



BI as an instrument of corporate management: Integrated financial planning with the BI platform by BOARD for the automation specialist KUKA

KUKA

Branch of industry

Manufacturing:
Robot & automation technology

Scope of application

Integrated financial planning:
Data entry
Analysis
Reporting

Pre-systems

SAP, SEM-BCS, MS Excel

Technology/ Platform

BOARD

Implementation and consulting

Official partner of BOARD
AIOS Solutions

KUKA Roboter GmbH uses the business intelligence solution (BI) by BOARD in its entirety: from data mining and planning, to the independent design of the platform by the company itself.

Together with KUKA, AIOS implemented in BOARD an integrated financial planning solution that has been put to use worldwide.

The Company

The KUKA AG with head office in Augsburg (Germany) is one of the worldwide leading providers of robotics based automatization solutions. The technology company with its business units

KUKA Roboter, KUKA Systems and Swisslog operates internationally for automotive and general industry customers, employing more than 12,000 people. In the financial year 2015, KUKA generated revenue of around 3 billion euro.

The Challenge

Integrated financial planning and consolidation with BI

KUKA Roboter GmbH is already using a sales and an HR planning solution based on the BOARD software, which had convinced the company. In the next step, the complex financial planning was to be integrated in BOARD to

carry out the planning in a much easier, faster and more comprehensive way than before.

The relevant pre-systems and applications for the company's financial planning were SAP, MS Excel and SEM-BCS (a module of SAP). Actual as well as planning data from the past were recorded in SAP. Current planning data, on the other hand, were stored in Excel. Daily updated information about the planning status was not available.

To supply and analyze data which was stored in Excel, a great deal of efforts was required. This made reporting in practice much more difficult. Due to the relatively high workload, time requirement and also to avoid future possible transmission errors, KUKA was seeking an alternative to replace Excel at this point.

Increased complexity also resulted from the company's global operations. With 25 subsidiaries on different continents, currency differences as well as intercompany (IC) adjustments play a significant role and must be recorded and adjusted.

"Our goal was to install an integrated financial planning that collates the transnational data from our pre-systems and integrates them intelligently," said Christian Grüttner, controller and project manager at KUKA Roboter.

"With a uniform BI solution, we hoped for a considerable simplification of planning with automated balancing of IC differences."

The BOARD Solution

Flexible planning and reporting with worldwide distributed users.

In order to simplify and harmonize the financial planning process, a global scale BI solution was developed in BOARD to support and optimized the following areas:

- › Cost center planning
- › Investment planning
- › Profit and loss accounting planning
- › Balance sheet planning
- › Profit center accounting
- › Consolidation of the plan

The BI application by BOARD convinced thanks to its user-friendliness, performance and analysis function. The application has also achieved the best positioning in various market studies, especially in the fields of planning and reporting. With BOARD, a comprehensive and flexible data analysis from different pre-systems is achieved, complemented by multi-layered, adaptable planning functions.

As specialized partner for the implementation of BOARD for complex financial planning, AIOS Solutions took over the project. AIOS Solutions is part of an audit and consulting firm and has already proven its expertise in the area of integrated financial planning, especially in cases with complex pre-system structures. Furthermore, AIOS Solutions is well aware of the specific needs of companies from the manufacturing industry thanks to its experience with the sector.

AIOS created the required interfaces for KUKA to run file-based data imports from the pre-systems SAP and SEM-BCS into

BOARD and to preprocess the data for better overview. In order to ensure actuality and exactness of the figures, a data transfer is carried out every night. Planning data, previously recorded in Excel, are now input directly into BOARD. This way, both the Excel solution previously used for the planning as well as the manual data transfer from the pre-systems could be completely replaced.

The system data is highly flexible which allows it to be segmented and individually assigned in BOARD. KUKA therefore decided to use the BI tool for profit center invoices as well. Information about the distribution of planning data to the various profit centers of the company is automatically transferred from BOARD to SEM-BCS via the interface.

AIOS further implemented currency conversion in BOARD, in which KUKA can store its own fixed exchange rates for planning purposes, too.

Versioning helps to compare planning data individually in different variants or at different times during the course of the planning. Thus changes in planning can be analyzed and implemented especially quickly.

Since the BI application of BOARD allows a very high level of detail, it is possible drill down to different levels of detail at any time in order to accurately search for the reason of an eventual discrepancy. This not only increases the company's reaction rate, but also enables a much more target-oriented management control.

"Integrated financial planning stands for intelligently networked planning. During all processing steps pre-defined key figures are automatically calculated and transferred to the appropriate locations in the analyses," Christian Grüttner explains. "For example, depreciation is automatically taken over from the investment planning into the profit and loss account. Parts of the balance sheet are automatically completed from the profit and loss account. Key figures from the balance sheet are then incorporated into the cash flow projections."

In summary, the new integrated financial planning helps creating reports and plans by means of data integration and data processing with a high degree of flexibility, high level of detail, intelligent networking and user friendliness.

Customer Benefits

Independent use & expansion of BI as a management control tool

Ever since the BOARD software solution has also been used for financial planning, the reaction rate and analysis capability in this field have been increased and improved many times over.

The planning process has been simplified and made much more flexible.

In the preliminary phase, KUKA very precisely defined its requirements for the solution, providing AIOS with very clear specifications. As a result the BI tool could be implemented successfully in accordance with the requirements and customized exactly to the needs of KUKA.

"We benefit most from the clear structure of our BI tools, their user-friendliness and self-service functionality," summarizes Christian Grüttner. "Thanks to these preconditions, more than

300 employees worldwide and the cost center managers of several associated companies are working with BOARD."

The integration of a range of individual systems into a comprehensive solution now allows easier control and processing of the data. Moreover, higher transparency was achieved as to where certain data originate from and how those are composed. KUKA has access to the figures and data of all its companies. This way they can directly influence, for instance, budget, transaction and investment decisions. Through reconciliation, conclusions on any deficits or optimization needs can be drawn as well.

Christian Grüttner emphasizes the high degree of autonomy that KUKA has already achieved in handling the BI tool: "In the meantime, we have set up our own BI team and are able to develop the tool independently."

"We have many worldwide distributed users that work directly with BOARD or input data to the platform. Especially in planning, the BI tool has become an instrument of day-to-day work and coordination between our international branches. Since then we have been developing our BOARD platform further with our own BI team."

Christian Grüttner, Controlling, KUKA Roboter GmbH