

Performance Made Intelligent: High-tech Electronics Manufacturer Works Smarter with QAD Business Intelligence

The Company: Powering Technology for Mission Critical Applications

Cherokee Europe is a business unit of Cherokee International, Inc., based in Tustin, California. The company designs, manufactures and markets high-reliability custom and standard switch-mode power supplies for datacom, telecom, medical and process-control applications. As the leading provider of custom-designed power sources, Cherokee also delivers a complete range of standard and modified-standard AC/DC power supplies, AC/DC rectifiers and power shelves, and DC/DC converters. Cherokee International has 1,700 employees worldwide and posted US \$145million in revenue for 2006.

The Challenge: Transforming Data into Intelligence

Cherokee Europe was experiencing typical data management growing pains. Their existing system of using Microsoft Excel for departmental or manager spreadsheets had become inadequate to managers' information needs.

Individual departments, such as sales, operations and quality, compiled their own reports in Excel, based on different data extractions from the QAD system. The departments lacked visibility into activity in other areas of the business. Managers were frustrated because this information deficit hampered the company's overall productivity, efficiency and ability to grow. Taking full advantage of new growth opportunities would require an enhanced ability to leverage data for faster, more accurate decision-making.

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Jehan Snyers d'Attenhoven, ICT Director,
Cherokee Europe

Improving management visibility into company performance would require tools that could create and manage the complex key performance indicators (KPIs) needed for analysis, decision making and action. Without a solution to empower management to fully leverage company data, opportunities for growth would be lost.

The Solution: Competitive Advantage with QAD Business Intelligence

For Cherokee Europe, a QAD customer since 1990, selecting the QAD Business Intelligence (QAD BI) module was an easy decision. "The solution is based on the world-famous Cognos suite but it is installed, parameterized, and supported by our ERP supplier: QAD. That way we keep only one partner for the entire ERP-BI environment," says Jehan Snyers d'Attenhoven, director of information communication technology (ICT) for Cherokee Europe.

"Everyone can see whatever they need to, right now; we can provide report to a customer in a matter of minutes."

Jehan Snyers d'Attenhoven, ICT Director,
Cherokee Europe

The solution was easy to integrate into the existing ICT environment. Just as important in the decision making process was the positive, long-term relationship with QAD. "QAD consultants know our existing setup quite well," adds d'Attenhoven. With the help of QAD Global Services, the implementation took just under two weeks.

The Benefits: With Better Information, Everybody Wins

QAD Business Intelligence allows shared visibility into business activity, and this benefits key management across the enterprise. No longer do departments create distinct reports in Excel, and cross-functional communication has improved significantly.

Full visibility and real-time access to company data make it simple to review KPIs; automatic formatting capabilities make it easy to create accurate, up-to-the-minute reports for informed, fast decision making. QAD BI also makes standards compliance and customer audits easier. "We can show them one, really rational method of calculating return rates and generating reports," says d'Attenhoven.

Integration of selected processes improves efficiencies. "We completely merged the way we manage sales forecasts, budgets and actual sales; now we have one, consolidated report," says d'Attenhoven. Before QAD BI, creating a Return Rate Analysis report for one product in Excel had taken as long as two days. "Now, QAD BI provides a common vision about the real status of all products; not just for one product at a time, but for our entire product line," says d'Attenhoven. "Everyone can see whatever they need to, right now; we can provide report to a customer in a matter of minutes."

Before QAD BI, managers had to manually build KPIs in order to monitor business performance; now, KPIs are automatically generated within the system. Management can easily review their KPIs and access key reports. Freedom from manual processes and enhanced visibility into what's happening across the business have created enormous productivity gains for the entire management team.

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Jehan Snyers d'Attenhoven, ICT Director,
Cherokee Europe

QAD Business Intelligence enables stakeholders at all levels of the business to be more productive, making Cherokee Europe a leaner and more profitable enterprise. For example, leveraging QAD BI to improve production planning creates operational efficiencies that reduce waste and improve customer service. The company is seeing positive results in customer satisfaction and revenue.

The Future: Working Smarter

Recently, Cherokee Europe initiated a project to support supplier evaluation. The project will remove a significant manual workload from the purchasing manager, allowing the ability to focus on more high-value activities.

"The BI project is kind of a never-ending story — once you've started you need to keep pushing it in order to harvest all the benefits from it," d'Attenhoven concludes.

Highlights

Company

Company Name	Cherokee International
Industry	Industrial Manufacturing
Products	High-reliability custom and standard switch-mode power supplies for datacom, telecom, medical and process-control applications

Solutions

QAD Enterprise Applications	QAD Enterprise Applications (version MFG/PRO 8.6) QAD Business Intelligence 2.3.1; QAD European Accounting
Number of Sites	One
Implementation time	May 2007 – Fall 2007
Hardware Platform	Sun Fire V240
Operating System	Sun Solaris/Linux
Database	Progress 9.1
Language	English
Time-to-benefit	Immediate

Results

- Improved data quality
- Shared, common vision of business activity that benefits key management across the enterprise
- Full visibility and real-time access to company data
- Simple to review KPIs
- Easy to create accurate, up-to-the-minute reports
- Informed, fast decision making
- Complete audit trails and comprehensive reports for ISO and customer audits
- Key contributors at all levels of the business more productive
- Positive results in customer satisfaction and revenue