Opening a new dimension for analyzing data: Customized self-service BI for the BARD group

Branch of industry
Manufacturing & Services:
Offshore wind energy

Scope of application
Monthly financial reporting
External consolidation
Stock valuation
Master data reports
Project and budget controlling

Pre-system
proALPHA (ERP-System)

Technology platform
BOARD

Implementation and consulting
Official partner of BOARD
AIOS Solutions

The BARD group implemented BOARD BI software on their ERP system opening up a new dimension for analyzing data. The flexible platform is intensively used by key users and continuously enhanced: from automated monthly reporting to consolidation of group accounts.

The Company

The BARD group of companies is pioneering in the development and implementation of future oriented offshore wind farms. As a provider of turnkey projects BARD covers the complete range of services from planning, development, production and construction to the operation of offshore wind farms. About 1000 employees work for the holding company and its six subsidiaries.

The Challenge
Reporting fit for the future with BI

The internal requirement analysis found that it was not possible to fulfill some of the reporting requirements with the existing ERP-system proALPHA within the desired time frame, budget and in the necessary quality. That is why BARD had already implemented a business intelligence solution (BI). This BI software enabled the rapid creation of reports; however those could only be created and adjusted by the employees of the ERP division but not by the actual key users.

According to the main users' assessment, the ever-growing requirements for the reporting could not be fulfilled with the existing BI software in the long run, because the ongoing development and adjustment of the analysis tool claimed too much of the internal ERP resources. In addition, there were also issues with regard to the data consistency of the reports. Consequently it was not possible to create ad hoc reports, since even for small adjustments the relevant division had to reach out to the ERP department.

As a result, BARD group started looking for another tool for analysis and reporting, in order to provide reliable reports and analyses which can be customized by the business users directly.

The BOARD Solution
From customized monthly reporting to financial consolidation

The choice came down to BOARD, which convinced due to its flexibility and fast implementation. With the help of BOARD partner AIOS Solutions, the data from the ERP system were initially screened and edited in order to create a more homogenous data base. Thanks to the excellent connectivity function of BOARD it is possible to access the data stored in proALPHA easily, drilling down to single document level. On this basis, a customized reporting system was implemented in BOARD, which generates automatically updated reports using the MS office add-in. Parallel to the successive implementation of the BOARD

solution, power users were increasingly involved in the implementation process ensuring the solution will be future-proof. The acquired skills are used to support and extend the BI system as well as to train further users. In the context of the complete fulfillment of the demands placed on the new BI solution (reporting and analysis), BARD decided in the course of the project to benefit from the possibilities and flexibility of BOARD by integrating further applications.

In the next stage of extending the BI solution, AIOS and the ERP department of BARD created applications for the areas of budget and project controlling, costing, intragroup coordination and for inventory valuation.

Setting up consolidation functions for the group accounts in BOARD marked another important step in developing the solution. Individual consolidation bookings stored in Excel are imported and corresponding consolidation steps are carried out in BOARD, thereby enabling a rapid reporting of monthly consolidated financial data. The consolidation by means of individual bookings at account level guarantees the necessary detailing and traceability.

Automatic import and processing of financial data takes place every night in order to keep information in BOARD up-to-date at all times. In parallel, a check is carried out using key figures, which helps to identify any errors quickly and allows corrections.

Further function extensions are being considered.

Customer Benefit
Achieving a new dimension in analyzing data by closely interlocking BI and ERP

The implementation of BOARD enabled BARD to overcome the inflexibility of the business intelligence solution which had previously been used in some areas. Before, key-users had to deal with standardized BI solutions, now they work with analyses and reports customized to their needs. The new system is now managed by the internal key users in cooperation with BOARD-partner AIOS. Its design makes it possible to adapt the system to changing company structures with little effort.

Eventually, BARD was equipped with a BI system in which reporting, ad-hoc analyses, dashboards, consolidation as well as various controlling and financial accounting applications are seamlessly connected. The consistency of the data with those of the ERP system proALPHA is particularly important. All users work with the exact same data base, ensuring consistent figures are used at all levels. The financial consolidation functions implemented in BOARD as well as the automatic night-time upload and data processing especially support the generation of consistent and continuously updated data.

The cost-benefit ratio has significantly improved. Efforts involved in the monthly reporting have been about halved by automating several work steps. All reports are now automatically available in common formats with current key figures using BOARD's MS Office add-in.

Day-to-day reporting is now no longer a problem.
The close interconnection of the BI software and the ERP system further opens up a new level for users to analyze the data.

In addition to the comprehensive options for ad-hoc adjustments of all reporting, the business figures can be viewed all the way down to the individual document level.

With BOARD, not only significant gains in speed have been achieved, but also customized reports have been enabled. In analyses, BI is now complying with the users, not vice versa.

„Finally we have an integrated system at hand that works reliably, is precisely adapted to our needs and still can be flexibly extended. With BOARD, we were able to develop applications, which were out of reach for our previous BI tool."

Dominik Krins, Head of Group Accounting, BARD