



“Fab planning at
Richmond Foods”



The UK has more than 1,000 ice cream companies with an annual consumption estimated at 7 litres per person. Amongst these, the largest producer in the UK of this growth product is Richmond Foods plc.

Finance gives Excel planning the cold shoulder

The planning and budgeting process at Richmond Foods was straining to keep pace with the addition of new products, customers and diverse business units. One person was responsible for the annual budgeting process, using Excel spreadsheets to collect information from up to 40 staff from various sites and areas of the business.

“Excel just could not keep pace with the demands of the budgeting process. It had got to the stage where our spreadsheets were creaking at the seams as we tried to insert different cost types and sales in response to new products and business areas,” explains Antony Smithson, financial controller at Richmond Foods.



Each business unit had evolved their own performance measures and accounting practices. Achieving consistency of information was felt necessary to really drive the performance of the company. Smithson describes the mood of

those involved in the budgeting process, “Everyone was working in their own boxes and we felt that this had to change to really perform at our best. We also felt that there was no way we were going to suffer the 2002 budgeting process in the same way again.”

Smithson voices his frustration; “We just wanted to trust the figures in our planning systems. That sounds a simple wish but with spreadsheets we were never 100% confident with the results.” Things had to change.

Time to introduce ‘FAB’ enterprise planning from Inca

Working with Inca, the finance team has effectively remodelled the budgeting process with the emphasis now on consistency with common measures for sales, production volumes and values. Cognos Enterprise Planning also allows Richmond Foods for the first time to establish and communicate the underlying drivers or measures required to achieve corporate objectives. This gives managers a valuable insight into the potential impact of their contribution to the budget, before submitting their numbers.

Now that the implementation is complete, Smithson comments on the benefits, “Even at this early stage we can see how control has been vastly improved. Consolidating information is much easier which

Business facts

- Largest manufacturer (by volume) of ice-cream in the UK
- Turnover – £116 million (2002)
- No. employees – 880
- Previous planning system – Excel
- Financial accounting package – Sage

Benefits Summary

- Implementation completed on time with Inca support
- Improved control and accuracy
- Ability to involve more people yet reduce the total resource absorbed in budgeting
- Consistency of information achieved
- Eliminated complexity from the process
- Time taken to perform budget cycle reduced by 43%
- Number of budget iterations reduced from at least 6 to 3
- Greater ease of use and ‘buy-in’ from users
- One set of consistent, trusted numbers
- Potential to adopt rolling forecasts



Smithson is obviously delighted with the system, “It is almost impossible to believe that we can now just press a button and see the whole budget picture. We can drill down into accurate figures and make and track changes both top-down and bottom-up.”

Future Plans

First on the agenda is to incorporate all the elements of the reporting process into Cognos Enterprise Planning, which will provide production and stock planning, as well as variance analysis. Establishing a 12-month rolling forecasting will enable Richmond Foods to move away from an annual budget, saving further time and working less as administrators and adding value to the business.

Thereafter, Richmond Foods wants to use Cognos Enterprise Planning to reduce the ‘time to market’ for new products. By working collaboratively with marketing and manufacturing, they will be able to model the cost and potential returns on new products - delivering valuable intelligence in making commercial production decisions.





Chris Kerrison, MD of Inca Software comments on Inca's performance in 2003...

2003 has been a very exciting year for the entire Inca team. Not only have we been able to continue and extend our relationships with existing customers but also build new partnerships with organisations eager to implement their vision of improved performance.

This newsletter is designed to share the benefits of these implementations and communicate information about the industry and technology to help the Inca community make the most of their application investments. We would like to thank the customers that have participated in case studies and press releases and hope that they enjoy the positive exposure of their companies as they discuss the real benefits of Enterprise Planning and Business Intelligence.

A business such as ours depends on recruiting and maintaining the right people who understand our culture for service and have the right technology and business experience. In response to the increased demand for consultancy and support we have been aggressively recruiting consultants. Our team has doubled in size over the last twelve months allowing us to undertake and complete many exciting implementation projects some of which we have outlined in this newsletter. These implementations have also driven the need to transfer skills and knowledge to our customers and in order to do this in the most effective way we have invested in increasing the size of the Inca Academy by adding a further suite to cater for additional training requirements. We have also established an Account Development team who are solely responsible for the on-going application needs of our customers. Their objective is to help all Inca customers gain the maximum return on investment to achieve the peak performance they require as their organisations evolve.

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We are encouraged to see that previous Adaytum customers have chosen to renew their support contracts with Inca and have used the new Inca helpdesk. We hope that over the coming months, more users will take advantage of this opportunity and gain access to our team of accredited consultants. We started the year with the aim of maintaining the “Customer First”

values and ethos many of the team first encountered at Adaytum. The exciting opportunity for 2004 is communicating the value that those organisations that drive their business using Enterprise Planning can gain from harnessing the best reporting and BI tools on the market place.



