

## Winchester City Council Case Study

Proactive provision of training and knowledge transfer has made a very real difference to utilisation of Business Objects across the Council

'We had a heck of a hill to climb if we were to get our Business Objects implementation delivering the reports and information that were so crucial to our department. We had no internal expertise and relied heavily on CONTEMPORARY. They were proactive in providing training and knowledge transfer and have made a very real difference to the ways in which we now utilise Business Objects across the Council.'

Winchester City Council is one of 11 district councils in Hampshire, covering an area of 250 square miles and serving a population of approximately 110,000 residents. A designated heritage city, Winchester attracts an estimated four million visitors each year.

### The Challenge

Several years ago, two departments within Winchester City Council – Revenues & Benefits and Housing – adopted Business Objects as their standardised departmental information reporting and data analysis tool. At that time, the Council had in-house Business Objects expertise but over time these 'Super Users' moved on to other positions outside the Council, leaving these departments with no real access to the high level, specialist technical knowledge that Business Objects platform needed.

Both departments relied upon Business Objects to generate reports, used by departmental staff and managers to review detailed information on various cases and initiatives as well as providing up-to-the-minute snapshots of the departments' overall progress and identify areas that needed additional resources.

A wide range of reporting templates had been developed by the 'Super Users' but with their departure, the complexity of Business Objects meant that departmental staff no longer had access to the expertise needed to create and run new reports. The subsequent pressures added to the already over-stretched resources of the Council's IT department which recognised the immense value that Business Objects could bring to the Council but which also lacked the technical knowledge to develop and run the required reports and maintain the system.

'We were satisfied that we had made the right decision to adopt Business Objects as the reporting and data analysis tool for these two departments,' explained Peter Byrne, Project Manager at Winchester City Council. 'Indeed, we suspected that we could roll out Business Objects to all of our other departments over time, ending up with a single, cross-Council solution that would deliver economies of scale, improve our efficiencies, reduce the burden on our IT department and allow us to deliver the information that was needed where it was needed and when it was needed.'

However before such an ambitious policy could be implemented, Winchester City Council had to substantially improve its internal knowledge of Business Objects and implement policies and procedures to ensure a streamlined delivery of accurate information.

### Quick Facts

#### Industry

Local Authority

#### Business Plan

To completely update an existing and earlier version of Business Objects and ensure that departments had the capabilities to build and execute reports so that information could be delivered to the people who needed it when they needed it.

#### The Result

The latest version of Business Objects is being rolled out across all Council Departments as the core reporting tool. Training and knowledge transfer ensures that designated users are now able to complete and run reports for each department, and that the IT department is able to maintain and enhance Business Objects. Scheduled reporting allows standardised reports to run and emailed to recipients on a regular weekly basis, helping staff become more efficient and effective.

#### Products

SAP BusinessObjects XI 3.0

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### The Solution

'We had already identified numerous issues that we needed to address,' continued Peter Byrne. 'The most urgent was the fact that we were running an earlier version of Business Objects that relied on high levels of in-house expertise – expertise that we simply did not possess. We realised that we needed external advice and support and met with several Business Objects specialist organisations to discuss our objectives and requirements.'

**One of the organisations that responded to Winchester City Council's request was CONTEMPORARY – a business intelligence, performance management and portal solutions specialist that has been supporting organisations and their Business Objects implementations since 1992.**

'It was obvious from the outset that CONTEMPORARY could meet all of our needs' explained Peter Byrne. 'They had the necessary in-house technical expertise, understood our situation and the issues that we were likely to face and were quick to suggest solutions, enhancements and improvements that would deliver immediate benefits to the Council.'

Working closely together, CONTEMPORARY and Winchester City Council decided to upgrade the current version of Business Objects to Business Objects XI 3.0 – the latest and most advanced and complete platform for enterprise performance management, reporting, query and analysis, and enterprise information management. This latest version of Business Objects provided the wealth of features and facilities that Winchester City Council required, but in-house training was still a core concern, so CONTEMPORARY arranged for designated members of Winchester City Council's IT department to attend an Administrator Course. 'We had very limited Business Objects knowledge and needed to get to the next level quickly. CONTEMPORARY pulled out all of the stops,' added Peter Byrne. 'We asked them to get us on this course at the end of January and by mid-February our IT specialists were receiving the training and support that they needed.'

Acting on CONTEMPORARY's advice, Winchester City Council decided to appoint representatives from each department as 'designated users' responsible for the development and running of reports on behalf of that department. Simultaneously, CONTEMPORARY began a detailed review of the Council's existing reports, migrating some of these to the new Business Objects environment and archiving others. This, combined with the training and support given to the designated users, provided the Council with departmental libraries of report templates that addressed most of the day-to-day requirements of departmental staff and managers. 'One of the advantages of this approach was that we were not re-inventing the wheel each time a new report was required,' explained Peter Byrne. 'Across the Council we had had a wide range of reporting templates that could be easily adapted to meet new requirements – saving us time and money.'

### About CONTEMPORARY

CONTEMPORARY is a Business Objects Platinum Partner with over 17 years product and Business Intelligence industry expertise.

If you are looking for a way to harness your data and transform it into useful, useable information, then look no further.

CONTEMPORARY has worked with a wide range of organisations throughout the UK to successfully deliver business intelligence consulting, training and products that have helped to drastically improve business performance.

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Previously, the onus for developing and running reports resided with the IT department. IT staff either had to stop working on other projects to run the reports or delay the reports until the necessary resources could be allocated. Today, Winchester City Council has implemented a report scheduling initiative, with reports run and emailed to relevant recipients within the Revenues & Benefits and Housing departments on a weekly basis. 'Scheduled reporting has been a major step forward for us,' explained Peter Byrne. 'One of our objectives was to ensure that people received the information that they needed, when they needed it, without having to worry about how to get it. Reports are now automatically generated and emailed the same time week-by-week and we plan to roll this procedure out to all other departments over the coming months.'

Winchester City Council is still rolling out Business Objects across its departments and continues to work very closely with CONTEMPORARY. Already, it has proved far easier for the Council to extract information, identify trends, spot anomalies and take proactive action. Day-to-day reporting is now far more efficient and one-off reports can be generated and run without involving the IT department and diverting them from mission critical projects. Plans for the future include the provision of dashboards to managers and updated reporting on Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).

'CONTEMPORARY's consultants are there whenever we need them. Their entire approach to this project has been exemplary and they are now working with us to establish a single reporting tool across the Council. Business Objects is our core reporting solution but without CONTEMPORARY we would probably still be struggling to create and run reports to get accurate and up-to-date information to our staff when they need it.'

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