



Clark County Family Services Department selects IBM Cognos BI to improve reporting and compliance

Overview:

Challenge

- Implement a BI solution that would not only streamline reporting, but also help Clark County's Family Services Department comply with new state regulations.

Why IBM?

- The IBM Cognos BI solution offered an intuitive user interface, the ability to integrate with existing systems and had the scalability potential for growth across other county departments.

Solution

- IBM Cognos 8 BI works with the statewide system to improve the department's reporting process, benchmark new services and measure business performance.

Key Benefits

- Helps identify new federal revenue sources; decreases reporting time; helps to monitor case worker compliance with state policies; identifies bottlenecks and improves business processes; eliminates the need for multiple spreadsheets and hand counting of information.

Clark County the United State's 15th-largest county – is home to the world-famous Las Vegas Strip, heart of the entertainment capital of the world and site of 14 of the nation's 15 largest hotels. This jewel in the desert lures many of the 40+ million tourists who come to the Las Vegas community each year to enjoy its world-class entertainment and hospitality, splendid casinos, fine restaurants and dazzling array of shopping venues.

Providing regional services to its more than 2 million residents, Clark County employs more than 8,000 people in 38 departments. The county is known for its strong ending-fund balance, overall financial strength and investment-quality credit rating. A strong commitment to IT excellence helps the county to achieve these accomplishments and meet its goal of providing a responsible, progressive, and results-oriented government that is responsive, accessible and accountable to its citizens.

Challenges faced

Clark County Family Services Department is the local public agency whose role is to help keep children safe, as required by the federal Adoption and Safe Families Act. The department runs numerous services – from child protective services to foster care services to adoption services – all of which require a large amount of data input and access via a case management system. Executive management, Business Intelligence (BI) analysts and child welfare staff all use the system frequently to run ad hoc and daily reports.

Prior to 2004, Clark County operated on a system where the state was responsible for the backend operations for child welfare, foster and adoption services. Front end services, such as intake and investigation, were the responsibility of the county. However, in 2004, there were



"In light of a fast-growing state population and struggling economic climate, we were able to not only boost our quality of service, but also generate about \$4 million in new revenue. The IBM Cognos solution, with its ability to help identify bottlenecks and improve business processes, was instrumental in these successes – so much so that other county departments are now implementing the solution and mirroring our BI infrastructure."

*~ Eboni Washington, QA/QI Supervisor,
Family Services Department, Clark County*

significant changes that were made by the Nevada legislature that made all of those services the responsibility of the two largest counties in the state, one of which was Clark County. With that change, the Family Services Department assumed responsibility and staff from the state to provide those new services. It was also mandated to start using the statewide automated child welfare information system, in addition to the customized reporting system the department was already using.



© 2010 Jupiterimages Corporation

"At the time, Nevada was the fastest growing state in the nation and keeping our quality of services on pace with the population growth was a challenge," says Eboni Washington, QA/QI Supervisor, Family Services Department, Clark County. "The reporting process we had in place was becoming time-consuming and a heavy burden on our IT staff. With the added requirements to work with the statewide system and benchmark new services, we knew we had to find a solution that would not only streamline reporting, but also help us to comply with regulations and measure business performance."

Strategy followed

In order to select the best solution for the Family Services Department's needs, Clark County invited several vendors to participate in a formal RFI process. The vendor responses were then ranked by an internal committee and narrowed down to four industry solutions. After seeing demonstrations of each product, IBM Cognos BI stood out as the clear winner.

“Right away, we liked IBM® Cognos® BI’s intuitive interface and user-friendliness – we knew our staff would be able to learn the application as quickly as possible,” says Washington. “Also, from the IT perspective, it was easy to manage, had the ability to integrate with our existing systems and had the scalability potential for growth, not only in our department, but also across other county departments.”