Baronsmede – Inca's new head office in Egham

Industry View



CIMA

The latest report from CIMA outlines the importance of accurate, timely, relevant Performance Reporting

Performance Reporting to Boards – Success depends on accurate, quality information, says CIMA

Unless companies improve the quality and timeliness of business information delivered to the boardroom, corporate failures will continue to happen, according to the latest report from CIMA. The report sets out the principles of good reporting of both financial and non-financial information to boards of directors, the systems companies need to have in place to do it and the culture that supports it. It illustrates good practice and the case studies provide useful ideas to make

improvements in organisations and are a springboard for new thinking.

Charles Tilley, CIMA Chief Executive, said: "Many of the post-Enron discussions about corporate governance have focused almost exclusively on the roles and responsibilities of directors and the structure of boards and board committees. This is hardly surprising. But boards do not exist in a vacuum – in order to make the right decisions, directors must base them on good quality and timely information about the company's performance."

He added: "Ultimately good

performance reporting to boards is about competitiveness. If you want directors to make good strategic decisions, they need to be given good business information at the right time. Culture and performance management systems must also be aligned to this, as directors need to trust the information given to them."

Charles Tilley added: "Good performance reporting is about the quality of the information provided to directors. We need to move away from the mentality that leads to the board report needing to be delivered by a fork lift truck. This is particularly pertinent post-Enron where there may be a temptation to increase the amount of information provided to

the board. Quality is the key, not quantity."

The report highlights that many companies do not know where value is created or destroyed in their business.

Charles Tilley said: "In many companies it is currently the case that this information simply isn't available or there is a lack of understanding about what the relevant numbers are. This hampers decision-making as much time is spent reconciling figures or getting information out of different systems."

For full press release and report visit www.cimaglobal.com





HINTS & TIPS

1. Apply patch 44 for Contributor 7.1

For any contributor users who have not yet installed Patch 44, please do so as this will fix a serious error with Contributor 7.1

2. Automated Flow Diagram Creation Function

Use the Automated flow design creation function to build a 'correct' flow design diagram of your models. This is in Manager 7.1 and is invaluable!

3. If you have Cognos Powerplay as well as Contributor, have you connected them up?

There is an extension that links these two products. It is free and not hard to set up. You will need version 7 or greater of each product and need the LAN version of PowerPlay.

And...

4. When taking a shower, always place the shower curtain inside the bath!



CB Richard Ellis selects Inca for best-practice enterprise planning

CBRE
CB RICHARD ELLIS

CB Richard Ellis, the world's largest real estate services firm, has selected Inca to implement the enterprise planning component of its pan-European finance IT strategy. As part of a finance department initiative to achieve best practice information systems and to improve service to its internal customers, CB Richard Ellis initially invested in enterprise planning to increase the speed and efficiency of the budgeting and forecasting process. This solution will also provide CB Richard Ellis with quarterly rolling forecasts for the first time. An unforeseen benefit is that CB Richard Ellis is using Cognos Enterprise Planning to support the financial management of the recent merger of CB Hillier Parker with Insignia Richard Ellis.

CB Richard Ellis previously used spreadsheets for budgeting and forecasting and consequently experienced the common problems suffered by organisations that rely

on spreadsheets for planning, such as the lack of consistency and data integrity. Like many organisations, CB Richard Ellis wanted to move away from a single annual budgeting process towards rolling forecasts, which would support the financial management of a rapidly changing business.

"For a long time we wanted to increase the ease and transparency of the planning process for the business and for users but this was impossible with Excel. Contributors to the planning process began to see budgeting and forecasting as a finance department black art!" comments Jeremy Kraft, UK finance director of CB Richard Ellis. He continues, "We are confident that using Inca to implement best practice enterprise planning will significantly increase the transparency of numbers and create a true sense of participation by involving more people in budgeting and forecasting."



The PLACES for PEOPLE Group

Places for People selects Inca to reduce costs with improved rent and maintenance planning

Inca to implement enterprise planning at UK's largest housing association.

The Places for People Group, the UK's largest registered housing association, has selected Cognos Enterprise Planning from Inca Software, to improve the planning process and reduce costs. With over 53,000 homes to manage and maintain, and the collection of rent and processing of arrears, Places for People faces numerous variables that affect cost and revenue management. Inca's implementation of Cognos Enterprise Planning will replace a cumbersome, inflexible, error-prone and overcomplicated

spreadsheet-based planning system and ensure that expenditure is minimized through meticulous long term resource planning.

Enterprise planning is currently used by the central finance department and will be rolled-out to Places for People's regional managers by the end of 2003, in preparation for the 2004 planning process.

Major refurbishment of housing schemes with up to 1000 properties requires careful planning. Repair work must be done quickly to minimise the loss of rental income and, in some cases, alternative housing for all tenants must be provided. Factors such as managing rent arrears, further complicate the planning process at a time when the necessity for increased visibility of the organisation's position is growing.

