



Community Health Network saves time and improves the performance of its IT services using a Microsoft Business Intelligence solution

Overview

The organization: Established over half a century ago, Indianapolis-based Community Health Network is a leading non-profit health care system. With over 10,000 employees, 1,000 physicians, and five hospitals, Community Health Network focuses on improving the health and well-being of Indiana residents. The organization ranks among the top integrated health care networks in the nation.

The challenge: Community Health Network believes members of the community have a right to know about the organization's quality of care—and how it compares to national performance goals. However, translating this same vigorous reporting approach to its IT department has been difficult, and the Cognos solution it adopted was not only difficult to use, but failed to provide the detailed benchmarking IT staff needed.

The solution: Turning to Microsoft and employing the implementation expertise of Project Leadership Associates, Community Health Network finally got the Business Intelligence (BI) solution it needed to drive improvements throughout the IT organization. With an intuitive dashboard at its disposal, the organization's IT department can easily monitor numerous service metrics and improve the organization's performance.



“Thanks to our Microsoft Business Intelligence solution, our IT organization is now better equipped to meet our service level agreements and provide increased support to our business units.”

Rick Cople, Chief Technology Officer, Community Health Network

Community Health Network has been providing quality healthcare to Indiana residents since 1956. The health care system prides itself on offering expert physicians, advanced treatments, and leading-edge technology that can get patients back to their normal lives as quickly as possible. With five hospitals and over 70 other care sites, Community Health Network is ranked among the top 20 integrated health care networks in the United States.

Central to Community Health Network's mission is a dedication to keeping patients and visitors informed of and involved with their health care decisions. The health system also publishes online quality report cards showing how its hospitals compare to national performance goals. Top executives at Community Health Network desired to extend this same information transparency throughout its IT organization and decided to adopt a Microsoft Business Intelligence (BI) solution based on Microsoft® Office PerformancePoint™ Server 2007.

With its Microsoft BI solution, Community Health Network's IT organization can now track, monitor, and analyze its performance against the service level agreements (SLAs) it has with nine different business units within the health care system. IT managers must no longer manually print reports from an unwieldy Cognos system to see whether they are meeting SLAs. They can simply access the Microsoft BI dashboard via Microsoft® Office SharePoint® Server to view a wide range of IT service metrics, such as number of support tickets, network uptime, and support calls abandoned. In addition, IT managers can track individual employee performance and identify process changes for improving productivity.

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Rick Copple, chief technology officer,
Community Health Network

Overcoming Cognos

As a shared services organization, Community Health Network’s IT department cares a lot about performance. It strives to continually meet SLAs with the nine business units that comprise the Community Health Network. However, it hasn’t always been easy to track performance against SLAs.

“We had no way of knowing how we were doing on our service levels,” explains Rick Copple, chief technology officer at Community Health Network. “We’ve been working on solving this problem for close to four years.”

What Community Health Network’s IT organization did know was that it needed an IT scorecard to benchmark its services. After trying a variety of solutions, Community Health Network landed on Cognos because its outsourced help desk used the system. But frustration soon followed. “It was very complicated, not intuitive, and extremely slow,” says Copple. “The Cognos system wasn’t well designed from a data management standpoint—and data wasn’t properly aligned. If there was a change in organizational hierarchies, for example, it wasn’t changed throughout the entire Cognos environment. In the end, we struggled with inaccurate data, very poor system performance, and inefficient analytical power.”

With the Cognos system, Community Health Network’s IT organization wasted a lot of time trying to work around these issues, which put additional strain on the IT staff. “We had to manually print reports out of Cognos and take them to monthly meetings with our customers so they’d know how we were doing with our SLAs,” says Copple.

Community Health Network’s goal was to implement a system that would not only help the IT organization track its own performance and meet SLAs, but give business units direct

access to service metrics. “For example, we want our home care division to see how many calls they made to the help desk and what our response time was on those services,” explains Copple. “And as an IT organization, we need to see if any of those calls point to a larger issue—like whether we should do training on a particular technology or whether a piece of new hardware isn’t working properly. We want to be proactive rather than reactive.”

Trusting Microsoft

When it became clear that Cognos couldn’t deliver what Community Health Network needed, it was natural for the organization to turn to Microsoft. “We have almost every Microsoft product you can imagine,” says Copple. “We are a large Microsoft shop.”

Not only did the Microsoft BI solution offer the features and ease of use Community Health Network wanted, it easily integrated with the IT organization’s existing Microsoft tools. “What really struck us was its architecture and user interface,” explains Copple. “We could tie it to SharePoint and Office products—it just made sense.”

The ability to use the solution with Excel was also a huge selling point for Community Health Network. “It’s nice that we can pull our data into Excel and manipulate it there, if needed,” continues Copple. “Most of our IT folks and even our customers understand Excel, so the Microsoft BI solution was a natural transition for us.”

Microsoft BI Helps Boost Performance

Project Leadership Associates (PLA), a Gold Certified partner and full service business and IT consulting firm with deep Microsoft BI expertise, built Community Health Network’s BI solution. Based on Microsoft PerformancePoint Server 2007, the solution leverages Microsoft SQL Server 2005

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RDBMS, Analysis Services, Reporting Services, and Integration Services. It also integrates with Community Health Network’s Microsoft Office applications, and utilizes Microsoft Office SharePoint Server to deliver PerformancePoint dashboards and scorecards to users.

