

Car Toys Reduces IT Burden and Gains Powerful Analytics Enterprise-wide with PivotLink On-Demand BA

“The investment in PivotLink is the best use of software dollars we have ever made. Our CFO is logged on all day, the Senior Vice President of Sales and the regional managers are on board, and the managers and assistant managers of all 54 stores are using it — and loving it!”

— Tom Lockwood, CIO, Car Toys

CAR·TOYS

A better way to go.

INDUSTRY

- Retail

GEOGRAPHY

- North America

CHALLENGES

- IT generated SQL reports took hours to create
- Data warehouse not easy to use or accessible to business users
- Unable to collaborate with other units to support business growth
- Limited IT resources for maintaining BI system or upgrades

RESULTS

- Rapid implementation with easy, low-cost maintenance
- Self-service, Web-based analytic and reporting tools for business users
- Collaboration on a global scale
- Better insight into customers and product performance
- Minimal IT involvement

CHALLENGE

Car Toys is the largest independent retailer of mobile entertainment and wireless phones in the nation. It has more than 1,200 employees in 52 locations throughout Washington, Oregon, Colorado, and Texas. When Director of Information Systems (IS) Stefan Nellenbach joined Car Toys, he was impressed with the analytical bent of the company’s managers and sales staff. “They wanted to take sales data and flip it every which way and backward to drive the business,” he said.

Nellenbach searched for a business intelligence (BI) solution that would meet everyone’s reporting needs. He chose PivotLink because it could handle huge sets of data and deliver information quickly. “We didn’t want a solution that built static data cubes from the data we loaded,” he said. “The fact that PivotLink could do it on the fly was amazing. And the interface is simple—anyone in the company can use the software to make better decisions.”

What Car Toys needed was an on-demand BA solution that could:

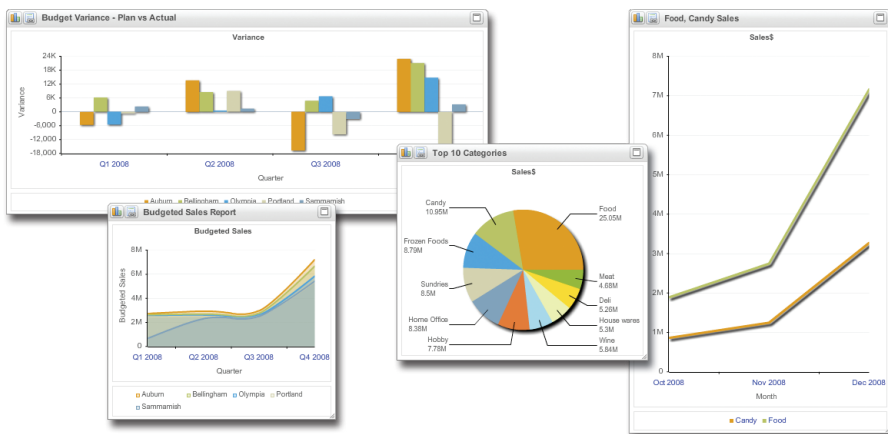
- Increase user adoption and satisfaction
- Integrate data from multiple systems
- Provide easy access to critical metrics and analysis
- Drastically reduced dependence on IT for custom developed SQL reports

SOLUTION

Building on Nellenbach’s success with sales analytics, the new IS director, Tom Lockwood, decided to expand the company’s use of PivotLink, and introduced more users to the solution. Lockwood, who later became CIO, worked to bring more employees up-to-speed on the PivotLink solution to reduce the time his team was spending on building custom reports.

“PivotLink is so flexible. People can use it in whatever way they want. A merchandising clerk may only need it to check one thing a day. The senior VP of merchandising, who does heavy analysis, might look at inventory turns, inventory levels, and gross margin return on investments. And our replenishment team uses PivotLink to track sales trends and demand so they can make better buying decisions.”

— Tom Lockwood,
CIO, Car Toys



Identify actionable insights from your data

“Because there were so many people who hadn’t been introduced to it, my staff was still developing dozens of custom SQL reports a month,” Lockwood said. “They would take anywhere from a few hours to weeks to create, then minutes to hours to process and print.” Lockwood also went to the company’s founder and CEO to get his approval to start using the PivotLink solution for all reports. “That wasn’t hard,” said Lockwood. “I took the CEO’s favorite report, put it in PivotLink, and showed him how to use it.” The CEO was an instant convert—all of a sudden he could see comparative sales data anytime, from any Web browser.”

RESULTS

About 125 sales, merchandising, and administrative staff use PivotLink routinely. “The investment in PivotLink is the best use of software dollars we have ever made,” said Lockwood. “Our CFO is logged on all day, the Senior Vice President of Sales and the regional managers are on board, and the managers and assistant managers of all 54 stores started using it—and loving it.” The PivotLink on-demand business analytics solution provides the following benefits for Car Toys:

- Flexible analytics that meet the needs of all business users, including executives, sales and regional managers, sales staff, and merchandising clerks
- Easy-to-use, customizable reports
- Eliminate the need for IT to develop time-consuming, custom SQL reports
- Integration of data from multiple systems, including GERS point-of-sale, Oracle financial, and ADP HR
- Ability to do budget analysis, eliminating the need to invest in additional Oracle licenses

PivotLink is a leading provider of on-demand business analytics.

For more information:
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