



Prince Sports Discovers Advantages of Desktop Data Analysis Using Diver

Prince Sports, Inc. maintains raw data on an iSeries, runs Dimensional Insight on Windows NT, and users access information from Windows clients using Diver. They use Dimensional Insight architecture to look at corporate data (open orders, SKU level inventory, shipment dollars, margins, net billings, Sales Rep commissions, warehouse transactions, warehouse performance, etc.) for five brands: Prince, Rollerblade, Nordica, Ektelon, and Killer Loop.

Lon Burke, Applications Manager, maintains about 20 DI data Models to support 100 users. The Models contain two years worth of product information and are updated nightly. Models, accessible by the Diver client, categorize information by where the sale was made, the brand, and the salesperson responsible for the account. Products are broken down by units, sell price, list price, and cost. Users may create columns for their own calculations. Models also contain customer address information and products by the brand (such as Prince), the category of the product (footwear, strings, machines, racquets), and the model and size, down to the SKU level. "They can see that whole structure. They can go down to the order number for a customer. Salespeople connect to the network and there's a download process that sends data which only pertains to them," says Burke. "Diver helps the end user because they don't have to wait for us, and we don't have to be bombarded with ad-hoc report requests."

"'Diving into the data' is something new for our users, but that's been alleviated by the fact that Diver is so easy to use. People go in who haven't used it before and pull up the exact data they want. I tell them to believe in the data they are seeing in Diver, and most people are comfortable with that," says Burke. "One of my biggest obstacles was reproducing reports just as they looked when they were printed from the iSeries," explains Burke, "but even that issue can be addressed through the use of the data extracts used to build Diver models."

Cosmo Digneo, Manager of Financial Analysis and Planning, says, "Actually, it's much easier now, it's a lot less paper than before. There's more information now than we used to receive on paper."

A common use for Diver with the Sales and Marketing arena is to access shipment and open order information. It's important for the sales team to be able to see orders day to day, in real time, and have the ability to look at products at the SKU level. "Sales Representatives in the field analyze account activity to determine what they have to do next for a given account or sales program," explains Toula Zotos, Director of Sales Administration. "They use Diver to find what should be selling where. Twice a year they have booking programs for the next season's product. For Prince, in particular, a very small percentage is from advance booking, and a larger portion is from normal fill-in business, which goes directly into Customer Service. Diver allows the Sales Reps to see what's been happening with a given account either under an entire brand or a particular product category within that brand."

Diver is also used within Prince Sports as a financial application. Finance is usually interested in shipment dollars and cost. In the past, Prince Sports ran a Net Billings paper report once a month, which would list products that were shipped and returned. The report would be 500 pages long. "Now, with Diver we can get to the same information and it's much smaller, easier, and quicker to get to than printing out reports," explains Cosmo Digneo. "The Net Billings report – the paper version – would only run at the month's end. If we needed to look at something during the month, it would be a special request to Lon. Now I dive on financial information, but I also have access to information that our sales side sees, such as open orders, and our inventory position. If something looks a little off compared to last year or last month, such as actual shipments versus a projection or budget, I will dive further into the product group level to see if it's a specific model of product that is driving the difference. With Diver, we do projections throughout the year," says Digneo.

When Cosmo is looking at a Diver Net Billings report, he can see on his screen what was shipped for the current year. From there, he has the opportunity to investigate product lines and orders over time. "We can also look at it from the brand level for Prince, Rollerblade, Nordica, Ektelon, and Killer Loop. If overall Prince is behind projection or looks behind or ahead from last year, that's when I'll dive further down to racquets and down to model levels. Diver gives us a lot more access to information that would have taken at least a day to get to before via paper reports off the iSeries."

In addition to Finance, and Sales & Marketing, Diver is also used by the Inventory Requirements Planning department, Customer Service, and the Credit department. IRP has the ability to view information about purchase orders and can display actual inventory levels. Customer Service uses Diver to track shipping performance. The Credit Department uses Diver to view customer A/R aging figures. Each department has their own specific needs, and Diver is able to provide a solution.

Prince Sports has realized a definite return on investment. Most significantly, Prince Sports feels that they are saving time and money by implementing Diver. "Time is being saved. Before we had to manually input pieces of data to a spreadsheet. Now, the data is available on Diver, and there is no need to create a spreadsheet. If time is money, we're saving money. On that same note, the IT department is saving programming costs with regard to ad hoc reporting; they don't have to run a report every time we have a thought," explains Zotos. Burke adds, "I know the Rep mailings that we did with paper, not only the cost of the paper, but also the cost of postage, it was an incredible amount of money. One year of fedexing paper and mailings is probably over the price of the original product. We definitely won."

In the future, Burke is planning on reporting, using Diver, sales and inventory data based on the rules of BSS's parent company in Italy. He will incorporate their management procedures when determining those sales and inventory figures. Burke plans to integrate Dimensional Insight's Mapping feature, which will give users the ability to display geographic data, such as City, State, Zip, or County, in the form of a map. When users click on the actual items of interest on the map, Diver will display more detailed information. BSS will also be upgrading to DiveLine, a Dimensional Insight product that provides better security and administration capabilities as well as unified access for all types of users.

About Dimensional Insight

Established in 1989, Dimensional Insight (DI) is a privately held company specializing in the development and marketing of multidimensional data visualization, analysis, and reporting software. Our products enable decision makers across all levels and functional areas of an organization to access and analyze data quickly and intuitively. People worldwide use our technology to identify new opportunities, improve their business operations, and increase their profits.

Dimensional Insight is privately held and consistently profitable, with no debt or venture capital. As a result, DI can focus 100% on satisfying customers - unlike many publicly-quoted software vendors that are distracted by stockholders' regular quarterly demand for consistently higher sales and higher earnings.

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