

PROTECTION ONE



“THANKS TO THE PLATFORM IMPLEMENTED USING COGNOS REPORTNET, WE’VE REDUCED THE TIME TAKEN TO INVOICE BOTH CONTRACTS AND CLIENT ACCOUNTS. THE BENEFITS OF THIS ARE CLEAR FROM OUR INCREASED CASH RESERVES, OUR IMPROVED CRM PROCESSES, AND OUR ENHANCED MANAGEMENT OF THE BUSINESS’S GLOBAL QUALITY STANDARDS OVER THE LONG TERM.”

— MIKAEL PERHIRIN, HEAD OF THE DECISION SUPPORT AND INFOCENTRE UNIT AT PROTECTION ONE

EXPERTS IN REMOTE PROTECTION

Founded in 1989, Protection One specialises in electronic security systems (CCTV, electronic surveillance and access control). Its client base is composed principally of business customers for whom the company installs protection systems adapted to their particular security requirements (such as theft, vandalism, stock shortfalls and so forth). Monitoring is then carried out by the client directly (using the CCTV systems) or more frequently by one of Protection One’s electronic surveillance centres. Highly protected (by measures including reinforced doors, CCTV cameras and ‘airlock’-type security entrances), they are in constant contact with all of the monitoring systems

located at some 50,000 sites. With a presence in France consisting of around 20 local offices and approximately 700 employees, Protection One provides its customers with a bespoke service that takes account of the risk factors associated with each customer’s region and environment.

Protection One has enjoyed constant growth during its 14 years of existence, partly through a process of targeted acquisition. The result – when its managers came to review the company’s IT systems in late 2003, they were struck by the diversity of the applications and technologies in place. This was causing a number of problems related to information sharing, most particularly the lack of any central data access strategy. At that time, 500 databases – more or less under the personal control of individual employees – had been identified in the company and, while some reporting tools and other dashboard-type indicators had already been deployed, these didn’t constitute an overall strategy. Instead, they further contributed to the lack of uniformity in the company’s IT systems.

STANDARDISING AND EXTENDING REPORTING ACROSS THE BUSINESS

In early 2004, Protection One decided to bring greater coherence to its systems by creating a dedicated business unit responsible for standardising its reporting structures. Mikael Perhirin was appointed head of this

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Area of business:

Security

Requirements:

- To standardise business processes
- To provide thin client access
- To extend reporting across the business

The benefits:

- Improved data quality and reliability
- Increased cash reserves
- A better overview of every activity

Solutions implemented:

Cognos ReportNet

Partner:

Business&Decision



THE NEXT LEVEL OF PERFORMANCE™

Decision Support and Infocentre. His first action was to consolidate the disparate sets of data within a special information centre. He took advantage of this opportunity to gather together any existing reports and check them for consistency and accuracy. Starting in March 2004 and supported by Business&Decision, the company sought to move beyond this straightforward review by considering the possibilities of setting up a data warehouse. This would help it to extend the use of reporting to every part of the business. *“While we have worked in stages,”* explains Mikael Perhirin, *“our ultimate goal was clear right from the start: we wanted to put in place management and quality indicators for the company by using a ‘monitoring’ system built around a data repository. This would form the main source of information for the business.”* »

Initially, Protection One took steps to cleanse the data held in its existing databases with the help of the ETL tool supplied with the platform (the SQL Server) that would host the data warehouse. The data was taken from the client databases, from contracts, and from technical service calls, as well as from the main alarm management software. This first phase of activity, during which existing structures were thoroughly audited and mapped out, was reinforced during 2004 with the introduction of a consolidated repository and a data model that was reliable and appropriate for the analyses the company planned to conduct in the second phase.

In parallel, Protection One was already ‘dividing’ its data warehouse into data marts. The first of these, focusing on technical management issues, became operational in June 2004. With Cognos ReportNet, it has brought improvements in the allocation across the business’s 15 technical centres. Since January 2005 onwards, the company has continued in the same direction by creating a series of data marts focusing on specific activities, such as finance, customer relationships and credit control. The business can now rely on some 20 different reports which have been created using Cognos ReportNet and covers 80% of its reporting needs.

COGNOS – AN INNOVATIVE AND RESPONSIVE PARTNER

For Mikael Perhirin, Cognos ReportNet was selected for two principal reasons: *“Cognos ReportNet stands out from the competition by virtue of its innovative features. We also really appreciated the commercial approach taken by the Cognos team, who listened to our needs and spoke the language we, as an SME, used.”* Additionally, so that reports could be supplied to shareholders, Protection One also needed a ‘light client-based’ solution to provide access via the company’s extranet.

Though still developing, the project has already brought real benefits: *“Thanks to the colour codes and other alerts provided, our users can easily keep track of outstanding debts,”* explains Perhirin. *“We are also better at credit control, with indicators clearly highlighting our clients’ outstanding balances. In addition, the local office managers now have access to tools for monitoring their sales figures. More generally, the whole way that the business is managed has clearly been improved.”*

Perhirin is not one to rest on his laurels: *“We are still in the development phase, and so to push our potential for analysis even further, we are seriously considering moving to Cognos 8 Business Intelligence. This will give us features such as options for multi-dimensional analysis, plus a variety of functions that we can use for enhancing the quality of our dashboards and becoming even more responsive to our customers’ needs.”*

The technical environment

- **Data repository:** IBM xSeries 346 Xeon 3.6 Ghz Dual Processor server (Bus 800 Mhz), 10 Gb RAM, running on Windows 2003 ENTERPRISE FR SP1 and SQL Server 2000 ENTERPRISE FR SP4. 5 data marts, 10 Gb data.
- **Cognos ReportNet:** IBM Pentium III four-way processor, 700 Mhz, 4 Gb RAM.

The requirements

- **To standardise business processes,** by consolidating data into a central repository, ending the confusion caused by multiple databases.

- **To provide thin client access** so as to facilitate use of the system via the intranet or extranet by our local offices and by our shareholders.
- **To extend reporting across the business**, starting with administration and finance and moving gradually to include every division, with the aim of optimising overall management of the company.

The keys to success

- **Support for the project from the executive management team right from the start**
- **A willingness to utilise the company's existing resources** by making information available, via a portal, to everyone
- **The high technical quality of the software**
- **The wish to meet every user's needs while keeping an eye on the big picture**

The benefits

- **Improved data quality and reliability:** having thoroughly mapped out and cleansed its data, Protection One now has access to reliable and consistent information.

- **Increased cash reserves:** financial reports have helped the company to manage its debts better, thanks to a system of alerts and colour codes enabling rapid detection of any financial bottlenecks.
- **A better overview of every activity:** in the long term, Protection One intends to use a solution covering every single business area, enabling it to manage better all of its activities.

ABOUT COGNOS

Cognos is the world leader in business intelligence and enterprise planning software. Our solutions for corporate performance management let organizations drive performance with planning, budgeting and consolidation, monitor it with scorecarding, and understand it with business intelligence reporting and analysis. Cognos is the only vendor to support all of these key management activities in a complete, integrated solution. Founded in 1969, Cognos now serves more than 23,000 customers in over 135 countries.

