

## Crane Pumps & Systems

### Suffering during Recession? Not with Leadership and the Right Business Intelligence Tool, Says Crane Pumps & Systems



In a time of recession, most companies fall within two categories: those that play defensive as they wait out the hard times; and those who use the opportunity to aggressively improve their processes and become a leader in their market. Crane Pumps & Systems falls squarely within the second category: they deployed business intelligence (BI) for the specific purpose of understanding their vertical and their business better, cutting costs and improving quality--and the results are starting to show.

Since 1948, Crane Pumps & Systems (CP&S) has manufactured a diverse range of pumps, accessories, and services to provide successful solutions for water, wastewater, military, and engineered pump market segments. "Our strength as a company is two-fold," says Scott Brooks, BI project lead at CP&S. "First, we have dependable brand names with a history of industrial strength solutions; secondly, we provide a very wide range of products to fit most customers, especially with our engineered pumps (built-to-order)."

As we know, by the beginning of 2008, the US economy was already slowing down. This is when CP&S went on the offense in their quest for higher quality and better efficiency. In particular, they identified an area of their operations in which they not only wanted to improve, but to become a market leader--and they used LogiXML as a valuable ally to get there.

#### The Issue

Says Brooks, "like most manufacturing companies, we struggle with managing vendor supply chains, assembly, and delivery in a timely fashion. CP&S has resolved to improve this critical characteristic of the manufacturing world and indeed to be a leader in on-time-delivery."

It was towards this specific goal that CP&S realized that an effective grasp of their data through reporting and analysis would be essential. In addition, they understood that giving transparent and company-wide access to this data, "for everyone to see," would be the ideal way forward.

"To do this," continues Brooks, "we needed to understand the stark truth about our processes, and that meant data. We needed to see more of our data, often aggregated, in ways we've not explored before. More of the same old reports was not an option. We needed flexibility such as ad-hoc functionality. We also needed more KPI's/Daily Metrics, which meant a tool like dashboards would be very helpful. If you want to improve something, just measure it and put that measurement up on the wall for everyone to see!"

## The Solution

Although CP&S already possessed the means to see and understand data at a basic level--that is, through conventional reporting tools--they began shopping for their first full-fledged BI solution. This solution was evaluated against three important requirements--all the more important given CP&S' goals and the slower economic times:

- 1 - Giving a wider pool of decision-makers the tools to see, understand and act upon their data, without waiting for IT to do this for them
- 2 - Providing a good value for the company in terms of having powerful and interactive BI tools without adding burden on their IT team or their end-users
- 3 - Allowing themselves the flexibility to deploy as much BI as they required without wasteful overhead

This quest led them to LogiXML's Logi Info (managed reporting, analysis and dashboards) and Logi Ad Hoc (reporting, analysis and dashboards for end-users). "During these economic times," says Brooks, "all departments, including IT, must operate on maximum efficiency. Having someone solely dedicated to supporting a BI solution is not realistic. With Logi, we were able to implement at our own pace (no outside expert contractors needed) and weren't committed to many hours of user admin. Logi enabled us to simply and easily make as much or as little use of our BI tool as we needed."

## The Results

Becoming more competitive, especially in a time of economic slowdown, means improving quality by singling out areas of improvement, as well as trimming unnecessary expenses. It also means understanding that vendors and customers alike, very likely, have the same needs. The right business intelligence tool can greatly facilitate this quest.

"As we began deploying our LogiXML solution, we knew we'd be able to understand our business better by having significantly more visibility of our day-to-day and monthly and yearly operational patterns, costs, and exceptions. In terms of seeing our exceptions, because of BI, we will be more able to focus energy where we need it to remain and grow competitively, cutting our own costs and improving quality."

"Times are tough for our customers too, so we want to be seen as a dependable solution to put their money into -- there's no risk putting your money in our products. This is important because our customers are cutting costly risk."

This twofold approach--identifying specific strategic goals and using BI as a means to achieve them--is starting to yield results for CP&S.

"Our BI solution is still in its infancy stages, but already we are beginning to see how middle-managers will no longer have to spend hours creating their own reports from several data sources. They will be able to get what they need and continue on with the rest of their job. No longer will they have to be Excel acrobats/experts. The time-savings here and standardization of our metrics is the first value that is visible."

"When our production managers have the time to get back out on the production floor, armed with accurate data," concludes Brooks, "they are able to appropriately manage our production and drive improvements -- the very reason they are here. Our middle managers have worked too hard on production to have to spend their time in Excel."

## Conclusion

The real-life example of CP&S is a perfect illustration of how BI--especially in an economic slowdown--can help a company become more competitive. CP&S had a clear strategic goal at which they aimed BI implementation, and expected these results:

- Making data and information widespread and transparent within the organization
- Consolidating data and making it consistent across the company
- Adding value by delivering the right reporting, analysis and dashboarding tools without requiring additional burden, particularly on IT