With less money distributed by central government, funds must be raised independently, and Places for People must ensure full accountability to its lenders. With mortgages typically arranged over 25 years and major refurbishments (e.g. roof replacement), particularly of older properties being scheduled every 15-20 years, it is vital that Places for People create a planning system that provides the required long-term view but can also react to the changes that will undoubtedly occur over such a long period.

"Cognos Enterprise Planning will enable us to easily incorporate all of these factors into our plans, as far as 25 years in advance, so that we can efficiently align the management of expenditure with income," says Martin Barber, deputy head of IT and qualified management accountant, The Places for People Group.





Set in grounds of 3 acres and a long way from the hustle-bustle of office life, why not attend the Inca Academy, which provides the perfect environment for your project team to concentrate on completing the Intensive Training Courses provided by Inca's accredited trainers.

Whether you are a new user or an experienced user in need of a refresher course tailored to your requirements, we have a course that will suit you. Please call 01784 224 320 for more information, to request a list of available dates or to make a booking.



As a reminder, the Inca Support Contract offers you the following benefits:

- A Technical Helpdesk for all your first line support questions
- A committed account management team who will work with you to ensure you gain maximum return on your investment
- Access to our training courses, held either at the Inca Academy or on-site, ranging from Refresher Days to 3 Day Public Courses for new users.
- Access to our team of fully accredited consultants
- Invitations to regular Best Practice Forums plus an invitation to our Annual User Group
- Regular newsletters and updates from the Inca team

If you would like to request a Free Healthcheck of your existing Cognos Solution (previously known as Adaytum) or discuss the Inca Support Contract option, please contact your Customer Account Manager, Sam Ruffle on 01784 224 320. Alternatively, you may email sruffle@incasoftware.co.uk.

PLEASE NOTE:

As of 2 January 2003, the Inca Helpdesk number will change to:

01784 270 870

Dates for your diary

MARCH 2004

The Inca User Group will take place in March 2004. The event will be available to both Cognos Enterprise Planning and Cognos Business Intelligence users and to previous customers of Adaytum. Hosted by Inca's Services Team, the Inca User Group will be an event packed with presentations and best practice sessions with Inca's consultancy team. We also plan to invite our customers to give an insight into how they have managed their successful implementations and the business benefits they have gained. The agenda will also offer plenty of opportunity to meet fellow users, share experiences and learn new skills.

As this is a customer event, we want to hear more about what you would like to see and hear! So if you have any ideas or suggestions about content or would like to speak at the event, please email Jayne Goodman at jgoodman@incasoftware.co.uk or call 01784 224 320.

Look out for further details in early January 2004!



Competition – Share your success

Win a bottle of Champagne and a 17" LCD TV!

Introduce Inca to another organisation and after our first meeting with your referred contact, we will send you a bottle of champagne!

If your chosen organisation goes on to purchase Cognos through Inca, you will win a 17" LCD TV!

Simply contact our marketing department on 01784 224 320, quote your colleague's company name, job title (preferably a finance executive), email address and telephone number and we will be happy to demonstrate how we can help them to achieve peak performance across their organisation. Alternatively email marketing@incasoftware.co.uk.

Inca's Winter Referral Scheme will end 19 March 2004.



(Minimum order value applies. Image for illustrative purposes only. For further information, please contact Jayne Goodman or Sonia Weston.)



Inca Software is moving...



As of 2 January 2004 our new contact details will be...

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Technical Helpdesk: +44(0)1784 270870

Feedback



This issue of Peak Performance from Inca Software, the leading partner of Cognos in the UK, is the first in a series of regular quarterly issues, designed to keep you up-to-date with all the latest product and service offerings.

Throughout the series, we will provide you with useful information on Inca's services, technical updates from Cognos, articles from industry experts and professional bodies, plus invitations to our regular seminars and masterclasses and insights into how other customers are using the Cognos suite of products. All this will ensure that we are helping you get the most out of your application and you are fully updated as to how Inca can help drive your business forward to achieve peak performance.

We would like to encourage feedback from you, so that we know exactly what you want to read about and how you would like to participate in future issues...

Perhaps you would like to suggest new areas for the newsletter?

Maybe you would like to increase your own profile and see your company featured in Peak Performance as one of our case studies or new customer profiles?

Or how about increasing your own profile by featuring as a guest speaker at our User Group event in March 2004?

However you would like to get involved, we have an opportunity for you and are keen to work alongside all our customers to ensure they are successfully planning, delivering and managing peak performance!

Please email your suggestions or requests to Jayne Goodman at jgoodman@incasoftware.co.uk or call 01784 224 320.

**FROM EVERYONE
AT INCA SOFTWARE,
WE WISH YOU A HAPPY
AND PROSPEROUS**

2004!

