



The Beer Store and Thoughtcorp Implement a New Data Warehouse and Business Intelligence Solution to Improve Reporting Accuracy and Overall Efficiency

“The implementation process was approached as one of continuous education for both The Beer Store and Thoughtcorp. Our teams worked together to gain a good understanding of the different business groups using the system, ensuring that the application would meet the needs of this diverse group. As we had anticipated, there were many changes made to the application throughout the development stage.”

**IT Manager
The Beer Store**

Business Situation

The Beer Store needed to replace a legacy Data Mart solution to meet its needs for a high performance Data Warehouse & Business Intelligence solution that would deliver a single vision for decision makers and enhance sales, payroll and financial reporting, critical areas to strategic operations and planning.

Solution

- Scalable application and data architectures
- Create a supply chain environment for various brewers
- Create a framework model to present business measures to allow the query of data to generate customized reports

The Beer Store was established in 1927 by a group of brewers working with the Government of Ontario to create a responsible system for beer distribution. Many changes have occurred since then, including the corporate name. Although Brewers Retail Inc. is their legal name, customers know them best by what they are - The Beer Store. In 75 years of operation, The Beer Store has adopted concepts and policies that have helped it become a world leader in the beverage alcohol industry: innovations such as the refillable, industry-standard bottle; a commitment to recover 100% of beer packaging; a responsible sale program to ensure that beer is sold safely and properly; a single source for draught equipment services for licensed establishments; system wide refrigeration; and an inventory management system that ensures the sale of fresh beer.

Today, The Beer Store is the primary distribution and sales channel for beer in Ontario. It operates 436 stores in Ontario and services 17,000 licensed bars, hotels and restaurants, as well as approximately 600 government-owned LCBO retail outlets. Their customers can choose from approximately 300 brands of beer in over 900 packaging combinations from over 70 brewers from around the world. The Beer Store provides retail and distribution services for over 25 Ontario brewers and 35 other Canadian and foreign brewers from the cottage, micro and large brewing industries.

The Business Problem

The Beer Store is committed to fulfilling its founding principles of providing efficient beer warehousing, distribution, and retail/wholesale sales for any customer/brewer, large or small, foreign or domestic, who uses their system. While The Beer Store has the vision of becoming the ‘Ultimate Source of Beer’ for Customers; it also wants to look at the other side of the supply chain and ensure that it follows effective policies. At a more detailed level, the business wants to determine trends in sales against various products and track these against the payroll data at a store level to determine fraud levels.

In order to do so successfully, The Beer Store required a high-performance solution that delivers a single vision for decision makers and enhance sales, payroll and financial reporting, critical areas to strategic operations and planning. Towards this end, a Data Mart solution was implemented in 2002. This system had grown in an unplanned manner as a result of unsuitable architectural decisions and a lack of understanding of the data. The Beer Store Data Warehouse is a critical component of the enterprise’s Decision Support System but did not provide an accurate integrated and analytic view of the business.

The Beer Store required a strategic partner to take ownership of the situation and decided on Thoughtcorp, a leading Canadian technology and business consulting company. Thoughtcorp offered deep experience in Data Warehousing and Business Intelligence project work and a proven track record of successful initiatives.

The Beer Store



About Thoughtcorp

Thoughtcorp is a 14-year-old, Toronto-based consulting company that uses business performance improvement technology to solve complex business problems for large organizations. With experience in a wide array of technology platforms, Thoughtcorp focuses on business solution architecture, solution development, system integration, Data Warehousing, and Business Intelligence. Our clients are able to make educated and timely decisions, which is crucial for survival in today's competitive market.

Technology Used

- Cognos BI Series 7 with ReportNet
- Oracle Database

Thoughtcorp designed and implemented an analytic solution for The Beer Store that meets their overall objectives and the needs of the front-end analysts in identifying trends in sales and correlating these with payroll information. Scalable application and data architectures have been defined that effectively position The Beer Store for long-term system growth in a secure environment. The required data components are sourced from various legacy systems and are routed through this architectural framework, with effective industry-standard controls on the processes and data flow. The data is eventually presented in a Data Mart layer in a business-intuitive fashion which is retrieved by the Cognos ReportNet tool to create a Framework Model that is directly accessed by the business. This Framework Model is presented with business measures and allows our analysts to carry out adhoc querying of data and generate customized reports.

The Beer Store is leveraging the existing investment in the Oracle database technology and is creating an effective Data Warehouse environment that includes development, testing and production instances. Oracle further leverages resources with broad support for open standards and popular development platforms. The Oracle family also includes solutions tailored for specific needs such as business intelligence and advanced tooling.

The Cognos BI Series 7 with ReportNet brought together the broad range of business intelligence capabilities required by The Beer Store to deliver the right information for better decisions. Cognos ReportNet provides improved performance and reduced costs, complete reporting coverage and a zero-footprint environment with reduced maintenance for quicker results. ReportNet allows for seamless integration and adaptive authoring shortening analysis times. Improved decision-making is facilitated through querying and reports which present critical data in easy-to-understand formats.

Benefits

The Beer Store Data Warehouse solution is providing benefits at many levels. Business groups from the Finance, Retail, Logistics, Marketing and Renewal departments are dedicated to the solution deriving synergies in data analysis and reporting. With an integrated set of data representing the 'single version of the truth', data analysis by various groups is effective, thus reducing resource efforts and adding quality to the final analysis/reporting. Annual costs saving in this respect are enormous.

Many of the company's decision makers are working with the Data Warehouse allowing for easy access to critical business and sales information through intuitive, comprehensive, and integrated business frameworks using the ReportNet tool. Additionally, the DW will make it possible for the Beer Store Analysts to produce higher-quality analysis and reporting. The Beer Store can source information from all its data systems into one place, creating a very rich analytic and reporting environment. Executives can drill down to various levels of underlying detail - detail that would not have been visible with the old system. As a result, they can answer questions quickly and focus their efforts on analyzing results rather than gathering data from multiple systems.