

## Peer-to-Peer

### BI: A decision support tool

*MAIA Intelligence's BI tool has enabled Essel Propack to analyze any type of data and derive meaningful information, resulting in faster, accurate and profitable decisions, writes **Vinita Gupta***

Business intelligence (BI) is a broad category of applications and technologies for gathering, providing access to, and analyzing data for the purpose of helping enterprise users make better business decisions. Essel Propack is in the process of implementing MAIA Intelligence's 1Key BI tool.



### Single source of data



CIOs of most organizations today are struggling to find solutions for mass reporting usage and deployment. Zoeb Adenwala, CIO, Essel Propack, pointed out that the biggest challenge has been to compile clean data, "Many companies still have multiple figures for any key indicator like sales. My vision is to have a single source of truth. That is, only one final figure for any key indicator like sales, which the management trusts. All employees should only use one figure in their communications. Besides this, the other problem is to compile data residing in heterogeneous systems in various forms. Normalizing this data is a challenge. In my earlier company Pidilite, I had also taken the initiative to implement 1Key where now 1,200 users use it across all levels of the hierarchy."

The first thing that he had noticed during his interactions with the senior management at Essel Propack was that they did not have access to key indicators. Data was lying scattered in various forms and the reports were available on a monthly basis, which according to Adenwala, was too late to take corrective or proactive action. This prompted him to go in for 1Key BI.

MAIA's 1Key BI tool connects and talks to all types of software, irrespective of the backend. It's a client-server based reporting tool which connects to all databases to generate MIS reports. The product has been developed using Microsoft's VB.NET technology.

It can generate formatted reports which can be further exported to Excel, HTML, XML etc. 1Key Query Builder design is based on a Service Oriented Architecture (SOA) with standard SOA characteristics like Reuse Query, Independent Query, Coupling, etc.

#### About Essel Propack

Essel Propack manufactures laminated and plastic packaging tubes. It has 33% of the worldwide market for this product category. The company has six plants in India and 17 abroad. Over 65% of its revenue is generated overseas so it can rightly be called an Indian multinational. Besides this, Essel Propack also deals with packaging and medical device. The company's goal is to double its revenues by 2010.

## The process and its benefits

"Forward visibility and data analysis gives the right tool to middle and senior managers. It enables them to proactively look at business directions and take corrective actions before a problem hits."



- Zoeb Adenwala  
CIO,  
Essel Propack

The BI tool at Essel Propack is targeted at the sales, finance and production functions as the company believed that clear visibility in these areas can provide the biggest bang for its buck vis-a-vis decision improvement leading to better business performance.

Adenwala said, "Forward visibility and data analysis gives the right tool to middle and senior managers. It enables them to proactively look at business directions and take corrective action before a problem hits. Also, a lot of time can be saved in analysis, when compared to the previous method of using Excel. Lastly, the management can see data on a daily basis instead of monthly. Decisions can consequently be taken at the right time and not delayed to the point where they become irrelevant."

The implementation was started in mid-October, after a pilot lasting just 15 days, where sample data from three business areas were selected and benefits demonstrated to key users. The roll out is to happen full scale over the next two-three months. Two persons from IT and one key user each from the relevant departments will be involved in the process.

Adenwala mentioned that the top management fully supported the BI implementation. He added, "The CEO himself participated in the pilot. He was impressed by the speed with which 1Key BI was able to help him do analysis."

Currently Essel Propack is using Microsoft Dynamic (Navision) ERP with some add on products such as Adexa for production planning, MES for production monitoring and WMS for warehouse management. The BI tool implemented will be accessing data from the ERP system.

Implementation in a nutshell	
Company	Essel Propack
Revenue in 2006	Rs 1,000 crore
Solution	MAIA Intelligence's 1Key BI tool
Aim of implementation	To have visibility of the key indicators.
Year/time of implementation	The implementation started in mid October 2007.
Cost of implementation	About Rs 10 lakh
Functional areas	The tool is targeted at sales, finance and production as clear visibility in these areas can provide decision improvement leading to better business performance.
Benefits	The data can be analyzed on a daily basis that is helping in taking the decisions at the right time without any delays.

## Future plans

To begin with, access to the BI tool will be restricted to senior managers and business analysts, but in six months the company is planning to deploy it organization-wide.

Essel Propack would want to have business users of BI not only in India but across the world. MAIA is planning to launch a new Web version with the 1Key BI tool. Adenwala revealed that the current version is a client version which cannot work on the WAN, but the Web version can. With the help of the latter, reports can be accessed through the Web.