In 2005, the Family Services Department, along with several other Clark County departments, went live with IBM Cognos BI scorecards. The following year, with the help of IBM partner PerformanceG2, Inc., the department’s IT team developed cubes that could be used to build data marts and, in 2007, the last of the data marts were completed. The department also leveraged IBM Cognos training to bring employees up to speed on the new applications, quickly and easily.

Benefits realized

In addition to helping solve the Family Services Department’s initial problems around data access and reporting, IBM Cognos BI helped the department to monitor case worker compliance with state policies and legislation more easily, identify bottlenecks and improve business processes. For example, the IT team worked with department executives to design a series of reports for monitoring and measuring benchmarks. Using these reports, executives can look at a variety of measurements such as whether open investigations are being completed in a timely fashion, how many face-to-face contacts have taken place with victims of abuse and neglect, and the average length of stay for children in out-of-home placements. Furthermore, they can run reports on federal funding, as well as on net gains and losses with licensed foster homes.

“Targeted case management has been a huge benefit for our department,” says Washington. “The IBM Cognos solution has been instrumental in helping us identify more federal revenue sources. In fact, since September 2009, we’ve generated about \$4 million in new revenue – a significant amount that is especially needed in today’s economic climate.”

Additionally, using IBM Cognos BI, the department has been able to do away with multiple spreadsheets and hand counting of information – practices that often led to confusion and errors. Now, there is a single source of the truth. Staff no longer needs to keep track of all their case management system information and, instead, can devote time to going out in the community and providing services to families and children. Analysts are also reaping the benefits of IBM Cognos BI. While it used to take the programming staff 14 hours to build a report, it now takes 6.5 hours - meaning that analysts can get their reports much faster. And, with thousands of ad hoc and daily reports run annually, this adds up to an enormous amount of time saved for the IT staff.

In light of these accomplishments, the department is currently upgrading its system to IBM Cognos BI 8.4. In addition, Clark County has also implemented the IBM Cognos solution in its coroner’s office, where the staff can make good use of the system’s executive dashboards and reporting capabilities. There are also plans to implement the IBM Cognos solution at the county’s Social Service department.

“This entire process has been quite exciting and we’re proud of our end results,” adds Washington. “With our management’s support and end user input, we’ve put controls in place and built a solid BI infrastructure for our department. IBM Cognos BI has been especially critical to our success with this project and we look forward to helping other Clark County departments achieve the same results.”

About IBM Cognos BI and Performance Management

IBM Cognos business intelligence (BI) and performance management solutions deliver world-leading enterprise planning, consolidation and BI software, support and services to help companies plan, understand and manage financial and operational performance. IBM Cognos solutions bring together technology, analytical applications, best practices, and a broad network of partners to give customers an open, adaptive and complete performance solution. Over 23,000 customers in more than 135 countries around the world choose IBM Cognos solutions.



© Copyright IBM Corporation 2010

IBM Canada
3755 Riverside Drive
Ottawa, ON, Canada K1G 4K9

Produced in Canada
February 2010
All Rights Reserved.

IBM, the IBM logo, ibm.com and Cognos are trademarks or registered trademarks of International Business Machines Corporation in the United States, other countries, or both. If these and other IBM trademarked terms are marked on their first occurrence in this information with a trademark symbol (® or ™), these symbols indicate U.S. registered or common law trademarks owned by IBM at the time this information was published. Such trademarks may also be registered or common law trademarks in other countries. A current list of IBM trademarks is available on the Web at "Copyright and trademark information" at www.ibm.com/legal/copytrade.shtml.

Other company, product and service names may be trademarks or service marks of others.

This case study is an example of how one customer uses IBM products. There is no guarantee of comparable results.

References in this publication to IBM products or services do not imply that IBM intends to make them available in all countries in which IBM operates.

Any reference in this information to non-IBM Web sites are provided for convenience only and do not in any manner serve as an endorsement of those Web sites. The materials at those Web sites are not part of the materials for this IBM product and use of those Web sites is at your own risk.



Please Recycle