Transitioning from Cognos to Microsoft BI was straightforward. Leaning on its Microsoft expertise, PLA worked with the user community to clearly define the requirements for the solution, completing the proof of concept in just 10 days and finishing the full implementation in just eight weeks. By working closely with the user community, PLA was able to accurately design intuitive dashboards and scorecards with the desired information for effective performance monitoring. Ramp up time for Community Health Network’s employees was negligible, thanks to the solution’s familiar, easy-to-use interface.

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Now Community Health Network’s IT organization can measure its performance in several areas: asset uptime, ticket assignment and resolution, customer satisfaction, and support call activity. While IT personnel and the business units they serve access the same data and KPIs, the information can be filtered to meet the needs of individual users.

“Our customers can review, at any time, our performance against their SLAs,” says Copple. “They no longer need to wait for our monthly meetings.”

Users can access the scorecards and dashboards through SharePoint, and bring data into Excel for further analysis. Because data is pulled into the Microsoft BI solution every evening, it’s easy to stay on top of actual versus target IT performance.

Exercising Analytic Power

What Copple’s team likes the most is the analytic power of its new Microsoft BI solution. “My staff is drilling down to see how their teams respond to help tickets—who is closing tickets and who isn’t—and whether we’re meeting service levels or not,” says Copple. “We can evaluate everything from our overall organizational results all the way down to the nitty-gritty of employee performance.”

“We can look at data along so many dimensions: date, time, customer satisfaction, employee, support ticket, and assets, for example,” says Copple. “We can slice and dice data so many different ways that we really understand how we are doing.”

Accessing Data

The combined solution of Microsoft BI technology and the effectively designed data architecture from PLA has also solved another problem: the time-consuming manual work required when site directors, who act as IT representatives at business units, needed data. Previously, when site directors needed to give customers information on IT issues, they had to call the IT desktop manager to retrieve it. The IT desktop manager ran a report in Cognos and then manipulated it the way the site director requested—a seven day process.

With the Microsoft BI solution, site directors can access the data through SharePoint themselves, pull it into Excel in the format they want, and give it to their customers. “It’s

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To access information using the World Wide Web, go to: www.microsoft.com

For more information about Project Leadership Associates, visit the Web site at: www.projectleadership.net

a matter of hours, instead of a week," says Copple.

Enjoying Results

Soon after Community Health Network implemented its Microsoft BI solution, it started realizing results. The IT management team immediately had access to new metrics to help monitor and improve performance.

"We have a handle on what our staff is doing and how much time they spend completing specific tasks," says Copple. "We now have metrics on support calls—such as length of the support call and call abandonment rate—and can track response time against our SLAs. At any time, we can get a quick snapshot of how we are doing and where we need to make adjustments."

The solution has also helped Community Health Network's IT organization identify how it needs to change processes to be more efficient. "The Microsoft BI solution shed light on some problems with our outsourced help desk," explains Copple. "It helped us see that our after-hours support had some problems. Teams weren't closing tickets in a timely fashion, even though they completed the work. Thanks to the insights from Microsoft BI, we know how we need to change behavior."

Community Health Network's IT leadership can also use its Microsoft BI solution to sell its services back to business units. "We can

sit down with each business unit and show them the value of our service offerings," says Copple. "We have the accurate and detailed information we need to sell and defend our services."

In the future, the IT organization hopes to augment IT service metrics with financial metrics. "We want to show our customers their entire portfolio of assets and related costs," says Copple. "If they can watch in real time whether their IT costs are going up or down, they can really understand the benefits of our services from every angle."

"We are very pleased with the Microsoft BI solution," concludes Copple. "It's helping us save time, improve our processes, and deploy our staff more efficiently. Thanks to Microsoft and Project Leadership Associates, we're boosting productivity and are better equipped to meet our SLAs."

Microsoft Business Intelligence

Microsoft provides an end-to-end, enterprise-grade, and cost-effective BI solution utilizing the intuitive Microsoft Office 2007 suite and robust BI components of SQL Server 2005 to enable decision makers throughout the organization to drive increased performance.

For more information about the Microsoft Business Intelligence solution, go to: www.microsoft.com/bi

Microsoft Office PerformancePoint

Software and Services

■ Products

- Microsoft Office PerformancePoint Server 2007
- Microsoft SQL Server 2005 Enterprise
 - Integration Services 2005
 - Analysis Services 2005
 - Reporting Services 2005
- Microsoft Office Excel 2007
- Microsoft Office SharePoint Server 2007

Server 2007

Office PerformancePoint Server 2007 provides all of the functionality that is needed for performance management including scorecards, dashboards, management reporting, analytics, planning, budgeting, forecasting, and consolidation. The application reaches all employees, across all business functions (finance, operations, marketing, sales, and human resources).

For more information about the Microsoft Office PerformancePoint Server 2007, go to:
www.microsoft.com/performancepoint