

Customer Profile

Information Builders enables agile information solutions with the WebFOCUS business intelligence (BI) platform and integration technologies from iWay Software.

INEOS Oxide

Snapshot

Organization

INEOS Oxide produces a comprehensive range of specialty and intermediate chemicals derived from ethylene oxide. It is a proven leader with a strong track record of high quality, engineering excellence, and innovation.

The Challenge

To extract meaningful information from the data generated by SAP systems and accumulated in an Oracle database.

The Strategy

Apply query and reporting tools to a data warehouse for analysis of maintenance and parts warehousing information.

The Results

The project has expanded to include the accounting department, which is using the query and reporting facilities to track monthly expenses. Third parties are also making use of the environment.

Information Builders Solution

WebFOCUS Report Server, ReportCaster, Resource Analyzer and Resource Governor, UAS, iWay ETL Manager, SAP, and Oracle adapters.



Enhancing Operations Through the Power of Information

Robust Integration and Reporting Tools Improve Productivity and Safety at INEOS Oxide

INEOS Oxide is still a young company, but it has grown through a series of related acquisitions to become a leading global manufacturer of specialty and intermediate chemicals, with sales of about €5 billion. It consists of six businesses, each with a major chemical company heritage, and has a production network that spans 60 manufacturing facilities in 16 countries throughout the world.

INEOS Oxide is one of those six divisions, with headquarters in Lyndhurst (UK) and production facilities in Antwerp (Belgium), Freeport (U.S.), and Plaquemine (U.S.). It is the market leader in specialty and intermediate chemicals derived from ethylene oxide.

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INEOS Oxide employs some 470 people in Europe, the majority of whom are located in Antwerp. It also acts as a third-party host for the production facilities of major petrochemical companies, allowing the company to share the benefits of its location, services, and highly skilled workforce, including IT infrastructure and related support activities.

Reporting problems

To support its very diversified portfolio of partners, INEOS Oxide originally developed a maintenance- and materials-management system (MMS), and a separate data warehouse. In the late 1990s, the transactional MMS platform was integrated with a new ERP system – SAP R/3 – with the intention of performing all reporting out of the new environment.

“After a while, we found out that, although SAP R/3 is an excellent program with lots of data, not all data can be flexibly accessed. So we faced a reporting problem,” says Jan Roelands, responsible for data warehousing and business intelligence (BI) at INEOS Oxide. “Therefore we started to look around for query and reporting tools. We approached all the big vendors, but we had one major request. We needed someone who could provide and support both ETL and reporting tools, because we didn’t want to get caught in a cat-and-mouse game between suppliers, as we had experienced in the past. In the end, we went with Information Builders because they met all our criteria, and they demonstrated the best price/performance ratio.”

The project started mid-2001. At INEOS Oxide’s request, Information Builders developed a quick-start proposal, which the company gradually expanded.

“That quick-start proposal focused on the querying of maintenance and materials data,” says Frank Dobbelaere, Information Technology and Process Control manager at INEOS Oxide. “One of SAP R/3’s shortcomings is precisely maintenance and materials reporting. The ERP system does provide such a feature, but it is extremely complicated. With the Information Builders solution, we were able to solve that problem.”

During the development phase, INEOS Oxide made sure its end users were involved, in order to find out what their exact requirements were.

“Of course, once they understood what the system could do, they started asking for more,” says Dobbelaere. “We have already extended the original project to the accounting department, to allow them to monitor monthly expenses and fixed costs. And we know that one of the third parties at our site uses those features as well. The maintenance and materials data warehouse is already being used by the parties that we provide services for.”

According to Dobbelaere, INEOS Oxide had no choice but to look for an external solution. “A couple of years ago, we started having performance problems with our ERP system. You know, the more you start querying and reporting, the more performance you demand from your system, and in the end, our transactional processes were being impacted. What’s more, our maintenance and purchasing staff wanted to dig deep into our database for historical information, and that’s really beyond the limits of SAP. But with Information Builders’ tools, we now have all of SAP’s modules talking to each other, which used to be very difficult in the old days. And the flow of information between the various departments has vastly improved.”

Find Out More

To find out how our solutions can help your company succeed, talk to an Information Builders representative today.

Contact our Information Builders office in Brussels or visit us at

informationbuilders.be.

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Not Your Typical BI

Roelands points out that INEOS Oxide is not your middle-of-the-road data warehousing and business intelligence implementation. "Most similar solutions are aimed at gathering and processing sales information, but we focused on spare-parts warehousing and maintenance information, so it's quite different than the traditional sales reporting story. Basically, we are using ETL with the underlying iWay engine, and WebFOCUS Analytical Reporter for Web browsers on top of that. This allows a restricted number of people to write their own queries and reports. If any one of them thinks he has created a report that might be of interest to anyone else, he can call me and we can publish the report for the rest of the community. Everyone else can make use of the Web portal, in self-service mode."

Currently, most of the data is available in the database, so Roelands is now focusing on expanding the reporting system, primarily for the sales department. "But we have no deadline," he insists. "You can't put a time frame on a data warehousing or business intelligence project. It's actually a never-ending story; it keeps on growing and evolving, with new demands from the end users all the time. The toolset from Information Builders is so versatile, [that] it's up to us now to make the most of it."

"We certainly can't complain about the support we got from them, and they send us follow-up surveys on a regular basis to see if everything is going as planned."

Higher Efficiency

For Dobbelaere, it is hard to say whether the BI implementation has resulted in any savings. "Not in financial terms, that is, but we are convinced that it has helped us to save a lot of time, and it certainly has increased our efficiency. For example, when renewing contracts, we are now able to negotiate so much better based on the information we can draw from the system. And as far as preventive maintenance is concerned, we were able to find out which equipment and which parts of the factory had not yet been covered – and that is crucial for our safety. The data warehouse has also enabled us to discover some irregularities which we could never have found without it."

As for the future of the business intelligence solution, it's all a matter of demand, says Roelands. "And of time and money as well, of course. Information Builders helped us stay right on budget with our implementation, but now it is a matter of assessing whether new demands from the end users are justified. All the data is there, and we know it is just a matter of extracting the right information."

"And I don't have to tell you that once the word gets around what can be accomplished with those tools, everybody gets interested," he continues. "But that's the rewarding side of business intelligence, helping people find the information they need!"

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