



Serving Easy-Made, Homestyle BI with SAP BusinessObjects Solutions to Increase ROI

by David Hannon, Features Editor

The business intelligence (BI) program at Kraft Foods is growing by leaps and bounds as new solutions, including SAP BusinessObjects BI 4.0, bring BI capabilities to a broader set of users, increasing the value of the company's existing investment in SAP software.

Kraft's implementation of SAP Business-Objects Explorer last year was the catalyst for this growth, allowing more business users to access the wealth of data in the company's SAP ERP system via its simplified user interface. Users can now drill down into huge data sets more quickly and efficiently to identify business trends or issues in ways they never imagined possible.

More recently, Kraft has been rolling out the SAP BusinessObjects BI 4.0 platform. And according to Mike Walsh, Associate Director of Business Intelligence at Kraft, "These solutions have made everything we do easier." The deeper integration between SAP NetWeaver Business Warehouse (SAP NetWeaver BW) and the frontend solutions in SAP BusinessObjects BI 4.0 has improved query performance and allowed for more self-serve reporting across the company.

This implementation, and the benefits it brought with it, can be traced back to a single conversation in Kraft's Information Systems' BI team — one that initiated an entirely new BI strategy for the business.



The Need for ROI Speed

In mid-2010, Walsh was talking with Kelli Such, Global BI Director for Kraft, about the company's enterprise-wide SAP implementation. The focus up until that point had been on implementing SAP transactional systems at various Kraft plants and businesses, getting the configurations right, and ensuring users were properly trained on those systems. BI work had only centered on building out the data foundation layers in SAP NetWeaver BW and providing visibility using more traditional BI reporting tools.

"During our conversation, we realized the businesses within Kraft would soon begin asking about the results of the SAP implementation," says Walsh. "Our entire company had

dedicated time, effort, and resources to rolling out a brand-new suite of systems and retiring legacy applications, and we were going to need to start realizing the benefits quickly."

Certainly, the transactional systems being rolled out would produce positive results of their own. But Walsh and Such knew the best way to exemplify and expand the benefits of the SAP rollout across Kraft would be by deploying user-friendly BI applications.

"We needed to produce the types of reports that help people make business decisions," Walsh says. "These kinds of reports make it obvious to people why the decision was made to go with SAP software."

Avoiding Sandtraps

Walsh and Such began focusing on how to get BI solutions to the production environment quickly and efficiently so users could begin realizing the benefits as soon as possible. Too often, says Walsh, an IT organization will build a new BI solution in a sand-box environment and ask the business to invest in and implement the solution. The business then takes its time to review the solution for a particular unit, weigh the budgetary issues, and decide if it is the right fit.

"You can stand up any tool that you want in a sandbox or in a test system very quickly," says Walsh. "But the problems come when you bring it to the business and start running into internal controls and security concerns and all of the technical spaghetti. Then it takes a long time to get it into production. And you lose some of the enthusiasm and some of the business cases change."

Kraft's 4-Point Plan to Speed BI Deployment

- Gain full support of the IT organization.
- Accelerate innovation to drive new capabilities in advance of business problems.
- Have a dedicated group develop the BI solutions and bring them to production.
- Work closely with SAP to streamline deployment.

The IT team knew the SAP BusinessObjects solutions were the key to getting return on Kraft's SAP investment, and it couldn't risk business units delaying their use of these valued solutions. As a result, Walsh and Such came up with a four-point plan to expedite the deployment of BI solutions within Kraft and speed time to value:

- 1. Gain full support of the IT organization, including financial support, before moving forward.
- Accelerate innovation to develop BI capabilities in advance of business requests and demands, and then showcase the commercialized product to all business units.
- 3. Create a centralized, dedicated group to develop the BI solutions and bring them to production, rather than pass demo solutions to the business.
- 4. Maintain a close relationship with the vendor (SAP) to work out bugs and streamline deployment.

The Model of Success

Kraft has progressed through these steps to develop a model BI program. Today, Walsh leads a centralized BI Technical Services team with a mission to expedite the development and deployment of BI solutions, most recently SAP BusinessObjects BI 4.0 solutions. When a new solution is selected, it goes to his group first, before any of the business units see it.

"We focus on getting the tool into the production environment, including all the transports, notes, connectivity, security, internal controls, and cost model," says Walsh. From there, the solution is given to local BI contacts working with the business unit to be implemented and used very quickly. "It's almost like a cookbook local BI contacts can use that has the standards, governance, and connectivity in place for them to deploy," he says. "Empowering the businesses to do this drives the adoption rate and speeds up the turnaround time."

