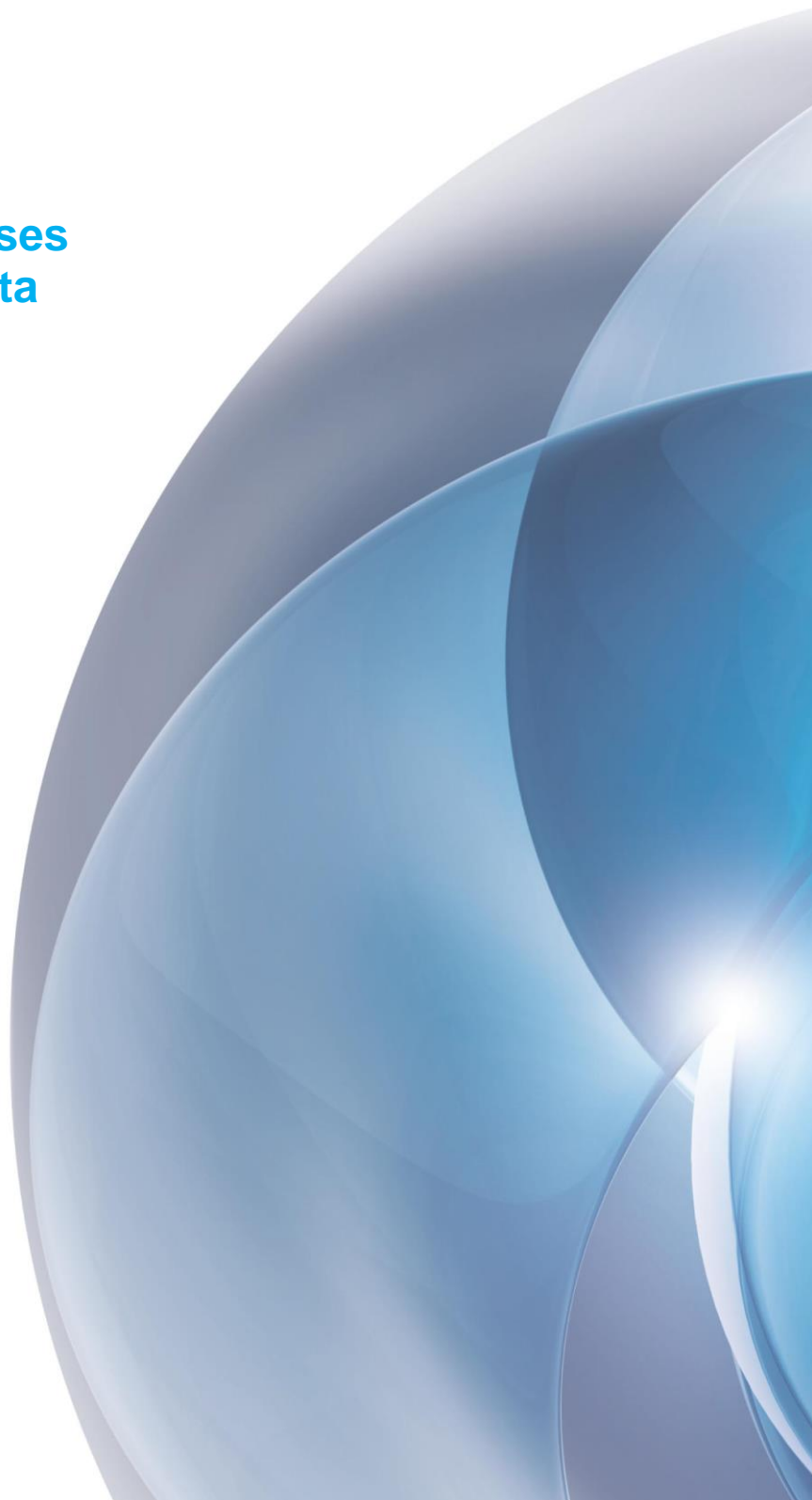


CASE STUDY

**North American Gas Increases
Efficiency in Production Data
Collection and Reporting**

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“The new Production Tracker application enabled the team to work more efficiently with a better insight into the data. We are also able to implement changes and to maintain the system by ourselves lowering on-going upgrade and maintenance costs. The project was delivered on-time, the first time and I would recommend the team most highly.”

MI Analyst, NAG

Our client's North American Gas division, one of the largest producers of natural gas, needed to overhaul its Production Tracker application and provide its users with a more efficient data collection method and better reporting in a tool that the users would find easy to use. It was also very important for the new application to be flexible and built on a platform that would allow them to better respond to the demands of tomorrow's business requirements in a timely manner.

The client decided to invest in a Microsoft® Business Intelligence technology based solution. Altius Consulting, a Microsoft Gold Certified Partner firm, worked closely with the key stakeholders to replace the existing custom and inflexible application with a Microsoft SQL Server 2005 based Altius Planning Solution (APS) solution.

APS, with Microsoft SQL Server, provides the necessary relational and On-line Analytical Processing (OLAP) components for a fully-integrated Business Intelligence (BI) solution.

Client Profile

Country: United States

Industry: Oil and Gas

Overview: Our Clients North American operations provide most of their U.S. natural gas volume. Their natural gas resource base in the lower 48 and Canada has grown by more than 30% in the last three years through a focus on renewal. They currently operate around 35 drilling rigs and 60 service units.

