measures and processes across the firm. Reporting covers all areas of activity, from HR to finance and CRM.”

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