

NOBLE DENTON IMPROVES GLOBAL FINANCIAL REPORTING



“SAP BusinessObjects Planning and Consolidation has enabled Noble Denton to reduce the financial close process from upwards of 30 days down to 10. Furthermore, it has improved data integrity, facilitated standardisation across the organisation and enabled in depth analysis of business at a regional and global level.”

Byron Waring, Group Financial Controller, Noble Denton

CHALLENGE

Improving Financial Reporting

Established in 1904, Noble Denton is a leading provider of life cycle marine and offshore engineering services to the oil and gas, marine and renewables industries. The company has an established presence in all major oil and gas centres, including North & South America, Europe, the Middle & Far East and emerging markets in India and China, operating from 27 offices across 18 countries.

In 2006, following significant private equity investment in Noble Denton, the company undertook a major review of corporate processes, most notably financial. Byron Waring, Group Financial Controller, explains, “Noble Denton had to improve global and regional financial reporting. The Excel based reporting was not easy to use, made it extremely difficult to undertake trend analysis and key stakeholders, including the board of directors, lacked essential performance reporting and analysis.”

Following an in depth consultation with PricewaterhouseCoopers, Noble Denton decided it would not be cost effective to implement a single financial software package across each of the five operating regions to achieve a standardised, consolidated view. Instead, the company looked for a consolidation tool that could pull information from diverse applications to deliver improved reporting at both head office and regionally whilst also providing financial planning, budgeting and forecasting.

APPROACH

Global Consolidation



After an in depth product assessment, the company opted to implement SAP BusinessObjects Planning and Consolidation™. Noble Denton worked with SAP BusinessObjects partner AIS Consulting to gather requirements and design appropriate system processes to meet the business needs.

“Once the finance team had liaised with the board to determine Key Performance Indicators and worked with the regions to source historical data, AIS worked with us to create a unified system that vastly improved our consolidation and planning processes,” Waring confirms.

Noble Denton operates across two business streams: Assurance & Consulting and Project Management & Execution, each supporting a number of service lines. “A critical component of the design was capturing information by business stream and line as well as region,” he says.

In addition, the company leveraged the data design and mapping process to create a unified Chart of Accounts, using the process as a catalyst to encourage the regions to align Chart of Accounts to the group structure. “This process has created greater harmonisation and standardisation across the organisation,” he says. “The result has been tangible improvements in data integrity and greater consistency of analysis.”

Industry
Marine Engineering

Business Plan
To achieve significant improvements in financial reporting to deliver greater insight into global performance across two business streams and across five regions.

Why Business Objects
Consolidating all global and regional reporting via a single solution has enabled Noble Denton to reduce month end reporting cycles, improve budgeting and forecasting, achieve better trend analysis and achieve global standardisation.

Business Objects Products & Services
SAP BusinessObjects Planning and Consolidation

Partner
AIS Consulting

“The implementation started in mid July and was rolled out across the company by the end of September,” Waring added.

RESULTS

Transforming Financial Insight

Noble Denton’s initial goal of improving monthly reporting was achieved immediately, with reports distributed via pdf to executive and regional management teams. The monthly reporting cycle has improved dramatically, delivering significant corporate value.

The use of SAP BusinessObjects Planning and Consolidation has been extended to include budget and forecast data, and the company now has around 20 finance staff actively using the system either inputting or reporting data. This provides touch of the button comparisons of budget with actual, as well as consolidating disclosure information to complete year end statutory accounts and providing a mechanism to capture and report various types of non-financial data such as headcount, chargeable mandays, working capital metrics and debtors ageing. The software is also used on a weekly basis to manage cash reporting, transforming the speed and accuracy of the treasury reporting processes.

Waring continues, “Noble Denton also uses the inter-company module to enable the regions to improve reconciliation processes and enhance performance visibility across the organisation.”

Benefits of adopting SAP BusinessObjects Planning and Consolidation:

- **Leaner Operation:** Enhanced consolidation and reporting has improved productivity enabling the company to operate a lean head office finance function. “Without the adoption of SAP BusinessObjects Planning and Consolidation Noble Denton would have had to hire additional staff to cope with a more dated and cumbersome reporting process,” Waring confirms.
- **Faster Month End Process:** In the past, reports were produced up to 30 days after month end, including a ten day consolidation process after information had been received from the regions. Today, Noble Denton produces its management reports within ten days: the regions can now report information via SAP BusinessObjects Planning and Consolidation within eight days, followed by a one/two day consolidation process.
- **Improved Trend Analysis:** The ability to track seasonal performance trends is enabling Noble Denton to benchmark company against company and region on region. In addition, forecasting and budgeting is now far more accurate.

The company is also looking at Key Performance Indicators such as revenue and cost per man day to assess pricing and profitability, staff utilisation to determine how resources can be used more efficiently, as well as comparing the cost/value of internal staff versus contractors.

Waring concludes, “The adoption of SAP BusinessObjects Planning and Consolidation has transformed the quality of financial reporting at Noble Denton. The investment has realised significant value through improved monthly reporting, a leaner finance operation and significantly improved the ability to track Key Performance Indicators across each business stream and region.”



ABOUT AIS Consulting

AIS Consulting is a performance management consultancy specialising in the delivery of SAP BusinessObjects Planning and Consolidation solutions. For more information visit www.ais-consulting.co.uk.

www.sap.com/uk/sapbusinessobjects

