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Murray and Roberts Cementation

# CUSTOMER STORY

# Murray & Roberts hooks strategy on Microsoft Business Intelligence

Murray & Roberts Cementation, a subsidiary of leading engineering, contracting and construction services company, Murray & Roberts, has deployed an accelerated Business Intelligence solution for its financial management purposes. The subsidiary focuses on contract mining, which includes project management and ensuring project profitability as well as mine development and mining services. The first phase of the solution has allowed for strategic BI, but scope was provided for tactical and operational BI during the next phase of the implementation.

## Business situation

Murray & Roberts Cementation has three main business areas, including mine development, mining services and contract mining. It also incorporates mine design and engineering for plant item maintenance and rebuilding.

The company's primary requirement was to provide information to the Executive Committee for project profitability and forecasting. While the solution is mainly financial in nature, it also required input from the time and attendance as well as risk management systems.

Jaco de Bruin, Financial Manager, Operations at Murray & Roberts Cementation, explains that the decision to implement a BI solution was integral to its strategy following completion of its ERP system deployment. This was to ensure that information from a number of systems could be brought together and financial and other data could be more easily accessed and presented.

"Our strategy was to provide management information from various sources, including the financial system, for making decisions based on early indicators," says De Bruin. "The first step was to define strategy and work through a full value driver analysis and so determine focus areas when implementing operational BI during phase two. This will ensure improved, value-added decision-making," he says.

While a BI tool was provided in the ERP system, it required extensive data manipulation. Previously, reports were also completed "hot of the press", just in time for meetings, he adds. The current solution will cut down on time to prepare and properly interpret numbers. It will also highlight issues and improved suggestions for taking corrective action where necessary.

The decision for strategic BI was only the first step, and the expectation is to unlock key value from operational BI. De Bruin explains that in the mining environment, this involves product planning cycles, asset usage - particularly underground - plant maintenance and management as well as optimal equipment usage. "Evidence of supervision to labour ratios, for example, will also come from the operational information at our disposal," he says.



## Solution implementation

Microsoft Gold Certified partner, IS Partners, implemented the Microsoft-based solution using timeXtender, an accelerated BI methodology and tools, which reduced development time by 75% through automated data extraction and staging.

All financial and non-financial information is presented through dashboards, scorecards and structured financial statements using Microsoft PerformancePoint Server.

Phase one of the implementation has been completed to provide dashboards for executive KPIs and assist the finance department with reporting to the Exco. Dashboards are used for various areas in different divisions, dealing with a combination of financial, risk, HR and order book KPI's.

This has ensured easier compliance with general mining industry metrics, such as safety, health and risk. HR can now also effortlessly obtain information relating to strikes, BEE components and recruitment, while procurement and order book metrics further allow for determining targets based on financial measures.

Financial information has been consolidated company-wide, and allows for drill-down to the various divisions as well as to a project level. "A primary focus for the Exco, financial KPIs now allow for streamlined access to information for meeting and maintaining targets," says De Bruin.



## Solution Benefits

He says that reporting can now be done with ease, even daily if required. Murray & Roberts Cementation can also react quickly to any issues highlighted within a project. "Previously, data had to be taken from sub-systems and manually compiled. We now have visibility into our information on a weekly and monthly basis, and this ensures up-to-date information as data can change from day to day."

Early payroll indicators have also allowed the company to circumvent one of its biggest problem areas. "We are now able to compare information from payroll and the time and attendance system for headcount purposes. A common problem in the mining industry is to determine whether people, who are not on the payroll, are going through the turnstile and allowed into the workplace. This can be identified and prevented.

"Our information can now be presented in a way that is useful to the organisation strategically. We can also gain new insights into existing information," De Bruin says.

Murray & Roberts operates in a Microsoft environment, with SQL Server deployed throughout the organisation. For this reason, the PerformancePoint solution was a logical choice for information presentation.

"timeXtender swung the decision in favour of IS Partners," he says. "The ease with which development was done made up our minds. In fact, we were surprised to find that there was tool that effectively cut development time by up to 75 %, generating all code required for the same end result.

"While timeXtender saved a lot of time in the development cycle, IS Partners also demonstrated a complete understanding of our industry's complexities and requirements."

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#### About timeXtender:

timeXtender® is a world leading vendor of agile ETL and data warehousing software dedicated to the Microsoft® SQL Server® platform. timeXtender was named Microsoft ISV Partner of the Year in Denmark in both 2010 and 2008. More than 1500 satisfied customers in 29 countries can't be wrong.

[www.timextender.com](http://www.timextender.com)

#### About IS Partners:

IS Partners - better decisions faster - Established with the exclusive aim of cutting through the banter of Customer Relationship Management (CRM) and Business Intelligence (BI), solutions that have traditionally shown little in the way of a tangible pay-off, IS Partner addresses the shift in business perspective that is demanding well-priced solutions that deliver information directly to where it counts.

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