



Business challenge

Awash with decentralized data generated by its worldwide subsidiaries, A-Gas International Ltd. struggled to gain a standardized view of the business and make timely, organization-wide decisions.

Transformation

A-Gas engaged IBM Business Partner Synergy to build a data warehouse and integrate IBM® Planning Analytics Express® software for planning analytics and group dashboards. It also used IBM Planning Analytics software, powered by IBM TM1® technology, to automate planning, budgeting, forecasting and analysis.

Results

Seconds versus days

to compile and consolidate sales matrices using automated business analyses

Gains holistic business view

across 16 entities worldwide through dashboards displaying aggregated data

Improves agility

and management of stockholding and procurement with increased visibility

A-Gas International Ltd.

Compiling sales matrices at the click of a button, versus several days, with IBM analytics software

Headquartered in Bristol in the UK, A-Gas is a group of companies that focuses on the distribution and life-cycle management of specialty gases and chemicals. Its expertise includes supplying refrigerants to various industries and providing recovery and reclamation services of environmentally sensitive products such as hydrochlorofluorocarbons (HCFCs). It operates trading subsidiaries in the UK, Europe, South Africa, Australia, Southeast Asia, China, Thailand, the Americas and Mexico. A-Gas employs roughly 600 people worldwide.

“With TMI, Synergy had the opportunity to launch both a financial and a business intelligence solution. It’s one of the best solutions in the world.”

—Allan Gibbon, Principal Consultant, Synergy



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Lacking a global business view

When A-Gas was founded in 1993, its aim was to introduce more climate-friendly alternatives to then widely used chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs). Today, it's expanded to provide innovative and sustainable solutions and services for a wide range of gases and chemicals detrimental to the environment, helping customers the world over to not only meet their regulatory obligations but also better protect the planet.

But being global comes with challenges. Allan Gibbon, Principal Consultant at Synergy, describes his customer's challenge: "A-Gas operates its various subsidiaries in a way that's most efficient for that region. Because of that, data was decentralized; the head office didn't have a standardized view of the business to make organization-wide decisions or to forecast. It took a lot of manual labor hours to bring everything together to get a group view.

"So we showcased what their world could look like if they went with an IBM and Synergy combination."

Aggregating data intelligently

Marlé Bijker, Principal Business Intelligence (BI) and Data Warehouse Consultant at Synergy, describes the game-changing solution: "First, we built a data warehouse and integrated IBM Planning Analytics Express software for planning analytics. It delivers a group dashboard that gives senior managers a consolidated view of the business by entity."

To automate planning, budgeting, forecasting and analysis, Synergy also deployed IBM Planning Analytics software, powered by IBM TM1 technology. "We create master categories for products, customers and suppliers, and TM1 exports that data to the warehouse so A-Gas can get a single view. We used the rules engine and its ability to model scenarios to give them the flexibility to plan, budget, forecast and compare different scenarios against one another over time to see the effect on the business," explains Gibbon.

Speeding analytics, planning

The A-Gas world is now truly connected. Sixteen entities are

integrated with the system, which systematically consolidates and analyzes business performance, customer and product data at unprecedented speeds. "Sales matrices that used to take 3–4 days to compile and 2–3 days to consolidate are now done at the click of a button," says Bijker.

In addition to saving time and reducing errors inherent in manual data consolidation, the solution delivers a holistic, global view companywide, fundamentally changing how executives manage the business. Ron Buissonne, Financial Director at A-Gas, describes the transformation: "It's like spending time looking through the windscreen as opposed to looking through the rearview mirror."

For instance, the platform improved warehouse stock management and procurement. "Now it's very easy for them to see the stockholding. It makes them a lot more agile in terms of how they address issues when they do come up," says Bijker.

Gibbon concurs, adding, "With TM1, Synergy had the opportunity to launch both a financial and a business intelligence solution. It's one of the best solutions in the world."

Solution components

- IBM® Planning Analytics, powered by IBM TM1®
- IBM Planning Analytics Express®
- Synergy

Take the next step

To learn more about the IBM solutions featured in this story, please contact your IBM representative or IBM Business Partner.

About Synergy

Synergy is a leading business analytics, data warehouse and financial performance management solutions provider, offering implementation, design, training and support services for both local and international companies. The company also provides expertise and consulting services in the areas of BI strategy and implementation, predictive analytics, and infrastructure-architecture and support, among others. Synergy was founded in 1978 and boasts offices in Cape Town, Johannesburg and Durban, South Africa.

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