



Covers Building For a Brighter Future CFMS Lite Business Intelligence

The Client

Covers have supplied a diverse range of timber and building materials to a wide spectrum of customers for over 160 years. With thirteen branch locations spread across the South of England, they are well situated to supply timber and building materials from their extensive range of over 23,000 product lines.

They have built their reputation by offering their customers a comprehensive selection of quality timber and building materials at competitive prices.

Covers import timber directly from source and have timber mills equipped with fast and flexible wood working machinery to produce quality joinery and moulding.

The Covers Group is committed to providing a one-stop solution for timber and building products .

The business is part of a wider group of 23 businesses with interests in property and agriculture.

The Challenge

Covers suffered from having a multitude of linked spreadsheets some with data loaded from their General Ledger and some updated manually. The fact that various group companies had different activities meant that doing consolidated accounts was particularly difficult. Detailed sales reports also required a lot of maintenance as each product group is assessed separately.

Weekly sales and profitability reports must be produced for each branch, detailing the result for the 3 main product areas.

Monthly accounts provide detail for each business over 6 cost centres and compare the performance of trade and retail customers, and of collected or delivered products.

Covers required an improved process of management reporting and consolidated accounts. This meant reducing the time to get to the first cut from data loading and making it easier to manage the process.

As with any spreadsheet environment the adding of new elements to the workbook took a long time and the amount of additional analysis beyond the standard workbooks was very low as it required rekeying and copying and pasting of data before a new way of looking at the data could be achieved.

The Budget process also used spreadsheets and required considerable spreadsheet effort each year.

The Solution

The CFMS Lite solution combines a multi-dimensional database with a powerful business logic engine and the ability to transform the data as it is loaded. It also allows for manual data entry and its multi-cube architecture supports the needs of the different company structures within the Covers Group. The use of a cube structure based on dimensions means that the detailed product structure can be delivered and easily maintained. With the product dimension at the heart of the reporting structure data can be analysed from a total level, through product group and down to the lowest product level.



CFMS Lite uses Excel as its front-end while removing all the limitations of a standard spreadsheet



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*Martin Fitzpatrick
Financial Controller*

Data is imported from the Ledger using a flat-file transfer and data is then held within the CFMS Lite data cubes by weekly sales and costs, and monthly account movements. With data in this format the users can produce ad-hoc views of the data and drill down or summarise as required, through the whole product hierarchy. All management reports – both weekly and monthly – are produced from the database.

The consolidation for the group now takes under an hour and provides consolidated cash flows, balance sheets and profit and loss. All inter-company balances can be reviewed centrally on a single report and are simply reconciled.

The budget process takes eight months data from the current year, projects the remaining four months based on the prior year and established growth factors to set the forecast for the current year, and this is used to set the next year’s target with each Branch Manager. After approval, CFMS Lite is used to

take the agreed budget and phase it across the year.

CFMS Lite holds actuals and budgets for every year, allowing reporting against budget, prior year or prior period. It also makes the reforecasting a fast exercise.

The Result

Martin Fitzpatrick and his colleagues are amazed by how much the deployment of CFMS Lite has made to their business processes. “It’s really cut down on the processing time and we can achieve so much more than we were able to before we implemented CFMS Lite. We look forward to achieving more in the coming months”