

How FYI Solutions successfully completed the deployment of a failing mission-critical Cognos EP Application

Background

Pharmaceutical companies invest significant capital in their Marketing and Sales business operations. A major portion of this cost is dedicated to providing their sales representatives with drug samples for distribution to medical practitioners. In order to insure that these drug samples are being used as an effective marketing tool and being used effectively in field operations, these companies use a highly complex set of business processes to determine the allocation of samples to their field operations. In addition, drug samples are very expensive to manufacture due to low volume packaging quantities and supporting literature that is required by law. Consequently, pharmaceutical companies are very careful about making decisions regarding the use of samples.

The calculations that are used to determine how many samples will be manufactured, what strengths to package, where they will be distributed, which physicians will use these samples effectively in their practice and a host of other factors is a highly complex business process. In the typical pharmaceutical company this process is supported by a host of spreadsheets used in a very iterative decision making process. The customer decided to automate this process and chose the Cognos Enterprise Planning software product (EP) as the platform for this effort. The Cognos EP product is especially useful in this type of data intensive planning application.

Client's Business Problem

The customer embarked on the project with a small team of internal resources and relied heavily on the services of a consultant who had limited experience working with the Cognos EP product. In the development process, the customer structured the new application to be utilized in its sixteen regions. While this worked in testing on an individual basis, the attempt to deploy the application universally surfaced a set of unforeseen operational issues directly related

to the number of database instances that had been created in the design phase. After several attempts to install the application and facing a planned "go-live date", the customer contacted FYI Solutions for assistance. Specifically, FYI was engaged to conduct a review of the design and to take responsibility for completing the deployment on schedule.

Improved Business Results with an FYI Solution

With the customer facing a six week implementation window, FYI was engaged. As a result of the remaining compressed schedule, the team immediately commenced a design review that focused on the technical details of the application as opposed to the User Requirements. The design approach taken by the customer's consultant was to avoid the creation of a large database, but this direction created a different set of deployment problems.

The FYI Solutions Team developed a dual strategy approach that served to accommodate the deployment deadline and, in a subsequent phase, to address the longer term objective to of redesigning the application to integrate the database, to maximize the capabilities of the EP Tool, and to eliminate the problems associated with the sixteen separate regions. FYI Solutions' approach took into consideration the customers planned deployment schedule. As a result of this approach, the customer successfully implemented the application on schedule.

Following this initial success, the FYI SOLUTIONS Team developed a new design blueprint for the application that would correct the operational issues encountered with the initial deployment. The new design was subjected to review by the Cognos Innovation Center who determined that the FYI solution was a technically viable approach to addressing the customer's business problem.

Business Benefits

Both the customer's business users and IT staff have derived significant benefits from FYI Solutions' response to the scheduling demands, innovative approach to the problem, planning ability, and technical contribution. As a result of this engagement, FYI Solutions continues to be engaged by this customer in several EP projects and, as a trusted business partner is addressing their future support needs on a global basis. Both the customer and Cognos have recognized FYI Solutions' capability to address customer business needs and objectives using this innovative technology.

- The direct involvement of FYI Solutions enabled the customer to meet their mandated implementation schedule and avoid the negative consequences of a major delay to the project.
- The customer's application is in operational status and is providing value to its user community.
- The customer has begun to realize the value of the Cognos EP Platform through a demonstrated return on its investment.
- The customer has a stable implementation despite the challenges associated with having sixteen instances of the database.

Contact FYI Solutions

Ask how our targeted, experienced solutions can help you deliver timely and trusted information for better business outcomes.

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About FYI Solutions

At FYI Solutions, we have a mission: to unlock the power of your business intelligence investment. By studying your business environment—from processes to information flow to data architecture—we identify and strengthen weak links throughout your entire reporting ecosystem in order to boost the productivity of your information delivery system. In the end, you'll access the data you need more easily, efficiently, and powerfully. Simply put, you'll have increased your ROI—that is, your return on intelligence.

