THE CHALLENGE

Webber, LLC, a Texas-based construction company and subsidiary of Ferrovial, S.A., needed a better way to quickly process and prepare reports on the massive amount of data it collects from its 3,000 employees and projects spread across the country, without having to depend on developers with static reports. Business executives sought to get away from the waiting game of report development and needed a way to scale their Power BI visualization efforts. The business side of the more than $1 billion construction company was able to download reports from its ERP systems and bring them all into Power BI to visualize projects, but the operations team couldn’t scale the process on its own.

With so many systems and data owners, Webber needed a way to incorporate their needs in how the solution performed, since Webber stores critical timecard information, per diems paid to employees, travel information, fleet management data, market data, corporate expenses, procurement information, equipment, HR data and more. The overall objective of implementing a solution was to have a 360-degree view of every project within Webber, so that project managers can see their project costs in a timely manner and in a way that makes sense for them to manage their projects.

One issue Webber struggled with, which is a familiar struggle across IT teams in most industries, is how to get the requirements from the user, and then work with people globally. Webber’s decision makers were looking for ways to collaborate with the business better and make the business and IT relationship more functional. Since Webber isn’t a technology company with endless technical resources, it needed a scalable, smart solution to drive business intelligence.

“Being in the construction space, margins are very small,” says Moises Hinojosa, chief information officer for Webber. “A huge IT staff to enable data warehousing isn’t in our business model. However, we wanted to make smart business decisions based off critical data, not just hunches, so we needed a lean, user-friendly way to incorporate data warehousing into our business practices.”

THE SOLUTION

“We knew we needed a data warehousing solution and this solution will be one of Webber business-critical technologies,” says Tuyen Dao, director of IT enterprise solutions for Webber. “As such, we needed to keep the core knowledge in-house and clearly demarcate the boundaries for outsourcing to vendors. While doing so, we had to also ensure IT ability to deliver quality data services to the business in a timely manner with the limited resources and data warehouse knowledge we have. And that’s the data warehousing solution we were looking for.”

Webber took part in a proof-of-concept (POC) with Pyramart’s Data Warehousing offering and began the hands-on evaluation. “Though Pyramart is a newer software, it met all of our key requirements,” says Dao. “The support staff was super and their willingness to listen and develop additional features to meet Webber’s requests was commendable.”
After the standup of production, test and development environments, Webber was able to bring data from 18 different data sources into the data warehouse within the first four and half months. This was done without additional IT resources or outsourcing, without external data warehouse training and more importantly, it was done in collaboration with business users using Pyramart. “As the team understands and masters all Pyramart capabilities, I believe we will deliver critical data to the business at an even faster speed,” says Dao.

“We haven’t had to hire a big data team to do this; from an IT perspective, we’re utilizing the existing resources that we have,” says Hinojosa. “The data warehousing work brings a healthy transparency to our business initiatives. The biggest benefit I’ve seen is that we’re able to utilize a tool that we don’t have to spend so much time going back and forth to get the business what they need.”

The Webber IT team wanted minimal development needs, and support as needed, so that they could deliver data warehouses quickly to the business. Pyramart offered all this and more, and Webber is making use of a lot of the functionality that the solution offers. There are a variety of ways to get data into the system, and Webber is currently utilizing almost every one of them.

THE RESULT

Webber is now saving thousands of hours of internal resources getting data out of different source systems – whether it’s their HR or fleet system, and downloading those as reports, sometimes weekly. The team has also found it is now able to have one single version of truth and enforce data governance like never before. From a performance perspective, everything is in one place.

“We’re democratizing the data, and anyone is able to take company data and create their own metrics and KPIs with it so much more easily,” says Hinojosa.

Pyramart is frequently adding additional functionality that supports Webber as they grow together. One example is that because of Webber’s security requirements, Pyramart was not able to put production and test environments on the same physical server. Because of that requirement, the Pyramart team was able to help and advise them on how to deploy, as well as write additional software that would allow Webber to take advantage of other functionality like migrating data from test to production. The data migration would have taken hundreds of hours without adding that value-added functionality.

“Implementing data warehousing is helping prevent project failure,” says Hinojosa. “Any error on schedule or budget can completely wipe out the entire profits of a huge project. Now that we have the data available, we can help make decisions much earlier in the project life cycle – we can actually forecast potential issues and deploy resources to change the trajectory of the project earlier on. In the past, we would find problems at 60 to 70 percent of project completion, and it’s very hard to change the course of a project at that point.”