WhereScape®

WHERESCAPE PROVIDES MISSING LINK FOR RENOLD'S BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE

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RENOLD

Fragmented growth

Renold plc. is a global manufacturer of industrial chains and power transmission products for escalators, factories and even theme parks. Established in the late nineteenth century, Renold has a long history of producing high quality precision engineering. Over the course of its existence the business had grown in a fragmented way and lacked commonality across its various sites and systems.

Early 2013, Robert Purcell joined the company as CEO, bringing Business Systems Director Sarah Cobb with him to help initiate a business systems strategy. The first goal was to provide consistent data, whether in the UK, the US or Australia.

Renold had over 13 Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) systems, including SAP, that should have been delivering a view of business resources (cash flow, raw materials, production capacity) and business commitments (orders, purchase orders, payroll). Data should have been flowing across all departments, but most of Renold's reporting was done by individuals creating bespoke Excel reports.

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The Business Challenge

- Improve business performance

- Access and manage all business data from 13 Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) systems and multiple sites in a consistent way

- Ensure all data was ready for the new ERP system

- Standardising its ERP systems will take four years, which was too slow

- Renold needed to build an agile Data Warehouse for effective enterprise-wide analytics

- Sales staff did not have adequate market intelligence and activity reporting needed to do their jobs effectively

- To understand its reseller and distribution network and all its customers' needs

Untrustworthy Data

The sales team could not obtain completely accurate sales and order numbers for their daily reports, let alone ask questions of the data to inform decisions about pricing and product choices. Business decisions were being made using summarised information gleaned from numerous sources.

"The SAP system was too complex and cumbersome. We knew it would be up to four years before we could roll out one consistent ERP system for the group, and that was just an unacceptable length of time" said Sarah Cobb, "Luckily, Robert (Purcell, CEO) and I had worked with WhereScape before, so fortunately we knew there was a quicker and better solution for our issues."

WhereScape's Data Warehouse Automation applications manage the initial scoping, planning, prototyping, loading and populating of data, as well as the ongoing management and optimisation of existing Data Warehouses. By automating the entire Data Warehouse lifecycle, WhereScape empowers customers to reduce costs, increase productivity and make better decisions.

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The WhereScape Solution

- Using WhereScape Red and WhereScape 3D an agile, source agnostic Data Warehouse was built for legacy and ERP systems

- Data integrated from the first five systems could be catalogued, made visible and available on a single platform for easy and reliable reporting

Proof of Concept

After Renold explained its problems the WhereScape team visited the company to demonstrate the proof of concept. Although Cobb and Purcell had worked with WhereScape before, Andrew Guy, Business Intelligence Consultant at Renold, was a little more dubious.

"I thought it must be marketing spiel, it couldn't be that easy." Guy said, "Then, on day one of the proof of concept, my jaw literally hit the floor. We had sales intelligence for the first time since I joined Renold. I just couldn't believe something like WhereScape existed. We had customer knowledge that we simply had not had before."

Three months later Renold had a working cube for invoicing that showed inconsistencies within the data itself[1]. The cube revealed discrepancies across the sites from differently classified units to varying exchange rates; once identified they could be rectified. Six months later, the company has four working cubes. With the WhereScape automated cube the parameters do not have to be defined beforehand, so managers can tailor them to be region specific.

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Clean, consistent data

It used to take three days to download data from one ERP system into a spreadsheet for analysis, plus a further four hours for reconciliation and analysis, a total of 28 working hours. Now it takes 3 minutes, 560 times faster. Daily reports, that used to take an hour to deliver untrustworthy data, now take 30 seconds (120 times faster) and provide clean, consistent data.

"We can produce interim reports now, which was unheard of before," said Cobb, "It's too soon to see the impact on sales, but getting sales reports into the hands of sales people will no doubt have a huge impact. Now staff can see and track the data, they can make decisions and behaviour changes that will ensure a more streamlined and profitable company."

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[1] A cube provides an easy-to-use mechanism for querying data with quick and uniform response times Cubes are the main objects in online analytic processing (OLAP), a technology that provides fast access to data in a data warehouse.

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Benefits

- Within the first day of the Proof of Concept Renold had clean, consistent sales intelligence for the first time

- The legacy, daily report of sales and order numbers took an hour to run and produced inconsistent numbers. This report now takes 30 seconds and is accurate

- Commercial reporting for month end reduced from 4 days to 3 hours with interim reports being produced

- Time to download, enhance and reconcile data reduced from 3.5 days to 30 seconds

- The people who need the intelligence can access it

- WhereScape RED's automated documentation and metadata revealed errors in Renold's source data and business processes that could then be rectified

- Rollout of the ERP system now includes BI, with historic sales information migrated to the Data Warehouse as part of the go-live process and commercial data included in the cubes from the start

The future

By the end of the year, Renold will have IBM's BI interface Cognos at the front of the Data Warehouse. Reporting will extend into production reporting so there will be an inventory of everything, not just sales history. One by one the ERP systems will migrate data into the Data Warehouse.

The next stage for Renold in its business improvement strategy is an acquisition phase. Growth through acquisition will involve even more disparate data needing to be standardised into Renold systems and reports. With the new Data Warehouse, this can be done simply, quickly and accurately.

"It's my belief that systems are an enabler of business transformation," concluded Sarah Cobb, "So, now that WhereScape is essentially gluing our ERP systems and our Data Warehouse together, Renold can fulfill its true business potential."