



FLIR sees clearly with VISUAL BI



The World Leader in the Design, Manufacture and Marketing of Thermal Imaging Infrared Cameras

ICX Technologies, a public company recently purchased by FLIR Systems, is composed of sixteen business units all of which specialize in homeland defense. They provide everything from biological and chemical detection to infrared cameras, radar systems and border patrol towers. Like other public companies, ICX has complex reporting requirements which play a vital role in their ability to make critical business decisions in a timely manner.

To get their reports into a format that met their users' wide range of requirements (and similar to the majority of businesses), ICX was using spreadsheets for their key operational metrics. But because of the manual nature of spreadsheet reporting, as well as the many errors to which spreadsheets are prone, this proved to be too expensive and inefficient. Thus to extend the efficiencies gained from implementing VISUAL ERP, ICX chose the VISUAL Business Intelligence Reporting Suite as their Business Intelligence reporting and dashboard solution to streamline their reporting processes and create greater organizational efficiency.

According to Peter Mertens, Manager of Biodefense Operations, "With sixteen business units,

obviously everybody wants different reports to meet their own operating procedures. Our people wanted to sort and take the data and move it around. Using spreadsheets was causing inefficiencies, but most importantly, we couldn't give upper management immediate answers and it was driving them crazy. "

To address their requirements, Mertens and his team unanimously chose the VISUAL BI Reporting Suite for the following reasons:

1. The Reporting Suite has a direct integration to their VISUAL database, providing real time visibility into all their data and complete drill down functionality.
2. The easy report creation saved tens of thousands of dollars in consultant and IT expenses.
3. The Reporting Suite provided the ability to copy a report to many different databases for use among all the different rex business units.
4. The product was easy to install and didn't require IT assistance.

Mertens notes that, *“With the Reporting Suite, you don’t have to wait for full costing to be done, and you don’t have to wait until the end of the month before the reports are valid. If somebody wants real time information, the Reporting Suite provides it immediately.”*

Once implemented, the Reporting Suite delivered on every one of their expectations. Not only has it saved ICX money, but substantial time as well, proving to be a solid return on investment.

According to Mertens, the Reporting Suite has increased ICX efficiency by twenty-fold in account research time alone. *“We were able to internalize a lot of the custom reporting, so we didn’t have to pay outside consultants to do custom reports. We created a small super group that had administrative rights over the Reporting Suite. This group has permission to get to the key data that the Reporting Suite can then easily report from. And then we simply give Reporting Suite users permissions to run reports, and limit their access in whatever manner we require. Plus, once you write a report in the Reporting Suite, you can use that same data across many other reports with ease. We’ve also been able to take our reports and copy them over from database to database to database, which saves a tremendous amount of time. Overall, we’ve saved between one to two hundred hours of consulting time alone.”*

“You know the efficiency is obvious,” Mertens adds, *“when you can put meaningful reports into operations’ hands, because what they really need are the hardcore facts in order to succeed in their respective positions. They can quickly go back to their boss and show what they have outstanding, and even break it down by week. They can easily show*

our cash needs, ordering process, and our vendors that are performing. Some of them are even using the information to go out and negotiate better contracts with their suppliers. So from an operations standpoint, the Reporting Suite has actually empowered them with the ability to do their jobs much more efficiently as well as adding to the company’s bottom line”

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PETER MERTENS -
MANAGER OF BIODEFENSE
OPERATIONS

The VISUAL BI Reporting Suite has successfully addressed ICX’s reporting requirements, and has importantly played a major role in providing the necessary due diligence reports to facilitate their buy-out with FLIR Systems in late 2010.

Summing up, Mertens says that “For the operations people who aren’t formally trained in accounting and finance, pushing a button and having the answers is extremely helpful. The Reporting Suite helps these smart people show their managerial skills and abilities.