

Crystal Xcelsius Customer Case Study



Challenge

Industry
Oil & Gas
Exploration

Business Pain
Financial Reports
were labour
intensive to prepare
and difficult to
interpret

**Why Business
Objects?**
Crystal Xcelsius
simplifies the
preparation,
publication and
interpretation of
reports in order to
extract more value
from financial data

**Business Objects
Products and
Services**
Crystal Xcelsius

Santos is a major Australian oil and gas exploration and production company with interests and operations in every major Australian petroleum province, as well as a number of other countries around the world. Founded in 1954, Santos has been active in the energy business for more than 50 years. The company employs 1,600 people, including 70 finance staff.

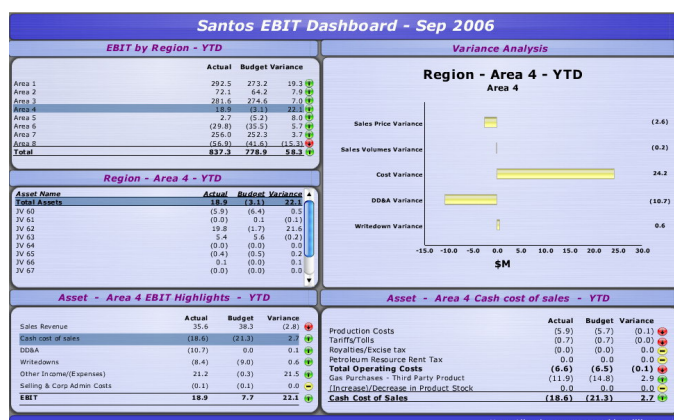
Before moving to Crystal Xcelsius™, Santos used Excel-based systems for its monthly financial management reporting. The company's team of three financial reporting staff were required to produce 1,900 reports each month.

The Excel reports were clumsy and managing data views for the company's extensive chart of accounts was a challenge. There was an increasing need for detail and static reports had to be reworked across the business. Craig Metters, Manager Accounting to Reporting, explained, "Under the previous system, users had to contend with large Excel files with hundreds of tabs. It was difficult for users to navigate through reports and even more difficult to see trends."

Approach

The increasing reporting burden led to the decision to move to Crystal Xcelsius from Business Objects. Crystal Xcelsius provides state-of-the-art interactive visualisation, enabling reporting staff to transform Excel spreadsheets into sophisticated data presentations that include unique visual components. Data presentations can then be shared within PowerPoint, Adobe PDF, Outlook and the web.

At Santos, data is imported from the company's enterprise resource planning (ERP) system into Excel. Xcelsius then extracts the information required to create an interactive dashboard, which is emailed to managers. For reporting staff, preparation of reports is now easy, with just one extract from ERP which is then manipulated into one Xcelsius model replacing all previous reports.



The resulting dashboard provides managers with an easy to understand view of the most high-level information. They are able to use the interactive functionality of Xcelsius to drill down through the results to satisfy any query they may have.

Results

The top-down reporting model has worked wonders for Santos. By starting with an overview of results, before clicking through to greater detail, people are better able to understand the results. Beyond the initial screen, there are 7,000 options users can click through. "Our senior managers often don't have time to labour over in-depth reports. Using Xcelsius they can obtain in-depth information rapidly by simply clicking through the dashboard."

Metters explained the new visually dynamic format has encouraged more participation from managers. "Under the old system, the complexity of the reports provided a disincentive to read them! With Xcelsius we are able to extract more value from information, keep things simple and display results in a meaningful way. As a result, we have more people within the company analysing our financial data."

It became clear that people were getting more from the reports by the increased number of questions being received by the finance department, as well as the standard of those questions. "The questions we receive are "smarter" than they used to be. Instead of people contacting us to query minor details or the quality of data, we now receive requests on the reasons behind figures or suggestions for different dashboard models. The kind of questions a finance department prefers to receive!"

There was no training involved for managers as the interface is very intuitive. Metters has also been impressed with the low cost and ease of implementation and ongoing maintenance. "The system was installed by our own accountants, with no need for assistance from IT. "Xcelsius has revolutionised our financial reporting at all stages of the process: from preparation, to publication and interpretation." Future plans include putting the dashboard on the company's intranet, linking Xcelsius reporting to ERP automatically and developing more hierarchical models.