Business Situation: North American Gas required an improved toolset to provide its management with production information that is critical in managing performance. The toolset requires the ability to perform enhanced reporting, flexibility for future changes in business requirements and user adaptability.

Solution: Altius Consulting — NAG's consulting partner for this important project—recommended the Microsoft® SQL Server™ 2005 Business Intelligence platform along with their Altius Planning Solution (APS) toolkit.

Benefits :

- Enhanced control of data collection
- Improved reporting interfaces
- Increased efficiency in data collection and report preparation.
- Standardization of tools.
- Provision of open, self-service applications to support the business.

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What we say

“Using Microsoft applications to create a modular system has enabled us to share development throughout the segment, giving huge cost savings and a rapid implementation cycle.”

Principal Consultant, Altius

Situation

The incumbent system used by the client for production management information was custom, inflexible and provided inadequate and limited reporting capabilities. The majority of the system was hard coded which allowed very little scope for extensibility or integration with other business applications.

Due to the nature of the underlying architecture of this system, change requests were expensive, both in terms of the turnaround time and the costs involved in third-party developer and consultation fees. This was a particular pain-point for the business and they were keen to avoid a repeat situation; whatever was delivered must be designed to easily be extendable to meet new requirements with minimum effort.

The reports that were generated by the previous system were crude, static and involved manual processes. The system also lacked the functionality to perform complex ad hoc queries.

The client needed a flexible solution that would conform to recognized software and business standards, could be managed by end users and would have the ability to integrate with existing systems based on the APS platform. This underlying platform would be Microsoft-centric, leveraging the proven advantages of the SQL Server 2005 Business Intelligence (BI) stack applications.

Solution

An Excel based data collection template was used to capture the various numeric and textual values required to manage production performance effectively and coherently. The template was designed by the business, ensuring the layout was exactly what they required.

This single, centralized template was then integrated into the solution architecture enabling users to download it from a central website. The template could then easily be populated with data and formula calculations in the familiar environment of Excel. The data and the formula calculations were then safely submitted into the SQL Server data store via an Altius developed Excel add in that hid all complexities from the end users. Using this approach, Excel is used as a window on the data rather than as a database.

Once the data has been saved, the Excel workbook has effectively become ‘throwaway’ as all the data and formulas can be re-downloaded again at anytime from the website. Almost immediately, all submitted data was available for further analysis either via pre-defined web based reports or adhoc query tools. A suite of pre-defined or ‘canned’ reports were also developed using SQL Server Reporting Services to provide live access to key information in both tabular and graphical form.

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What we say

“By working with the Production Tracker super-users to design the data collection template, we guaranteed that not only would the appropriate and relevant data be collected but also that it was in a format that would be both recognized and approved by all the end users.”

Consultant, [Altius](#)

Benefits

Enhanced Control over data Collection

The data collection template was designed by the Production Tracker super users, which guaranteed the appropriate and relevant data would be collected in a format that was both recognized and approved by end users. A single, centralized template ensured that data was collected according to the client's standards and any changes are done to one central template instead of applying changes to multiple spreadsheets and circulating the changes via email.

Standardization of Tools

The use of the APS platform, combining recognized and standards-compliant enterprise software such as the Microsoft SQL Server BI stack, .NET and Office suite, ensured that extensibility and support could continue for years to come with many changes managed by end users. Integration with other applications leveraging similar technologies could occur with minimal additional cost and effort.

Provision of Open, Self-Service Applications to Support the Business

The central website provided a one-stop shop for production performance management information. It provided users from both the office and field locations the information they need for their management conversations and presentations. The Excel template provided two key advantages; firstly, it provided a familiar environment to users who require minimal training to input data effectively; secondly, only one version of the template would be available at any one time,

vastly reducing time and effort in conforming spreadsheets from distributed users.

Increased Efficiency in Data Collection and Report Preparation

The use of SQL Server Reporting Services integrated into the web application provided a dashboard-oriented user interface and a single entry point for both data collection and reporting. The time saved by not having to gather and format data into a usable format could be spent on actually analyzing the data.

Improved Reporting Interfaces

SQL Server Reporting Services provided the platform to produce parameter-driven tables and charts. Rather than producing an individual report for each new reporting requirement, a standard report template could be developed and data parameters passed to it. This made development and maintenance of reports quick and easy. Even after limited training, super users were able to build and modify reports without having to embark upon lengthy and costly change requests. In addition, adhoc queries can be performed more efficiently by accessing the data using the pivot table function in Excel or using the XLCubed add-in. This made it easier to present data in different views through the drill-through and slicing and dicing of data.

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For further information

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If understanding your business better is a high priority, or you would just like to discuss what Business Intelligence and Performance Management options may work for your business, please contact us today.

About Altius

Altius helps companies better understand the data that drives their organizations. We are practitioners who have personally managed successful Business Intelligence initiatives. From this, we have developed a suite of products that helps you save time, reduce errors and quickly execute projects. At the end of the day, we help you make intelligent business decisions from your data.

Altius has the experience of over 500 project implementations, spanning companies in oil, gas, energy and utilities. Altius is head-quartered in Houston, Texas with a second office location in Anchorage, Alaska.

