

Quick Facts

Industry

Computer Software Development

Company Info

- Operating since 1984
- Annual Revenue: US\$60 million
- Employees: 300
- General Ledger: JD Edwards

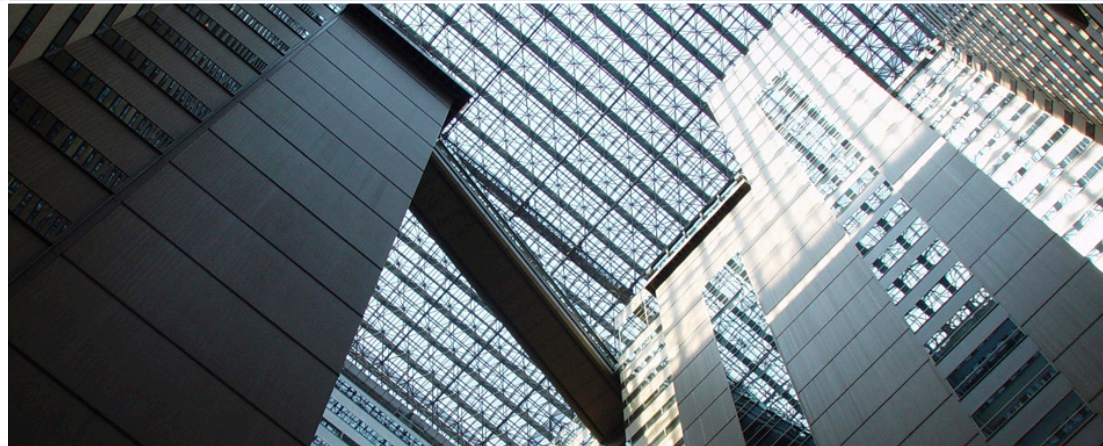
ROI

- Decreases reforecasting time from 2-3 days to 3-4 hours a month
- Reduced time spent on report creation from 2-3 days to ½ hour
- Improved report distribution process from being 1-day manual task to an automated process
- Reduced time spent on personnel budgeting from 10 days to 1 ½ days

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--Doug Sawatzky

Chief Financial Officer, MKS Inc.



MKS MKS Inc.

Case Study

MKS required a flexible performance management solution in order to produce reliable forecast numbers in a short amount of time. Ruling out Cognos and OutlookSoft early in the process, MKS implemented PROPHIX because the product was self supportive and did not require a lot of external or IT involvement—ultimately offering a low cost of ownership. With PROPHIX’s capabilities, MKS was able to completely replace their previous solutions and decrease their forecasting process time by 83%.

Background

MKS Inc. is a globally recognized leader of software application management and provides IT and software engineering in organizations with end-to-end coverage across the application life cycle development process. Its product capabilities include requirements management, software configuration management, change management, and build management. MKS supports customers worldwide with offices across North America, Europe and Asia.

Recognizing the Problem

MKS is in an environment that changes rapidly on a weekly and sometimes daily basis, which requires constant reforecasting. Their solution was to create master spreadsheets that would link

to other spreadsheets and continually increase their knowledge of Excel to apply advanced functions to meet their needs. In addition to Excel, MKS used the standard reporting language inherent with their JD Edwards general ledger for financial reporting. MKS’ budgeting and forecasting processes were not working well for the company, given the importance as a public company to be able to provide forecasts quickly, reliably, and accurately. “Our financial reports weren’t very flexible; our processes did not accommodate our requirements to provide reports that addressed financial and operational users’ needs on a timely basis,” says Doug Sawatzky, Chief Financial Officer, MKS Inc. “Our process wasn’t scalable and didn’t have the data integrity that a packaged product would have.”

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--Doug Sawatzky
Chief Financial Officer, MKS Inc.

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Implementing a Solution

MKS began exploring various solutions for their budgeting, forecasting, and reporting needs. Cognos and OutlookSoft were amongst the solutions but were found to require more effort and cost than anticipated. Doug explains, “It became quite apparent that there was a high ownership cost for both of those products, in terms of license fees and the amount of services and configuration effort required. We wanted a product that was self supportive and did not require a lot of external or IT involvement, and PROPHIX met those requirements.”

PROPHIX offered MKS a solid framework, which was implemented in a short time. The hands-on implementation gave them a strong understanding of how the system worked, which gave them confidence in the numbers and consolidated data. “Our implementation experience exceeded our expectations. The professional services consultant had a good understanding of our business and was able to point out advantages and best practices with the product that we would have not thought of ourselves. He really provided additional value to the whole implementation,” says Doug.

Benefits

MKS’ forecasting process improved immediately with PROPHIX. “Now we are able to reforecast based on a current situation in 3-4 hours, compared to 2-3 days,” says Doug. MKS can produce forecasts in a shorter amount of time and communicate the forecast to key personnel through PROPHIX e-mail

distribution. With all the capabilities PROPHIX offered, MKS was able to replace standard reports in their JD Edwards software. Doug continues, “PROPHIX helps our field management and business department managers understand costs and impact of their units—the actual numbers as well as the forecast numbers.”

PROPHIX has also improved their data analyses. MKS can quickly take numbers and have them portrayed in a departmental manner, which can then be compared to budget data. “Prior to PROPHIX, our analysis was very rigid and unable to accommodate the appropriate answers to questions or anomalies. Now, we can take those questions and drill down to understand the variances in order to re-plan for the future,” says Doug. These comparisons and standard analysis reports help them identify areas that need additional review.

Bottom Line

Overall, PROPHIX has improved the efficiency of the finance department. Manual processes have been automated, which has freed up finance resources. The focus is now on more value-added tasks.

Future Plans

MKS plans to continue working with PROPHIX and the new features released on a regular basis. “PROPHIX continually releases new functions and processes, so staying on top of new features is a great way for us to drive more benefits from the product,” says Doug.

PROPHIX