

Challenger Motor Freight advances analytics and business intelligence using ProClarity

Overview

Country: Canada

Industry: Transportation

Customer Profile

Challenger Motor Freight is the largest privately owned transportation company in Canada. Located in Cambridge, Ontario, Challenger's main goal is safety and to provide impeccable service for customers.

Business Situation

Challenger needed an efficient way to analyze and report data across the company. With the business constantly growing, the company needed to transform its business to meet industry demands.

Solution

Challenger enlisted the help of Microsoft Certified Partner, SHEA Business Solutions, who helped the company leverage the features in ProClarity across the company.

Benefits

- Improved business insight
- Faster data analysis and reporting
- Enhanced customer service

“When we first standardized on ProClarity, we quickly reduced the time needed to create reports and improved data quality in a way that helped us grow our business. But we were only scratching the surface of the capabilities of ProClarity.”

Eveline Gaede, Director Information Technology, Challenger Motor Freight Inc.

Challenger Motor Freight Inc. is the largest privately owned truckload carrier in Canada and the fifth largest trucking company in the country. It has built a reputation for the highest standards of safety, and it relies heavily on detailed driving records to highlight its success in this area. However, with data stored in different systems across the organization, Challenger employees found it difficult to get the consistent and accurate results they needed to build reports. After reviewing several business intelligence solutions, Challenger standardized its business intelligence (BI) analysis, visualization tools with ProClarity® and platform on SQL Server software. Working closely with SHEA Business Solutions, a Microsoft® Certified Partner, Challenger implemented ProClarity 6.2, SQL Server™, and the Microsoft Office system. Challenger is now able provide customers with tailored reports and employees can access information in real time. This helps them make key decisions in a matter of hours, not days.

Situation

Challenger Motor Freight Inc., located in Cambridge, Ontario, is the fifth largest trucking company in the country. It relies on a fleet of 1,600 trucks to deliver a wide range of goods across Canada and the United States. The 33-year-old company has also established a reputation for safety, which provides Challenger with a competitive edge.

To help demonstrate this commitment to safety, Challenger regularly produces reports detailing its clean driving record to executives, stakeholders and customers. To be effective, however, these reports must provide Challenger executives with a holistic view of the company's activities, and place the value of safety within a business context. But compiling this information was proving to be a difficult process. Corporate data was locked into several, non-integrated databases. This meant that each department was expected to analyze its own data - for example, assessing how many trucks moved each day, what they delivered, and how quickly it was shipped - and compiling its own report. This segmented process increased the chances for errors, making it difficult for staff to obtain an accurate, holistic view of the business.

"The data in our systems often overlapped between departments. Depending on how it was captured, we could see inconsistent reports," says Eveline Gaede, Director, Information Technology, Challenger Motor Freight Inc. "In addition, we knew there was relevant data our teams missed because they couldn't accurately collect the data needed to conduct a thorough, efficient analysis."

In order to provide management with the information they needed, the IT department amalgamated reports from the departments, and watch for duplicate results. But this was a time-consuming process, one that required a large resource investment from the IT team.

To help smooth its reporting workflow, Challenger needed an integrated and scalable business intelligence (BI) solution that leveraged its existing IT platform.

Solution

After reviewing several solutions, Challenger decided to standardize its analysis, visualization technologies and BI workflow on ProClarity. Working closely with SHEA Business Solutions, a Microsoft® Certified Partner, Challenger implemented ProClarity 6.2, upgrading from a previous version, as well as SQL Server™ and the Microsoft Office system.

"When we first standardized on ProClarity, we quickly reduced the time needed to create reports and improved data quality in a way that helped us grow our business," says Gaede. "But we were only scratching the surface of the capabilities of ProClarity. We wanted to integrate ProClarity across our business and with other technologies we were using, including Microsoft Office and SQL Server software. This helped us generate reports faster, and ensure everyone in the company had access to the data they required, as quickly as possible."

Challenger employees already used Microsoft Office software, and that familiarity helped to reduce the time needed to implement the new ProClarity-based solution, minimizing training costs.

"The familiar ProClarity user interface helped make data easy to use and manage," says Jeffrey Hunt, President, SHEA Business Solutions. "We wanted workers to have the ability to create their own reports immediately, rather than having to rely on the IT department which may have other priorities. This concept of self-service was very important to us, and is a major reason why we chose the ProClarity-based solution."

Benefits

By upgrading to ProClarity 6.2, Challenger is able to provide staff with a clearer view into business processes. This helps the company make faster and more informed business decisions.

Using SQL Server software, SHEA helped Challenger to consolidate its multiple databases, ensuring all the information is built, cleansed and stored in the way that's easily accessible. SHEA helped Challenger develop customized programs with ProClarity and provided focused knowledge transfer, enabling the company to extract more extensive knowledge out of the system.

"With the system and training provided by SHEA, Challenger's employees can easily create their own reports using consistent information and without any assistance," says Hunt. "This allows IT to focus their efforts on other technology advancements. It also empowers Challenger's employees to make strategic decisions that help improve the bottom line."

