



## Business Intelligence



# Data Warehousing & Business Intelligence Reporting

## Energy Production, Marketing, & Trading

*COMSYS recently acquired Praeos Technologies Inc., a leading Atlanta-based provider of IT consulting services specializing in the business intelligence, data warehousing and analytics sectors.*

*Praeos' strong practice in business intelligence and data warehousing have become the platform for these services offerings within the COMSYS Managed Solutions Group. Together, these combined business intelligence practices, now called COMSYS BI Practice make COMSYS a leading provider in these sectors.*

### CLIENT SITUATION

This client owns and manages physical power generation plants and provides energy marketing and trading products and services throughout the United States and Canada. Their business is extremely complex and dynamic and plant operations and trading positions must be continually managed in order to maximize profitability and mitigate risks. The need for both accurate and timely information is critical to the success and profits of this company.

Operational software used to run the client's business was either home-grown or relatively immature packaged software which was inconsistently deployed and used. The analytical and reporting software tools used by the client were inflexible and incapable of providing all of their reporting and broader information needs. Further complicating the situation, the client was migrating to a new operational software tool and had purchased BusinessObjects to be the new reporting and analytical tool. Our client desperately needed data integrated from a number of disparate systems made available to them in concise, accurate reports and query structures for their decision-making.

Before the arrival of the COMSYS BI team, there had been two prior attempts with other firms to deliver the needed data warehouse capabilities to this client. Both of these projects failed, resulting in lost time and money and without delivering any usable components. The data warehouse organization was new and struggled to gain credibility. Project stakeholders had lost confidence in the ability of this organization to deliver on the project's objectives. Something needed to change.

The client engaged COMSYS for what was to be one last attempt to fulfill their original business objectives and put quality, timely information into the hands of decision makers. Our client was looking for a consulting partner with experience that could deliver.

Specifically, they desired a consulting partner:

- That specialized in combined BI/DW solutions
- With experience and success with BusinessObjects implementations
- With the ability to manage a project successfully
- With a proven, best-practice project methodology specific to data warehousing and business intelligence
- That could engage with them on a project to mentor their staff

Once the partnership began, our COMSYS BI team found additional issues:

- There was a shortage of data warehousing experience in key roles assigned to the project.
- Source data quality was poor and users struggled to reconcile differing versions of the same data.
- The client has just recently purchased BusinessObjects and the staff had been trained yet lacked any real experience designing and using BusinessObjects.
- Business users did not understand the capabilities of integrated data coupled with their new powerful BI tool, BusinessObjects.



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## Business Intelligence



- They struggled to collect adequate requirements from users, resulting in static, single source, one dimensional BusinessObjects reports that looked like their old operational reports.
- Ultimately this client would need to move to a self-service BI model where the business would be able to create most reports and queries in BusinessObjects without having to go back to IT for assistance.

### COMSYS BI SOLUTION

COMSYS BI initially performed an assessment of the client's data warehouse practices, methodology, and organization. The Assessment compared processes, documentation standards, and organizational structure to industry best-practices.

This Assessment process identified:

- The technology, resources and processes needed to implement a robust data warehouse and Business Intelligence solution
- The specific benefits the client would achieve with the solution
- Specific actions that could bring the organization in line with best-practices
- The criticality of a data warehouse specific project methodology that combined COMSYS BI's proven methodology and client-specific needs
- The optimal organizational structure, including roles and responsibilities needed to build and sustain the solution
- The critical staff education and mentoring needed for project success

The COMSYS BI practice team then engaged with our client in strategic planning for the data warehouse and BusinessObjects solution. This strategic planning resulted in the delivery of a data warehouse architecture, project roadmap, staffing plan, budgeting guidance, an infrastructure/technology plan and a data access and delivery strategy built on the features of their BusinessObjects tool.

COMSYS BI began to engage on the initial projects in our client's new project roadmap, providing leadership and project management. The initial project delivered a central data warehouse and necessary foundational components including process control, data quality routines, notification processes, and reusable Informatica transformations. This foundation was specifically architected to take advantage of the Business Object Universe and reporting features, ensuring that reports and queries could be easily developed and modified by business users.

In short succession, the COMSYS BI practice team delivered data marts with robust BusinessObjects reporting and analytical capabilities for key subject areas:

- Deal profit and loss
- Trading position and risk
- Deal pricing
- Index analysis
- Human Resources
- Payroll

During these projects, COMSYS BI provided the following:

- Project management
- Senior leadership, including DW architect, Data Architect, and ETL Architect
- Technical staff: Data Analysts, ETL Developers, BI developers, data modelers
- Mentoring of existing staff during the course of projects
- A data warehouse-specific project methodology

Our client continues to engage the COMSYS BI practice in the years since this initial engagement. Additions to the data warehouse in recent years include new subject areas, data marts, reports and queries:

- Plant generation analysis
- Plant fuel analysis
- Plant lost opportunity and event analysis
- ISO reporting
- FERC reporting
- Back office reconciliation and reporting
- Consolidated financials reporting and analysis (GL, AP, AR, PO)

### CLIENT BENEFITS

- There is now confidence in the ability of the data warehouse organization to deliver warehouse and BI projects
- The client enjoys flexible and robust analytics from their data warehouse. Former projects focused on rigid report specifications.
- The client has implemented a self-service model for BusinessObjects that reduces support, maintenance, and enhancement costs by empowering the business users to generate their own reports.
- The client is more confident in their staffing model due to roles and an organizational structure that COMSYS BI helped to define.
- COMSYS BI staff bridged the communication gap between project stakeholders, executives, and the project technical staff.
- Client has a long term partner they can trust and rely on for their next generation of warehousing, analytical and Business Intelligence needs