



Creating a new 'HR data backbone' for ING

The company

An organisation employing over 100,000 employees across over 40 countries, ING is a global financial institution of Dutch origin, currently offering banking, investments, life insurance and retirement services to meet the needs of a broad customer base.

The challenge

ING faced a challenge common to many global organisations: with subsidiaries and business units running their own separate HR systems, it was especially difficult to generate meaningful and standardised data on core HR issues. The company wanted to have the capability to report on things such as headcount and staff turnover in a consistent way across all business units in every country.

Benefits

- Regular feeding of data into a central data warehouse, enabling consistent reporting in each country and business unit.
- Better information for HR and line managers on headcount and turnover.
- A fully hosted architecture that lowers the cost of ownership and maintenance from an IT perspective.

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Addressing the need for answers to crucial HR questions

Geert Beck, the project team leader at ING, explains the background to the project: "The core challenge was to address the issues that arose from operating separate HR systems in each country. We had tools and processes in place for reporting on factors such as headcount and turnover, but these involved the manual comparison of separate databases. Having such complicated processes in place was unacceptable.

"A second issue was the fact that centrally we have a number of global third party systems for tasks such as learning management, recruitment and performance management. These all require core HR information from each of the local systems, and this was also difficult to organise. Addressing both of these issues was the aim of the work we have done with NGA.

"In addition, ING's workforce planning objectives could only be met if the business had a better view of the talent that the company has throughout the world. It was felt that data in this area was also necessary if the company was to create opportunities for employees appropriate for a global business."

Geert mentions another reason why excellent data on these factors was vital to ING: "Like many businesses in the financial sector in particular, decision making on restructuring and divestment is dependent on up-to-date information and HR has a duty to provide this to senior management."

Using BusinessObjects at the heart of the solution

NGA's consultants have extensive experience of SAP's BusinessObjects solution and based the project around it. The process that was created for ING uses BusinessObjects Data Services as the ETL (extract, transform and load) tool and BusinessObjects Enterprise as the reporting and analytics platform.

The process works by regularly feeding CSV files from each of the separate business units into a central data warehouse. These files include personal information such as an employee's name, date of birth, location and so on, and current organisational hierarchy data. They are fed through on a daily or monthly basis, depending on the nature of the data.

When the files are loaded data is validated based on a series of validation rules. A validation report is produced and any issues are communicated back to the data provider to correct and reload. Data is then loaded into a reporting database that is designed for query performance.

The solution also feeds data to third party applications for recruitment, training and performance management. This ensures that these are all maintained with accurate employee data.

The new reporting capability

Of course, bringing data together centrally is not in itself the objective of a project like this: the real benefit is the analysis that this makes possible. Regional and country HR managers can now run standard and bespoke reports about their own business units, as well as pre-defined global reports that enable them to compare their own data against global aggregate data.

Geert says: "The new data capability and reporting tools give ING a better view of which regions, countries or departments have higher employee turnover levels than others. This in turn enables central and local discussion and action to improve performance on relevant KPIs such as regretted loss and voluntary and involuntary turnover. Within HR and line management the data is also used whenever restructuring is discussed."

A successful project delivered on time

Geert acknowledges the vital role that NGA played in ensuring the success of the project: "We are very happy with the expertise that NGA delivered and the level of cooperation across the project team. We worked closely with NGA's business intelligence consultants, who did all of the technical and development work on the project.

"Another thing that has helped the project proceed more quickly than might otherwise have been the case was the fact that NGA host the new solution. This, combined with the role of the consultants, has been invaluable in ensuring the project was a success.

"It's a constantly changing environment at ING and the solution has been able to change accordingly, including to keep pace with internal restructuring."

For an initial discussion about your requirements call us on 0800 035 0545.
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