

## Activant Solutions

Activant Solutions Inc. is a leading technology provider of business management solutions serving small and medium-sized businesses in three primary vertical markets: hardware and lumber, wholesale distribution, and the automotive parts aftermarket. Activant provides more than 30,000 customers with industry specific software, professional services, content, supply chain connectivity, and analytics. Activant has operations across the United States, Canada, Ireland, and the United Kingdom.

### ► PROBLEM

Activant, an Oracle E-Business Suite customer, had been using Oracle Discoverer for business intelligence reporting, but their IT department found this solution was not meeting the company's overall needs. Discoverer was too complex for Activant's 100-plus users who required a simple user-friendly reporting solution yet also wanted the wide variety of content for transfer and manipulation into an Excel spreadsheet normally found in more robust solutions. These business users were overwhelming the three-person IT team dedicated to operational reporting with requests for new types of information, changes to existing reports, etc.

Craig Davenport, Senior Director of Information Technology at Activant, who was in charge of the effort to find a new reporting solution, began looking at business intelligence tools like Oracle Business Intelligence Enterprise Edition (OBI EE), Cognos BI, and BusinessObjects. These major industry players offered lots of exciting features, but also lots of complexity. Davenport also considered building a data warehouse, but realized this option would take years to complete and require large IT teams and financial resources.

"We needed to get our reporting situation handled quickly and we needed a solution with a large variety of content," said Davenport. "We started looking around for tools that would be able to meet our needs and kept thinking how can we collapse a yearlong project into two months, plus give users an operational reporting tool that's robust, but easy enough to use so that our business users can self serve?"

### ► SOLUTION

Davenport's team chose Noetix because of the breadth and depth of business views available in addition to nearly 800 out-of-the-box reports that

"The Noetix solution is a huge benefit to the company because people are now getting operational reporting when they didn't have it before."

**Craig Davenport**

SR. DIRECTOR OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY  
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users are able to easily modify in order to access a wide variety of corporate information.

After the Noetix implementation, Activant was up and running with the ability for users to create their own reports in just over four weeks time. As part of phase one of the implementation, Activant wisely initiated a comprehensive training program to ensure that users were comfortable enough with the software to use it on a regular basis instead of continuing to approach the IT team with reporting requests.

The IT team, meanwhile, began to work through the 400-report backlog that had existed in Discoverer, and to move those reports over to Noetix. The team estimates it was able to use nearly 70 percent of Noetix's out-of-the-box reporting content for their specific needs with the remainder requiring some additional customization.

## ▶ RESULT

Today, just a few months after the Noetix implementation, more than 35 percent of Activant's users are creating their own reports and the rest are well on their way. Davenport is thrilled to finally have the ability to give users at least a starting point (in the pre-built Noetix reports) so they do not have to attempt to create a report from scratch.

"All of the Noetix views and the pre-built reports really give people a great foundation," said Davenport. "If the report doesn't meet their needs exactly, it at least provides them the tools to add a couple of fields and then they're in business. And the turnaround time is so much quicker."

The operational reporting unit of the IT team is busier than ever before. The improved reporting structure, training, and tools have all increased the demand for more and better information to a wide variety of business users throughout the corporation.



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