seaco

Company:
Seaco

Application:
Seaco Mobile Bl

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>
> – Rick Anderson
>   Business Intelligence Manager
>   Seaco

Seaco is one of the world's largest marine container leasing companies. With a fleet of around one million TEU (a type of container known as Twenty Foot Equivalent Units), the company provides container equipment to customers from more than 300 depots worldwide.

It is headquartered in Barbados and has locations worldwide, with major offices in Singapore, London, Hamburg and Miami as well as sales offices in Shanghai, Seoul, Mumbai, Moscow, Hainan, San Francisco, Livorno and Paris. Since Seaco operates through depots in over 120 cities in 40 countries, it faces the daily challenge of co-ordinating containers on a global basis.

CHALLENGES

Seaco's existing information and reporting system, based on SAP Business Warehouse, contains a vast quantity of data. However, extracting the statistical overviews and general trends that the executive team needed was time-consuming and required specialist knowledge of the SAP system. It was also difficult to present these figures in an easy-to-understand format.

The company wanted a system that could present general trends and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) in a simple, graphical form. It needed to be quick and easy to use and instantly available, including if the executive team was logging on outside the network. This would allow them to pick up headline messages about the company's performance at the airport or on the way to a meeting, making best use of their iPads.

SOLUTIONS

Seaco started the project in 2011, exploring several different options including SAP BusinessObjects, Roambi, MicroStrategy and using its own in-house resource. After an exhaustive investigation, Seaco chose MicroStrategy for its graphical approach and its leadership in dashboarding and mobile information delivery, particularly to iPads.

However, it was also important to know the supplier could work well with the company, as Rick Anderson, Business Intelligence Manager at Seaco, recalls: "We chose MicroStrategy because it's a leader in this field, but also because we were impressed with its people and knew we'd work well together – and that's as important as the technology."

Seaco knew it would need the support and advice of a consultancy during and after the implementation, so MicroStrategy recommended Business Intelligence (BI) and analytics specialist VPT. Together, the companies implemented MicroStrategy Mobile which plugged straight into the SAP

system, allowing executives to use their iPads to directly access vital company information. The solution went live on time and on budget in early 2012. Since Seaco wanted to avoid focusing on numbers as little as possible, the solution presents a mix of graphical trends and maps. Graphical trends such as KPIs are shown over several timescales. A global map provides a strong visual record of container inventory and movements in and out of depots. Red circles show where containers coming back from lease outnumber those going out, and green circles indicate more movements out onto lease.

The MicroStrategy solution has provided a new medium for executives to access key company information without having to wait for results or call on others to collate information. "The dashboard has allowed us to exploit the huge quantity of data we have in the SAP system, in an engaging, meaningful form that isn't clouded with too much detail," comments Rick Anderson.

Daniel Fedak, Managing Director at VPT, says: "Seaco needed to turn its business data into a story, and that's how we approached it. You swipe pages on the iPad and it's like paging through a book, putting statistics such as KPIs into a narrative context."

The solution is also a valuable sales tool. Using the dashboard to identify long- and short-term trends in fleet use allows Seaco to concentrate its sales and marketing efforts in the right places to improve efficiency and utilisation. Seaco executives have also found the map format works well to generate conversation and break the ice at meetings, and sales managers believe it can give them an advantage over competitors.

THE MICROSTRATEGY DIFFERENCE

Since its MicroStrategy implementation, Seaco has gained the following benefits:

- A valuable internal tool giving executives fast access to headline information.

- A professional and unique display for customer meetings.

- Focuses sales and marketing efforts to improve fleet utilisation.

After the initial implementation, Seaco found it could develop the solution further without much further financial investment. A second version focuses on the utilisation of certain products, and a regional European dashboard is in development.

The company is also considering future enhancements such as customer-facing information for meetings, additional KPI dashboards, and access to other real-time SAP functionality.

Before MicroStrategy
- User adoption was required to drive dashboard success.
- Time-consuming to extract data into high level graphs.
- Gathering information required specialist knowledge.

Goals
- Allow executives to quickly get overviews and trends.
- Present data in a graphical format.
- Provide access to information via iPads.

After MicroStrategy
- Valuable internal tool providing fast, clear information.
- At-a-glance dashboard showing company performance against KPIs.
- Engaging sales tool.