



Brief facts:

- Leading specialist recruiter to the rail, engineering, construction and transport infrastructure sectors
- Directors needed accurate, up-to-date and understandable reports so they could react to internal and external trends
- Bespoke KPI dashboard solution delivers the information needed, when needed, giving total visibility of the business
- Custom developed data warehouse and OLAP cube allow for highly complex analytics delivering real value from data

Keeping a finger on the pulse of the business

Resourcing Solutions was founded in September 1996, to provide recently privatised sectors with contract and permanent recruitment solutions. Since then, Resourcing Solutions' services have grown significantly and the company is now recognised as a market-leading specialist recruiter, renowned for its ability to source scarce-skill candidates for the rail, engineering, construction and transport infrastructure sectors.

Resourcing Solutions' service offerings develop and evolve in line with market trends. Working in partnership with clients, Resourcing Solutions delivers best practice and leading-edge solutions, providing only the best skilled individuals available in today's candidate-driven, scarce-skills marketplace. The company's recruitment sections are populated with experts in each discipline and each section is led by a highly experienced industry-related manager, supported by senior consultants and teams of resourcers and researchers.

Information: the key to success

In order to stay ahead in the highly competitive recruitment marketplace, organisations need to identify internal and external trends and react to these as quickly as possible. Access to accurate and up-to-the-minute business data is critical, as is the need to have this information available for presentation in a concise and understandable format so that any anomalies can be rapidly identified. This, according to Barry Potier, Resourcing Solutions' Head of Strategic Support Services, was an area of increasing concern for his organisation:

"Traditionally, we undertook sales reviews on a quarterly basis and augmented these with ad hoc meetings as and when necessary. This was not as effective as it should be, particularly in the current economic climate, as our managers and directors had to be fully in touch with the performance of individual consultants and teams, and need to identify and react to the ever-changing demands of the market."

The issue was compounded by the fact that it could take Barry and his colleagues up to a week to prepare the management reports:

"We produced these reports as quickly as we could, but there was a lot of number-crunching and no real visual impact in the completed reports. If the management team wanted to compare the performance of consultants against each other, against targets or between teams, they had to base their assessments on tables of figures. And it was equally difficult to spot trends in the market and make adjustments within the business so that we could capitalise on these."

Experts with an innovative approach

Resourcing Solutions already had a successful IT infrastructure that included a number of Microsoft SQL Servers but recognised that it did not have the in-house expertise to develop a suitable, graphics-based method of delivering key information to directors and senior management. Barry Potier undertook some research and came up with a shortlist of seven Microsoft partners with proven expertise in the development of SQL applications. The shortlist was reduced to three and, after meetings and discussions, Resourcing Solutions decided to partner with Consolidata. "Consolidata understood our issues and requirements," said Barry Potier. "They were clearly experts but had an innovative approach."



“It was immediately apparent that Consolidata’s KPI dashboards would reduce the amount of work that we had to do to produce reports whilst giving management far more up-to-date and accurate information upon which they could base their decisions.”

Barry Potier
Head of Strategic Support Services,
Resourcing Solutions

Technologies:

- MS SQL Server 2005 using SSIS (SQL Server Integration Services)
- SSAS (SQL Server Analysis Services)
- SSRS (SQL Server Reporting Services)
- Custom developed data warehouse
- Bespoke OLAP cube

Working in partnership, Resourcing Solutions and Consolidata mapped out the initial concepts of a Key Performance Indicator (KPI) dashboard solution that would give the company’s upper-level management the required visibility of the performance of their recruitment consultants. “Consolidata were very good at explaining the benefits of this approach in business, rather than in technical, terms,” said Barry Potier. “It was important that our senior management understood the concepts and how the dashboard solution would deliver the information that they needed, whenever they needed it and in a form that they could immediately understand.”

Barry Potier and his team had already decided that the dashboard approach was the best solution and had identified seven KPIs. Together, Consolidata and Resourcing Solutions began development – a process that included knowledge transfer so that Consolidata would be able to enhance the solution over time in line with the evolving business.

Developing the OLAP cube

Consolidata proposed the use of a data warehouse and OLAP (Online Analytical Processing) cube to ensure that Resourcing Solutions would be able to analyse its data in a multi-dimensional way. “Cubes are extremely efficient entities when it comes to storing summary levels, hierarchies and allowing Resourcing Solutions to slice and dice data for analysis,” according to Dwain Goulbourne, one of Consolidata’s SQL development specialists. “A traditional relational table has two dimensions, whereas an OLAP cube can have many more, giving Resourcing Solutions unrivalled flexibility in the way that data was analysed, evaluated and compared against past performance and market trends.”

When demonstrated, the initial dashboards met with approval throughout Resourcing Solutions. “We had not seen information being presented like this before,” said Barry Potier. “This approach was entirely new to the company and it was immediately apparent that the dashboards would reduce the amount of work that we had to do to produce reports whilst giving management far more information upon which they could base their decisions.”

“The development process was extremely complex,” added Dwain Goulbourne. “There was significant business understanding that had to go into building the data warehouse and cube. Barry was very clear on his objectives and as his company already had internal processes and procedures, we developed dashboard solutions that mirrored those procedures to deliver the information that was required.”

Significant benefits across the board

Now live, Resourcing Solutions’ dashboard solution has already delivered significant benefits. Directors can view and monitor the information that they need, whenever they need it, allowing them to react to issues and trends far more effectively than ever before.

“We now have our finger on the pulse of the business,” concluded Barry Potier. “Directors can monitor the consultants’ efficiencies at placing people in positions and take the appropriate steps to ensure the ongoing success of the business. At the same time, we have a complete and up-to-the-minute view of the business and can spot trends and opportunities in the market and refocus consultants and teams on emerging opportunities.”

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