Walsh's new group does more than just hand the solution off to the business, however. There is another layer to the organization that focuses specifically on helping business units deploy BI solutions. "We realized we can do the innovation and even get it into production, but we needed help with the adoption,"

"It changes users' perception when we can take 500 million rows of data and render it graphically in less than three seconds."

 Mike Walsh, Associate Director of Business Intelligence, Kraft Foods he says. "Now, members of the BI Technical Services team work with both the local BI contact and the business clients to show them the tool and sell it to their users to drive adoption and guarantee success before they roll out the project."

Soft Sell

According to Walsh, selling business units on SAP BusinessObjects functionality isn't very complicated. Most of Kraft's businesses were previously accustomed to seeing data reported in tabular views that took weeks to create because they had to be built from the database layer. So when the data is shown to users in a very visual model with pie charts, line graphs, and drill-down capabilities, the business units are quickly captivated.



"With the client sitting there, we could just drag and drop to show the view we wanted and render the data in the tool," he recalls of the early SAP BusinessObjects Explorer demos. "And that changes their perception when we can take 500 million rows of data and render it graphically in less than three seconds. The business users could see spikes and trends much more clearly, so that drives a lot of pointed research on things they probably wouldn't see through a tabular view."

Another major selling point for SAP BusinessObjects Explorer was the lack of required development. Because the user interface is similar to what users were familiar with, they could easily move from one data set to another seamlessly, without having to re-learn the interface.

"It's like a window into the different datasets," says Walsh. "A user can look at sales data in this solution, and then look at distribution information, and then support tickets, and the user interface doesn't change. And our group doesn't have to worry about developing the interfaces. We just plug in different datasets to SAP Net-Weaver BW and then we can build out a view of sales data in SAP BusinessObjects Explorer within an hour."

Intelligence Gets Smarter

While Kraft was enjoying the success it achieved with SAP BusinessObjects Explorer, it saw even more potential in the new solutions available in SAP BusinessObjects BI 4.0. As Walsh explains, the two biggest drivers for Kraft's move to the new platform were the connectivity with SAP NetWeaver BW and the self-serve reporting capabilities of SAP BusinessObjects Web Intelligence 4.0, which it is currently piloting with super users. "We want to empower the users to start building their own reports," he says. "The goal is to take IT out of the mix when it comes to report building. We have made the investment in SAP software on the back end to capture information in the data warehouse, and with these new solutions, we can open it up to the end users to build out their own content."

In addition to the graphical representations that SAP BusinessObjects Web Intelligence makes possible, Kraft's end users were also impressed by the solution's ability to combine disparate data sources. "That capability broadened the entire scope of what BI can deliver to us," he says. "When we rolled it out to super users who had Business Objects experience in the past, they compared it to being reunited with an old friend."

Kraft is expanding its rollout of SAP BusinessObjects Web Intelligence throughout 2012. And with that in place, the next move is to enable mobile BI through the use of SAP BusinessObjects Mobile in parallel with an SAP HANA pilot project.

"We see a great deal of value in going mobile as soon as possible," says Walsh. "It requires very little selling and in fact helps you sell BI as a concept. You just hand off an iPad during a demo session and watch the clients start playing with it."

Exceeding Expectations

The implementation of the new BI solutions at Kraft has begun to change the perception of the BI program across the enterprise. As SAP BusinessObjects BI 4.0 wins more support, the word is spreading.

"Interest in the BI program at Kraft is increasing from IT and non-IT employees," says Walsh. "For example, we're getting more requests to meet with clients to talk about what we can do for their organization. When you achieve these successes, word starts to spread, and that's good for us. We're spreading it even further by hosting learning lunches and webinars to get even more people engaged across the company."

And as more users are brought onto the solutions, Kraft continues to increase the return it gets on its overall investment in SAP software. ■

At a Glance

Kraft Foods

Headquarters: Northfield, Illinois

Industry: Food

Revenue: \$49 billion (NYSE: KFT)

Employees: 125,000 Company details:

- Currently the world's second largest food company
- 11 brands generate more than \$1 billion in revenue
- 70+ brands with more than \$100 million in revenue
- 40+ brands over 100 years old

SAP solutions:

- SAP ERP
- SAP NetWeaver BW
- SAP BusinessObjects Explorer
- SAP BusinessObjects Web Intelligence
- SAP BusinessObjects BI 4.0