

How a Pharmaceutical Company Enhanced its Reporting and Analytics for Sample Administration

Background

An expensive but necessary activity, the sales forces of major pharmaceutical companies often distribute product samples to physicians. Distributing samples accelerates introductions of new and existing drugs, educates physicians and demonstrates the effectiveness of a medication, especially when new. Closely tracking distributions of samples is therefore important to decision makers and to sales and marketing organizations: they can see where samples are going, how effective they are at stimulating interest among physicians, plan manufacturing and allocate additional samples. Analyzing the flow of samples provides a wealth of valuable information that can be used to fuel sales and growth.

Client's Business Problem

A major pharmaceutical company maintained historical transactional data on sample distribution to physicians as well as shipments and returns from members of the field on an operational system that produced standard pharmaceutical reports. The reports were used for core administrative purposes and fulfilled basic requirements. But the system lacked the ability to perform extensive sample administration reporting for both operational and analytical use. Serving ad-hoc requests from the business operational users would often take the IT department hours — or even days — and were compounded by the sheer volume of data. Yet the ad-hoc requests from marketing, sales and executive teams were crucial to the company's ability to know what was going on with the drug in the field and to facilitate accurate and timely decision-making.

Improved Business Results with an FYI Solution

FYI worked closely with the company's IT and business and management teams to determine requirements, assess reporting tool solutions and implement an ad-hoc reporting solution to meet a variety of reporting needs.

FYI helped change the way this pharmaceutical leader manages samples. The company is now able to provide accurate, timely information to its sales management team and can make faster and better decisions about product strategies.

Cognos was selected for its adaptability to immediate requirements, its ability to handle high data volumes and its scalability for meeting projected enhancements. In addition, in usability tests conducted with a sample administration group, including non-technical business users, Cognos was strongly appealing.

A customized proof-of-concept demonstrated a completely Web-based approach that would provide the needed ad-hoc information along with flexibility for both business and technology users. The solution was designed and then optimized so that the ad-hoc capability would return results quickly while not impeding the performance of the production database of the existing operational system. A production pilot phase with a select group of business and technology users ensured that the final system deployment would be successfully completed.

Care was taken to ensure the foundation would easily support future data, whether combined with existing or independent sources. The user interface was customized using the Cognos portal product, providing a look and feel consistent with the operational system. To provide seamless access with the needed security, user profiles stored within the database were used for authenticating access.

Business Benefits

Both business users at headquarters and technology staff have found significant benefits from FYI's solution. Critical ad-hoc analysis can now be achieved independent of the technology staff almost instantaneously, freeing valuable resources for other tasks.

The solution provided by FYI has helped change the way this pharmaceutical leader manages samples. The company is able to provide accurate, timely information to its sales management team and can make faster and better decisions about product strategies.

- Accurate, timely data from the field enables managers to make better business decisions in a shorter time.
- The sample administration group is able to quickly respond to requests, which now come from a wide array of departments throughout the organization.
- The business users are able to "slice and dice" the data in ways they need, then present more meaningful, timely information in an easy to read graphic format.

- The company is able to search and sort years of records and produce extremely effective trending reports.
- The sample administration team can spot anomalies and other issues, such as uneven distribution of samples, before problems become acute. This enhanced visibility into field operations raises efficiency in the field and helps ensure that all samples are well-managed and accounted for properly.
- The samples administration group now spends less time searching for data and responding to requests and is able to focus its time and energy on other challenges.
- Field sample management operational costs were lowered and delivery efficiencies were increased.

For more information on our services, please visit www.FYIsolutions.com or contact us at (973) 331-9050.

