

Case Study

Business Intelligence & Augmented Analytics

Augmented Analytics for a Financial Services Group in India



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Client

The client is one of the leading financial services groups in India. They offer Equity, Commodity, and Currency brokering services as well as depository participant services. The company is a member of NSE, BSE, MCX SX, USE; a depository participant (DP) with NSDL and CDSL; and AMFI-registered mutual fund distributor.

This client services over one million customers through its extensive network spreading over 500 cities in India and key overseas locations. It is a highly process driven company and depends on data and its analysis for decision making and reporting at each level in the organization.

The Objective

The client had been using one of the globally popular dashboard tools and third party MIS solutions for organization wide reporting. Regardless of this MIS infrastructure, manual intervention and continuous development by a

dedicated MIS team was necessary for final reports produced on spreadsheets and published for a large number of users. This process created multiple challenges such as:

- Data Consolidation
- Security of the data
- Issues related to lack of confidence in MIS reports
- Day-to-day interdependency across MIS and business teams which would lead to delayed reports and increased operational costs due to multiple iterations involved
- TCO challenges for an organization wide deployment due to the high cost of the dashboard solution being used and the need for specially trained in-house manpower and consultants

The need for a robust yet cost-effective centralized solution that could effectively manage complex requirements had become paramount for this rapidly expanding organization.

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The client needed a solution that could:

- Consolidate data from multiple sources such as securities trading software and CRM
- Bring all types of information consumers under a single roof
- Provide effective analysis
- Provide dashboards and KPI
- Provide security and access rights at different levels in the organization
- Simplify ad-hoc querying and reporting for the business users
- Handle diverse data and data sources
- Offer an affordable TCO
- Operate independently from any specific platform
- Eliminate the need for specially trained manpower or consultants

The Solution

“The Augmented Analytics based business intelligence system now scales the potential of a resource intensive MIS team to a massive user base for an organization wide deployment. Business users can now spend more time analyzing business.”

After evaluating a range of options, the client’s team selected Smarten for its unique value proposition, offering traditional and modern BI components in one platform, simple to use and highly cost-effective business intelligence solution. Following a rigorous proof-of-concept, it was observed that Smarten could not only deliver interactive dashboards but also allowed business users with no data science background to create, share and use predictive use case without writing any statistical algorithm. It also allowed users to prepare their own data without writing any ETL scripts or SQL queries. Smarten provided auto-suggestions for data preparation, visualization of the data in form of graphs, charts etc. and suggested best fit algorithm for predictive analytics. Business users with no technical knowledge could take advantage of this after very little training.

This enhancement was crucial to significantly reducing the dependency of business users on report developers and spreadsheets for day-to-day reporting and analysis requirements.

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Technology & Platform

- BI Application : Smarten & Server : Windows Server 2008 Enterprise
- Data Sources : Multiple OLTP Systems including their stock trading transaction system
- Backend(Database) : MSSQL Server 2000, 2005, 2008, Oracle 11g
- Data Warehouse : Oracle 11g
- ETL Framework : Leading open-source Data Integration & ETL Studio

The environment is controlled by separating UAT and Production servers for maximum research and development in Enterprise Information Management without affecting the reporting on day-to-day business.

The first step is to consolidate data scattered over different operational and CRM data sources. Out of the consolidated data, key analysis such as the daily business reports, has to reach the branch managers. Leadership teams locally and regionally require a consolidated view at the operational and organizational levels depending on their roles and responsibilities. The data is

displayed using the powerful security features of Smarten, which provide detailed access-right control at data level.

Key Data Warehousing and Business Intelligence deliverables achieved:

- Consolidated data from multiple operational and CRM data sources in different versions of MSSQL and Oracle to a single Data Warehouse in Oracle 11g using leading open-source ETL and Data Integration Studio
- Migrated and automated the distribution of spreadsheet based reports to a centralized browser based analysis and dashboards
- Completed automation of complex Profit & Loss monitoring for key executives through P&L dashboards composed of OLAP analysis and graphs
- Daily Risk Analysis of Assets Under Management
- Daily analysis, assessment, and reporting of compliance requirements
- Daily Operational insight on the status of key business KPIs and KRAs covering operations, customers, and compliance monitoring
- Achieved better visibility and analysis across business operations for everyone from top management to branch managers

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- Integration with Active Directory servers for user authentication and access-rights management for each user by BI object and data
- Drill-down hierarchies as per business needs
- Drag-and-drop layout driven objects allow for rapid modification without dependency on technical resources
- ETL monitoring and notification in the event of failures
- Data Quality and Query optimization led to faster ETL and Cube building and precise delivery of relevant information to relevant people

Solutions for Key challenges:

- Established Data warehouse and online centralized reporting as a part of change management through coordination across various business units including IT, infrastructure, MIS
- New system implemented with Smarten has automated data consolidation and functional report generation resulting in business and functional users having self-service reporting to solve different business scenarios without day-to-day dependency on a technical team

- Replacement of spreadsheets with centralized browser based dashboards and reporting, eliminating data security concerns and improving confidence on MIS data
- Eliminated data duplication; this has significantly reduced the time utilization of MIS and business teams involved in data verification providing a significant improvement to both inter-departmental coordination and the optimal utilization of IT infrastructure
- Self-service drag-and-drop query, analysis, and reporting for complete business hierarchy, empowering business users, removing demands on a busy MIS department, and improving agility in decision making
- A completely scalable and platform independent Business Intelligence and Data Warehousing system on Smarten with hardware sizing and storage planning(capacity planning), offering optimum TCO for the needs of today and scalability for the future
- Out-of-the box delivery to tablets and smart phones without any additional licensing costs or development efforts

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Sample Screen Shots. This image does not reflect actual client information.

Smarten Team Role

Smarten's implementation team helped the client establish a corporate Business Intelligence and Data Warehousing system rather than merely setting up a business intelligence tool for dashboard and report development.

The business intelligence standardization from spreadsheet based reporting involved the entire workflow from system requirements study (SRS) and Data Mart modeling to Data Dictionary management and designing jobs and workflows. It also involved jointly designing dashboards, KPIs, interactive cross-tab analysis and graphs and training the client's MIS team for all technical and design aspects related to ETL, Cubes, Dashboards and reports.

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Conclusion

From a Forest of Spreadsheets to Centralized Self-Service Analytics

The Smarten system has helped the client cost-effectively shift from spreadsheet based reporting to business intelligence based centralized analysis, assessment, and reporting.

The business users now have the facility to focus on capitalizing on domain and functional knowledge, and the MIS team can work towards the much

larger objective of building a Corporate Data Warehouse and BI Competency Center. The technical team can invest more time and focus in data consolidation, cleansing, quality management, and data mining activities, optimizing report scenarios and alignment with group-level BI initiatives.

While most BI projects focus on implementing tools as the outcome, the Smarten project has achieved the objective of establishing a Data Warehouse and Business Intelligence system as a framework and practice that can scale across the organization at group level.

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