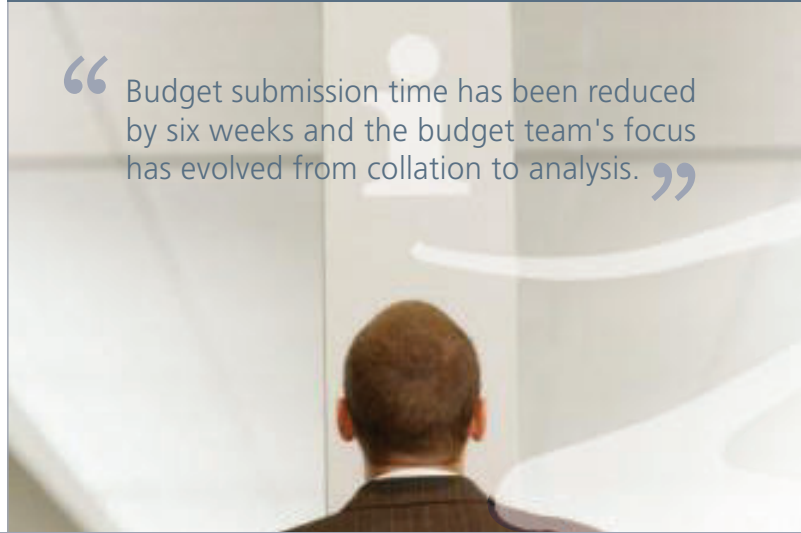


Blue-chip company's budgeting processes transformed. Management confidence returns.

“ Budget submission time has been reduced by six weeks and the budget team's focus has evolved from collation to analysis. ”



BUSINESS CHALLENGE

An outdated and broken budgeting process at a large multi-national company on the South Bank of London kept senior management from seeing up-to-date budget numbers and put undue stress on an entire department tasked with turning around budget adjustments for both business and management review.

The budgeting team was spending upwards of eight weeks collating data from a submission system that was poorly designed, error prone and included an unnecessary number of steps to produce final output. Data submissions wouldn't be available in a consolidated fashion until an overnight batch process had run. The system was highly bespoke, poorly documented and required expensive consultants on site to correct day-to-day problems.

Because the system couldn't be trusted, all data was loaded manually into Excel for processing. Differing versions of the same data existed, extensive reworking of numbers in Excel was required and the timeliness, accuracy and completeness of data suffered.

Senior management began to lose confidence in the budget figures being presented.

SOLUTION

Management needed a more fluid process for the initial submission and collation of budget data, and the inevitable head-office adjustments and base assumption changes.

Two hundred users spread across approximately one hundred business units needed a capable and robust means of entering their budget data, and then agreeing and "signing off" on the numbers before they were released to head office.

Head office needed to manage the submission process as a whole in a way that alerted them to business units who were lagging behind in submitting data. They also needed a process that allowed them to view incomplete data, without waiting for overnight batch processing to complete.

The solution chosen was Cognos Enterprise Planning. The system provided a web-based front-end to business users, requiring nothing more than the standard Internet Explorer program already installed on their PCs. Users could enter their budget figures into a web browser, often simply pasting from Excel.

Two Cognos consultants worked alongside two accountants building a Cash Forecasting and a Budgeting model. Their remit was to build a vanilla solution without customisation, and to provide clear documentation of the system's structure and its maintenance.

BENEFITS

- Budget submission time reduced by six weeks
- Budgeting team shifted from collation to analysis
- Budgeting system is now the single source of budget data, improving confidence in management information
- System complexity reduced from four sub-systems to two
- "What-If" analysis now possible - assumptions and adjustments can be made in differing versions of the budget model
- Head office adjustment turnaround and republishing accomplished in minutes rather than days
- No need for onsite consultancy since implementation - two years and counting