



CASE STUDY

AF BLAKEMORE



Using Maven, the migration process could not have been simpler.



Wolf Jones,
IT Manager,
AF Blakemore

INDUSTRY

Retail, Distribution

BUSINESS PAIN

To improve the timeliness and flexibility of management information across a diverse portfolio of retail and distribution companies.

WHY SAP BUSINESSOBJECTS?

SAP BusinessObjects provides rapid information access across the business. Additional functionality, including alert driven scheduling has removed the need for third party applications.

SAP BUSINESSOBJECTS PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

SAP BusinessObjects Enterprise

BUSINESS BENEFITS

Speed of information retrieval and ad hoc analysis supports innovations including new customer loyalty programmes. Migration to SAP BusinessObjects will support the company's evolution towards a performance led culture.

SPAR



SPAR shops with
SAP BusinessObjects

THE CHALLENGE



Migrating to SAP BusinessObjects has provided AF Blakemore with the speed and flexibility of reporting required to respond rapidly to the constant changes occurring within the retail market.



Wolf Jones,
IT Manager,
AF Blakemore



ABOUT AF BLAKEMORE

Privately owned AF Blakemore is one of the country's leading independent food retail and distribution companies. The company is a key player in the world-wide SPAR symbol group and currently supplies more than 700 stores across England and Wales. Following the acquisition of Tates Ltd in 1994, AF Blakemore also has a strong "own-stores" division encompassing more than 200 SPAR shops. Other parts of the business include cash & carry, food services for local authorities, prisons and schools and a new organic food distribution service.

THE MAVEN CHALLENGE

For the past 12 years, AF Blakemore has used BusinessObjects business intelligence tools to deliver company wide reporting. For the Tate Spar and independent retailers this includes basket level analysis across every store on a daily basis.

As Wolf Jones, IT Manager, explains, "Within the retail industry, there is a requirement for very fast decision making. As a highly diverse organisation, AF Blakemore requires a flexible business intelligence tool that can rapidly support buying decisions, financial analysis and customer queries from organisations as diverse as Tesco, Sainsbury's and Warwickshire Schools."

With increasing competition and growing price challenges within the retail sector, AF Blakemore is keen to move towards a more performance led culture, using Key Performance Indicators to track the activity of each business area.

Furthermore, many of the company's staff are located either at numerous satellite offices or work regularly from home. "It is essential to provide the same speed of information access to individuals across the business irrespective of location," he confirms.

THE APPROACH



The process could not have been simpler; SAP BusinessObjects was installed and the universes migrated over without a hitch.



Wolf Jones,
IT Manager,
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Sample Dashboards



“SAP BusinessObjects XI also includes numerous functionality improvements that have enabled Blakemore to eliminate several third party applications. For example, the alert driven scheduling is excellent and ensures reports are automatically produced for the weekly board meeting without requiring staff overtime”

Wolf Jones,
IT Manager,
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FAST, FLEXIBLE REPORTING

To deliver faster information access and support the performance management culture, AF Blakemore opted to migrate to SAP BusinessObjects.

Key to the decision was the speed with which SAP BusinessObjects Web Intelligence delivers ad hoc reports to the company's 100 power users across the business.

He adds, “SAP BusinessObjects also includes numerous functionality improvements that have enabled AF Blakemore to eliminate several third party applications. For example, the alert driven scheduling is excellent and ensures reports are automatically produced for the weekly board meeting without requiring staff overtime.”

The migration from BusinessObjects 5.1.2 to SAP BusinessObjects XI was managed by partner Maven Solutions. Transaction level information from

the company's multiple bespoke solutions is exported into a SQL Server data warehouse and Maven migrated the reports to the new SAP BusinessObjects environment. The process, which included upgrading the server infrastructure and streamlining the extensive reporting infrastructure to reduce the number of weekly reports from 5,000 to just over 3,000, took only three months.

“The process could not have been simpler; SAP BusinessObjects was installed and the universes migrated over without a hitch,” Wolf Jones confirms. “Maven also conducted training to ensure the users were familiar with the new features and functionality provided by SAP BusinessObjects.”

SEE REVERSE FOR **THE RESULTS** >>



THE RESULT

SAP BusinessObjects allows AF Blakemore to be far more creative in the way information is presented and distributed both across the company and to customers.



Wolf Jones,
IT Manager,
AF Blakemore

AF BLAKEMORE

PLATFORM FOR INNOVATION

AF Blakemore attained an immediate return on investment from the migration to SAP BusinessObjects by eliminating the license and maintenance costs of the redundant third party applications. In addition, the company is gaining significant commercial benefit from a number of new developments, including the introduction of a loyalty campaign for its 400 independent retailer customers.

"SAP BusinessObjects allows AF Blakemore to be far more creative in the way information is presented and distributed both across the company and to customers," says Wolf Jones. "Critically, information is rapidly available to users both at home and at remote offices, ensuring consistent quality and timeliness of business intelligence."

BENEFITS INCLUDE

- **Customer loyalty**
Using the speed of information retrieval and analysis provided by SAP BusinessObjects, AF Blakemore is offering its 400 independent retail customers a new loyalty scheme. "Detailed basket level analysis enables AF Blakemore to offer each store a tailored incentive to buy more products. The discount both encourages customer loyalty and boosts turnover," Wolf Jones says.
- **Faster reporting**
Leveraging the web-based technology has enabled AF Blakemore to transform the speed of standard reporting; key financial reports that previously took one hour to run are now available within three minutes. This speed is encouraging users

to undertake far more 'what if?' analysis to assess the implications of purchasing decisions, discounts or promotions on sales and revenue. "Timely information is key, enabling AF Blakemore to respond faster to business opportunities," he says.

- **Performance culture**
SAP BusinessObjects also provides the platform for the introduction of dashboards to reflect AF Blakemore's key performance indicators (KPI). "The retail marketing is challenging and the company recognises that constant monitoring of performance across the group will be key to attaining long term growth and success," Wolf Jones concludes.



About Maven Solutions

Maven Solutions is a multi-award winning Platinum Partner of SAP BusinessObjects, based in South Manchester. Maven has helped its customers realise real value and return on investment through streamlining their management information process and providing insight into their corporate data.

It is our mission to help our customers make informed business decisions quickly, efficiently and effectively utilising the power of world-class Business Intelligence software.

Our services encompass the entire project lifecycle, from scoping/needs analysis through to implementation/rollout, training and support.

Services

- Management Information Scoping/Needs Analysis
- Data Warehouse Design/Build
- Dashboarding & KPI Management
- SAP BusinessObjects Skills in:
 - Universe Design & Report Design
 - Data Integration/Quality
 - Technical & End User Education
 - Migration/Upgrades
 - Corporate Support
- Six Sigma Consultancy