

Video Products Distributors Leverages Panorama Necto to Shorten Decision Window



Video Products Distributors (VPD) is a Folsom, California-based company founded in 1980. The company currently operates various distribution warehouses throughout the country. It supplies DVDs, Blu-ray, video games, gaming systems, and related products and accessories to all industry channels and holds more than \$20 million worth of inventory. Key customers include wholesalers such as Amazon.com, Newegg.com, Overstock.com and PlayTrade.

Business Challenge

VPD offers its customer the latest new releases and catalog titles direct from the manufacturer through wholesale clients. It holds an inventory of millions of dollars' worth of DVDs, thousands of Blu-Ray™ SKUs, and all major video games, consoles and accessories, and manages a 500Gb data warehouse that holds all of the related information.

Prior to implementing Panorama, the company required a considerable amount of time to develop one report. Much of the reporting came out the company's Enterprise Resource Planning solution, including several custom reports which required several days to build and several hours to process. This manual process did not provide staff with timely reporting and also required the time of multiple IT personnel who had to ensure data integrity.

VPD desired a solution that would be able to pull crucial reports on demand so staff members could make decisions with the most current data. As the pace of business grows exponentially, the company faces increasing demands to better manage inventory and sales goals in order to meet the

requirements of wholesale clients. It needed an analytics platform that would meet the number crunching requirements of its finance department as well as sales and inventory management staff who needed more insightful reporting.

The previous BI solution did not feature any social collaboration tools that are becoming commonplace in user's personal lives and also are integrating deeper into the business realm. VPD wanted meetings to be more efficient and to allow all personnel to have access to key data which would influence decision making for the good of the business as a whole. They wished for a simpler platform that makes it easy to share reports and perform contextual searches to find the right information more quickly.

Solution

VPD reviewed several competitive products during a lengthy screening and evaluation process, and narrowed their final top choices to Panorama or Tableau. They selected Panorama's Necto, an innovative BI 3.0 platform that combines social learning with the ability to produce relevant insights.

VPD tested Necto's rich user interface and determined it would fit the company's needs for a system that would see adoption across multiple departments within the organization. In 2011, VPD switched from SQL Server 2000 to SQL Server 2008, and purchased Necto during this time in order to stay current with the most advanced technology innovation. Necto is tightly integrated with SQL Server and several other Microsoft products, including the recently released SQL Server 2012.

Necto is socially-based, and encourages team members at VPD to work on projects together using unified data regarding distribution analytics, sales goals, and inventory numbers. Using the drag-and-drop interface, team members can simply pull another colleague onto a project, instantly sharing their data in real time. Users can also follow one another similarly to how they can on consumer-facing social networks.

The platform effectively shortens the “decision window” which is the gap of time between issue recognition and resolution. By providing insightful and relevant data immediately to users, this decision window can be measurably improved after Necto implementation.

A core component of Necto is its automated intelligent suggestions and exceptions alerts which allow individuals to find the root cause of problems. It takes the guesswork out of traditional analytics by plainly illustrating exceptions so small problems can be tackled before they cripple the entire organization.

Results

VPD’s data warehouse that contained a massive amount of shipping and inventory data was seamlessly integrated with Necto, and the system is able to accommodate several data sources and turn them into unified workable data. Usage of Necto is producing substantial early results for VPD’s operations. Reporting through Necto takes seconds instead of days or hours. It features One Click Insights which are able to spot data exceptions in real time, so staff members can operate proactively to find and correct small problems before they potentially cripple the business.

A key feature of Necto is its ability to be accessible and customizable for users of various technical abilities. This feature allows it to encourage not only adoption throughout a company but also frequent usage as teams begin to rely on Necto’s analytics to influence all of their key business decisions.

For VPD, they have multiple levels of users that need to analyze data in different manners. The finance department staff members are more technical and like to use advanced features such as slicing and various formulas in order to review overall profit and loss, accounts receivable information, and trends in daily and monthly metrics.

Typical business users have a few key dashboards that they are working with to leverage Microsoft’s reporting services and discover cause and affect insights to better understand the business. They require less technical features than the finance users, and are utilizing workboards that present data as trends and the interconnectedness between two or more seemingly separate metrics. These staff members are analyzing sales data, shipping data, inventory, and other measurable to be sure VPD’s processes are as efficient as possible for the ultimate satisfaction of their customers.

The social collaboration features of Necto are encouraging VPD staff to work together through the forming of cross-departmental teams. Instead of emailing different versions of reporting to each other, Necto users can simply pull up the latest real-time analytics and instantly engage in conversations with others. Necto is truly self-service, while still offering advanced features for the most sophisticated users.

“Necto will help our business to continue its history of offering video products on-time to wholesalers throughout the nation,” said Abdul Khan, BI Manager at VPD. “We are seeing widespread adoption of the platform as multiple departments understand the benefits of on-demand analysis that not only presents the data but does so intelligently. We are now ahead of the technology curve, as Necto represents the future of business intelligence, which allows seamless integration and social tools that encourage people to work together for common goals.”

Panorama Software


Panorama Software helps clients grow revenues and reduce costs by giving them the ability to analyze data, identify trends, maximize business opportunities, and improve corporate performance and results. Panorama software offers an intelligent, collaborative and easy-to-use, BI solution that enables enterprises the ability to gain insights more quickly, more efficiently and with greater relevancy. Panorama maintains over 1,600 global customers.

To learn more about Panorama Software, please visit www.panorama.com.

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