Isle of Wight

Widespread Adoption of Rocket Software’s Performance Management and Business Intelligence Solutions Enables the Isle of Wight Council to Realize Significant Benefits

Situation
Located five miles from the south coast of England, the Isle of Wight is a predominantly rural island with a population of 138,000. The Isle of Wight Council coordinates all of the main local authority services, and decided to streamline its processes and replace several monitoring and reporting tools with a single integrated system.

“Until recently, we were using a variety of methods to undertake performance management,” says Heidi Marshall, Strategic Manager of Policy & Performance for the Isle of Wight Council. “This typically included the use of local databases, spreadsheet models, and Word document reports. The reporting processes were typically time-consuming, and the presentation of data was inflexible. Therefore, the team began the process of scoping a project to investigate the potential procurement of performance management software that would meet all of our needs.”

Solution
A substantial procurement process took place to select a system that was to enable the council to measure its data and to begin to manage its service performance. Heidi Marshall says, “After the presentations it was apparent that Rocket was the outright preferred supplier by far. The system looked simple and easy to understand and use, uncluttered and colorful. Coupled with the potential power of CorBusiness to demonstrate the performance management detail, it proved to be a winner.

Rocket showed professionalism, high standards, and understanding of performance management and a strong commitment to their products. This has continued throughout the implementation process where the help, support, and dedication of Rocket consultants have been exemplary. This has enabled the project to be delivered smoothly and on time, thus increasing the confidence of the council in the products and the supplier itself.”

The Council purchased two main components: the CorStrategy performance management system and the CorBusiness business intelligence reporting package, both of which have gained widespread adoption. In March 2010 the Rocket CorVu project drew to a close and Isle of Wight Council moved in to a business as usual position. Some of the benefits of the CorVu project are shown below.
Performance Management Benefits (Corstrategy)

More timely performance data: Automated reports are enabled via the Council’s intranet site and performance data is captured to an agreed timetable aligned with the authority’s internal performance management framework. Ownership of the generation and circulation of monthly management reports sits within the services.

More complete performance data: Multi-stage update and sign-off process; exception reports and fixed windows for data entry.

More coordinated performance data (hierarchy): Measures mapped to corporate themes and priorities at the strategic level and local measures linked to service outcomes from business plans.

Improved data quality: CorStrategy is used to record and report on data quality assurance against individual performance measures.

Improved data analysis: With audiences ranging from managers, service heads, directors, and elected members, the CorVu commentary feature is used to capture contextual information and highlight actions required. From this basis, other business intelligence is used to analyze performance in a holistic manner.

Improved data reporting & presentation: CorVu has facilitated a standardized and consistent approach to performance reporting across the authority with the RAG report format embedded and well understood across the organization. Reports are made available via the authority’s intranet with access to staff at all levels in the organization. Detailed quarterly performance reporting is also available for partners in the management of the Local Area Agreement.

Improved Performance: As a result of CorStrategy, there is better provision of quality performance data and increased intelligence about the whole organization. The authority’s performance management framework is wholly supported by CorVu and this has improved strategic management of performance at a senior level.

Business Intelligence Benefits (Corbusiness)

As highlighted above the CorVu project has seen significant improvement to performance reporting with the impact apparent across all services of the Council. The HyperVu tool has been fully utilized to enable a ‘self service’ reporting facility that allows staff, managers, and senior officers to generate a range of relevant performance reporting via the authority’s intranet site. This supports devolved ownership of performance management throughout the organization, less dependency on corporate performance staff and a quicker turnaround of reporting functions.

The flexibility and functionality of the CorBusiness reporting tool was quickly identified by the Isle of Wight Council and a secondary project was implemented between 2007-2010 that rolled out the software as the Council’s corporate reporting tool.
This project realized further benefits as outlined below:

**More cost-effective data retrieval processes**: CorBusiness reports developed and delivered as part of the CorVu project had accumulated an efficiency saving of over £83,000 by March 2010, exceeding the anticipated savings within the original business case by over £50,000.

Initial report development focused on linkage to finance systems with nearly 700 reports re-written using CorBusiness and published on the intranet for easy access by finance staff. Using CorBusiness management reports on staff usage and report generation, it was established that these reports were viewed over 65,000 times in a two year period.

There have also been cost-effective improvements where manual processing of data has been replaced with a single integrated report. An example of this is the management information relating to Freedom of Information requests. Data was originally accessible through a number of separate customer management reports and then manually processed to tie all stats together for monthly monitoring. The holistic data requirements have been re-written into CorBusiness reports. Now all information is contained in a single report, accessible via the intranet and with parameters to allow the user to specify date ranges when running, and a drill-down function to pinpoint individual Freedom of Information requests. Due to the flexibility of using shared ‘knowledge libraries’, it was very easy to apply the same reporting principles to formal complaints managed within the same customer management system with minimal additional work. Extracting data from the Council’s social care system CorBusiness was also found to be up to 50 times faster than the department’s existing report writer.

**Faster identification of data available for reporting**: The target for this benefit was to establish a central electronic knowledge library with connectivity to five council systems within the first six months of the project. As of March 2010, connectivity to sixty-four council systems had been established. The scope of the data now available and linked through CorBusiness continues to open up new opportunities for cross-cutting reports and has saved money by replacing other reporting tools.

**Improved efficiency of staff time**: Automation of data collection from core systems has removed the ‘human element’ while maximizing data quality. Further efficiencies have been gained through the internal training of fifty CorBusiness ‘Super Users’ as they are actively using the reporting software against their own service databases to produce performance data, ascertain management information, cleanse data, and generally improve the provision of instantly accessible information to officers/members.

In addition, there are a range of examples where CorBusiness has been utilized in service areas to reduce report turnaround times and free up staff time. This is best demonstrated with the ‘Empty Property Report from Council Tax’ for Housing Services. This annual report usually required a 2 week full-time resource and is now available via CorBusiness at the press of a button. The report lists all empty properties as of a given date with an exemption class and highlights properties empty for 6+ months, automatically calculating totals for performance measures. The production of this report was approved by the Audit Commission.
Improved access to Authority data for evidence based decision making: The system is already connected to 64 data sources and there is interest in expanding this even further to make data retrieval and research even more efficient across the authority. The ongoing development of CorBusiness relates to embedding its usage as the corporate reporting tool and providing connectivity to both local source systems and corporate systems to maximize information available for evidence-based decision-making at all levels within the authority.

Enables research of organizational activity to be sourced from a central knowledge library: With CorBusiness now connected to over 60 systems via a combination of live data links, extracted data and CorVu Dynamarts, the Isle of Wight Council have a single point of access for a wide range of business intelligence. A number of examples of efficient use of data and cross-cutting of system information have been cited on this report and improvements to research functions will be wholly facilitated by this in the future.

Having a central resource for the CorBusiness application means there are trained staff with a wider, holistic view of data available from business areas and they are ideally positioned to identify opportunities to reduce duplication, make research more efficient and generally increase the value of the authority's data.

Summary
The benefits are showing in the Isle of Wight Council with a culture change of improved engagement in performance management, more desire from staff and partners to use the system for managing performance at a local level, and increased willingness from members and staff to work together to improve performance.

CorVu has supported the authority in this journey of improvement. The software is continuing to be developed and utilized in different ways to meet emerging expectations and develop a deeper understanding of the value of data to the organization, partners, and residents.