

Information Builders enables agile information solutions with business intelligence (BI) and integration technologies. WebFOCUS – the most widely utilized business intelligence platform – connects to any enterprise system or application and enables simple and intuitive interaction with information.

Securex

Snapshot

Organization

Securex, a Belgium-based provider of social-services management, helps small and medium-sized companies with payroll, HR, and other social-management tasks.

The Challenge

Deliver an online software service that manages continually changing personnel and payroll requirements.

The Strategy

Create a Web-based self-service application with built-in BI that delivers reports to small business owners via secure VPN connections and provides ad hoc reporting for advanced users.

The Results

Reduced distribution and maintenance costs while freeing up personnel for customer support. Securex clients have lower software costs and the ability to obtain global views of their businesses faster and in formats that meet legal requirements.

Information Builders Solution

WebFOCUS.



Els Demeyere, Business Analyst, Securex.

Securex Helps Small Businesses Manage Personnel and Payroll Requirements

WebFOCUS Self-Service Application and Ad Hoc Reporting Makes It Easy

The complex structure of Belgium's legal and social services makes it difficult for companies to keep up-to-date with continually changing personnel and payroll requirements. Large organizations typically employ in-house specialists to stay on top of the changes. But for smaller enterprises and independent contractors, maintaining compliance with government payroll regulations involves navigating through a bureaucratic maze.

This difficulty supplies a burgeoning market for Securex, a provider of social-services management based in Belgium that helps small and medium-sized companies. Securex currently has 26,000 clients, and 73 percent of its customer base consists of companies with fewer than five workers.

“With the [WebFOCUS-enhanced] version of Magistral, we save three days’ worth of consolidated reporting information, as well as having access to details of the entire workforce in Belgium. There is no need to reintroduce data for each business unit. We get global reporting across six business units.”

Securex makes it easy for these Belgian companies to meet legal and fiscal obligations, thanks to a unique self-service human resources (HR) application called Magistral ASP. Delivered as an online software service, Magistral ASP is especially designed for companies that wish to automate their personnel administration and management activities.

The application uses Information Builders’ WebFOCUS to generate reports and business intelligence information via the Web, e-mail, and printed reports, creating a real-time information delivery environment for small business owners. For example, FNAC, a large media and entertainment retailer in Belgium, is using Magistral ASP to support 800 employees at six branches in Brussels, Gent, Antwerp, Wijnegem, Leuven, and Liège.

Riding the e-Business Wave

Along with several other branches of Belgium’s social secretary organization, Securex has shifted its entire business strategy to e-services. The overriding premise is to utilize the Internet wherever possible, eliminating manual processes and streamlining access to information. This directive motivated Securex to transform its client/server Magistral application into an online service called Magistral ASP.

Securex conducted extensive research into Belgium’s social services requirements, then created a software application that accommodates customer needs. Designed using advanced Internet and Web technologies, Magistral ASP does far more than merely calculate monthly paychecks, although that is its primary purpose. The system is built around four online modules:

- Payroll Management, which processes social, fiscal, and payroll data while providing a comprehensive view of staff expenses
- Simulation, which allows users to calculate severance pay based on length of service and salary level
- Recruitment, which contains lists of potential candidates based on selectable criteria, simplifying the hiring process and offering information for internal career planning
- Reporting, which allows users to obtain information on everything from the ages of company personnel to the total yearly costs of industrial accidents WebFOCUS is used to create lists, charts, and statistics in the reporting module. “We chose WebFOCUS because it offers the best price/performance for enhancing our application,” explains Els Demeyere, a business analyst at Securex. “HR staff members appreciate having such a sophisticated business intelligence tool. It allows them to access a breadth of information covering a wide spectrum of activities.”

Consolidating Data to Streamline Reporting

Magistral ASP uses modern, Web-based technology to simplify infrastructure requirements and lower costs. A Citrix-based, thin-client architecture allows all the servers and software applications to be housed in the Securex data center, where they can be professionally managed.

Rather than maintain a client-side software application, users access the Magistral ASP via standard Web browsers, using Virtual Private Network (VPN) technology to protect data in transit. All data that passes over the Internet is encrypted and thus unreadable by noncertified users. The data is stored externally at one of the biggest data storage facilities in Belgium. Servers and software are also managed by an external partner of Securex. WebFOCUS adds an additional layer of data

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protection, working with existing security mechanisms at the application, network, and server levels to ensure only authorized users can access reports, statistics, and other information.

By offering the Magistral application as an online service, Securex no longer needs to distribute CDs to deliver software and updates to customers, simplifying customer support. Users appreciate the lower operations and rental costs, immediate access to software updates, and centralized backup/restore facilities. Information is obtained faster via the Internet and documents accessed over the Web even retain their legal value.

Building a Cost-Effective Reporting Infrastructure

Information Builders supplied the crucial reporting engine for the Magistral ASP application.

“Securex has worked with Information Builders’ products for many years,” says Demeyere.

“Previously, we used Information Builders’ software to create the reporting module for our client/server application. Then we used WebFOCUS to create the online version for Magistral ASP.”

According to Demeyere, customers used the client/server version to perform HR reporting activities offline by consulting their own locally stored data. Now all reporting functions are centralized on the server – and users need just a browser to access them. “WebFOCUS adds an extra layer of value to Magistral – above and beyond our specific payroll calculations,” says Demeyere. “Our users need to answer questions varying from ‘How many people do we have on the payroll today’ to ‘How many children do our employees have and what are their ages’ – so we can buy the appropriate holiday presents.”

Leveraging the Web to Improve Customer Service

To obtain answers to these and other questions, Securex used WebFOCUS to create a menu of standard reports, with ad hoc reporting capabilities available to more advanced users.

For example, each of FNAC’s six branches used to have its own payroll system, making it difficult to obtain a global view of employee data. According to Paul Seghers, human resources manager at FNAC, that all changed once the organization began using Magistral ASP in February 2001. “With the ASP version of Magistral, we save three days’ worth of consolidated reporting information, as well as having access to details of the entire workforce in Belgium,” he explains. “There is no need to reintroduce data for each business unit. We get global reporting across six business units. This allows us to centrally manage payroll for all 800 employees from one global database, while giving each shop access to its local information.”

FNAC appreciates the flexibility of Magistral ASP, especially when generating reports for its mother company in France. Seghers says FNAC plans to use the recruitment module in the future to help manage their seasonal hiring requirements.

“The thin-client version is far more attractive, especially to smaller companies that don’t wish to invest a lot of money in IT infrastructure,” concludes Demeyere. “Additionally, the new architecture reduces our distribution and maintenance costs, giving our support personnel more time to offer advice and assistance to customers.”

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