By upgrading to ProClarity 6.2, Challenger is able to provide staff with a clearer view into business processes. This helps the company make faster and more informed, business decisions.

Improved data quality

By consolidating its data and creating a common access point through ProClarity and Microsoft Office applications, such as Excel®, Challenger has confidence in the quality of its data and the ability to analyze its business in real-time.

"It's incredible how granular we can get with the data, now that we know it's 100 per cent accurate and contains all available information," says Gaede. "Microsoft provides us with an integrated BI solution that can go deep and is able to span our businesses -

this allows us to make decisions that impact day-to-day operations and our bottom-line."

Before ProClarity, it took the IT department several days to create a relatively simple report. Now, Challenger is able to create reports in a matter of hours. Workers can quickly make sense of the large amounts of data generated and have access to the tools to help get answers to questions related to Challenger's business performance.

"When we create a new report, there's not as much time involved in confirming that the data is accurate, because it's already been cleaned," says Gaede. "You actually end up cutting your report time in half."

Advancing corporate goals

With the new ProClarity solution, employees can easily create Customized Service Reports for clients, which outline a range of shipment information, including status of delivery and mileage.

"Before, it was too time-consuming to actually develop a report for every customer that wanted something different," says Gaede. "Providing our customers with a timely report is invaluable to our relationship with them, because they can use the information to further their business as well."

One customer that has benefited from the new reporting process is Molson Coors Brewing Company. Molson uses Challenger shipment reports to help gain visibility into its activities and to help compile monthly financial reviews. A service no other carrier has shown the ability to provide, in a timely fashion.

"The reporting tools and capabilities Challenger delivers are phenomenal. Our customer service team is able to access the Challenger website anytime to check loads and status," says Alison Carr, Transportation

Analyst, Molson Coors Brewing Company. “The reporting tools allow us to perform analysis of our own and the technology fills in a huge gap that is currently missing in our sector.”

Deeper business insight

Challenger is currently creating a scorecard for its Driver Managers. With this scorecard, they will be able to ensure that every driver gets an equal amount of miles, better track how many miles the driver moves per day and pinpoint their pickup and delivery activities. ProClarity’s customized data cube technology helps Challenger determine where best to allocate its resources and tools and enhance its existing relationships with its with clients.

For example, a Running Miles report is generated for the financial department to help it keep tabs of driving trends year over year. With ProClarity, the reports are automated through Microsoft Excel, making the analysis clear and manageable.

Challenger’s fuel consumption is also essential to its purchasing decisions, so the company created the Fuel data cube to measure it. It identifies where the drivers are filling up, the amount being purchased and the cost. These figures show where Challenger needs to address workflow or reduce costs. Challenger also uses the information gathered to identify drivers with poor fueling habits, and re-educate if necessary.

“We’ve already used ProClarity Scorecards in our Warehousing department to gain efficiencies. We created data cubes to compare the average distance between order pick, so that we could organize our warehouse in a more efficient manner,” says Gaede.

Additionally, Challenger trucks are all satellite-equipped, which provides visibility

into how the drivers behave on the road. The information gathered from the satellites is then put into ProClarity, allowing the ability to pinpoint high-risk drivers quickly. The expectation gap between what management wanted and what IT was able to deliver has disappeared.

“We can see when they’re speeding and when they’re over-idling or hard breaking,” says Gaede. “From that we know whether we need to bring them in for extra training, to ensure our safety record remains intact.”

For More Information

For more information about Microsoft products and services, call the Microsoft Sales Information Center at (800) 426-9400. In Canada, call the Microsoft Canada Information Centre at (877) 568-2495. Customers who are deaf or hard-of-hearing can reach Microsoft text telephone (TTY/TDD) services at (800) 892-5234 in the United States or (905) 568-9641 in Canada. Outside the 50 United States and Canada, please contact your local Microsoft subsidiary. To access information using the World Wide Web, go to: www.microsoft.com

For more information about SHEA Business Solutions products and services, call (905)542-1292 or visit the Web site at: www.shea.ca

For more information about Challenger Motor Freight Inc. products and services, call (519) 653-6226 or visit the Web site at: www.challenger.com

Microsoft Office System

The Microsoft Office System is the business world's chosen environment for information work, providing the programs, servers, and services that help you succeed by transforming information into impact.

For more information about the Microsoft Office System, go to: www.microsoft.com/office

© 2007 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved. This case study is for informational purposes only. MICROSOFT MAKES NO WARRANTIES, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, IN THIS SUMMARY. Microsoft, Example: Active Directory, Windows, the Windows logo, Windows Server, and Windows Server System are either registered trademarks or trademarks of Microsoft Corporation in the United States and/or other countries. The names of actual companies and products mentioned herein may be the trademarks of their respective owners.

Document published May, 2007

Software & Services

- ProClarity 6.2
- Office 2003
- SQL Server 2000

Partners

- SHEA Business Solutions

Microsoft