



# COGNOS®

CDP New Zealand's Cognos partner



## New Zealand Dairy Board

The NZDB needed a solution that could gather financial data from over 50 disparate sources and countries everyday, so it could provide timely reporting and analysis services to its sales and marketing operating companies around the world. COGNOS had the answer.

Its subsidiaries span the globe, turning over more than US\$4.5 billion a year. The New Zealand Dairy Board needs power tempered with flexibility to turn masses of incoming financial data into business information.

NZDB's business intelligence manager Bruce Peters says by 1998, the Board's old data management system had reached its limits. It was very labour intensive and report generation took weeks.



**"[This] has been quite a significant piece of work and the use of COGNOS tools has been critical."**

Bruce Peters  
General Solutions Manager NZDB

"Looking forward, we knew our systems just wouldn't cut it," Peters says.

The Board reaches its markets from Peru to Japan through 90 Operating Companies, and began looking for a solution that could use the Web to gather data back to a Wellington-based hub for verification and processing.

NZDB CFO Peter Schuyt says the Board had also recognised a gap in its information

strategy.

"We were investing quite significantly in transaction processing ... but when it came to the provision of information onto the desktop of executives, the investment we had made was not delivering," says Schuyt.

"We were going to not only replace it, we were going to make it a darn sight better."

The Board chose business intelligence tools from Cognos from among 16 vendors, to form the backbone of its Enterprise Management System.

Craig Catley national sales manager for CDP, New Zealand's Cognos Partner, comments "that throughout the selection and implementation process NZDB has shown a complete understanding of business intelligence and the value it can deliver within the business. We enjoy working with clients such as the Board, who extract every piece of functionality from our products, resulting in a great project and experience for both partners."

Peter Schuyt says that since the roll out, Operating Companies around the world are starting to return positive comments about Cognos PowerPlay®.

PowerPlay lets managers 'slice and dice' data to create different views according to changing criteria. Users can view general results before progressively 'drilling down' to see the details of which they are comprised. 2D and 3D charts help users visualise data, giving form and shape to patterns and trends.

"There's information available to them around their customers, around their products, which was not there before.

They are able to assess where they make their money far better, far faster. They are able to see it in a way that's clear, and they are able to organise it for themselves," Schuyt says.

"I think we've got a great solution, and



Anlene delivered by bicycle. Guangzhou, China.

great tools within that solution."

"It enables us to understand all parts of our business across a multitude of dimensions to see where we make our money," he says.

NZMP Singapore handles about 170,000 tonnes of milk products worth US\$320 million each year. It is the hub of the NZDB's Southeast Asian operation. NZMP Singapore finance manager Rena Tan says she can use Cognos PowerPlay to create a new report from scratch in as little as 30 minutes, where the company's previous system would have taken at least a week.

"We no longer have to log the job with the IT staff, requesting they design and run a particular report," Tan says.

She is enthusiastic about being able to use the Web to log on and use the system from wherever she happens to be.

"I don't have to be in the office to do work - it saves a lot of time."

NZMP Singapore has found PowerPlay particularly useful in determining who their largest customers are according to product type and application, and comparing actual with budgeted figures - all with a substantial reduction in data



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**Peter Schuyt CFO NZDB**

re-keying.

The NZDB’s clutch of global subsidiaries or Operating Companies has grown up over the past 25 years through a combination of acquisitions, start-ups and joint ventures.

Bruce Peters says this has resulted in an amazing conglomeration of systems and architectures.

“We have everything from companies with turnover in the hundreds of millions who run a significant ERP, down to five-person operations with some spreadsheets and an Access database.”

In the case of NZ Milk Taiwan, the Enterprise Management System takes over from Microsoft Excel-based spreadsheets.

NZ Milk Taiwan managing director Michael Deignan says the reduction of re-keying has made life easier for sales staff, as well as improving data reliability.

“Sales [staff] like being able to get at live data for themselves,” Deignan says.

Mr Peters says managers no longer need rely on a gut feeling, because PowerPlay offers immediate access to objective information.

“Cognos was strong architecturally, as well as being preferred by users,” he says.

Peter Schuyt says the new system has greatly reduced the amount of data re-keying the Operating Companies must perform to prepare for Group level reporting.

“There’s one point of data entry, that is at the point of transaction, and that’s it,” he says.

“So long as it’s defined correctly, it’ll flick into the warehouse correctly, and the data integrity is there. From then on you can do what you want with it.”

This means the preparation of Group level reports is now part of a larger, more flexible business information tool.

“What we could see pretty early on in the piece was that we could create a system, that had a whole lot of benefits to the OCs, and also deliver the Group results,” Peters says.

“Every single OC has said, ‘we are not just going to treat it as a Group reporting tool, we see value in it for ourselves.’”

Mr Peters says many Operating Companies already have the information the Board needs locked up in their ERP systems, but until now, they have not been able to use it effectively.

Mr Peters says Cognos used its DecisionStream® tool to decode the NZDB’s data schema and create a star schema.

“They did that more swiftly than any of the other people we dealt with.

Architecturally, they had an answer for us because they had DecisionStream to decode the schema to the star, they had Transformer taking the star and building the [Power] cubes, and then PowerPlay serving them up.

“That has been quite a significant piece of work and the use of Cognos tools has been critical.”

The Wellington hub can accept data from over 50 Operating Companies in an automatic, ‘lights-out’ fashion, producing localised reporting for each of them. The system performs about 115 checks to validate incoming data and standardise product

codes.

Because managers can create PowerPlay reports via an ordinary Web browser, Operating Companies around the world need only a network connection and a PC to start exploring their sales data.

Mr Peters says a manager can be up to speed and using PowerPlay after a single day’s training.

“With our OCs being distributed around the world, to be able to go and train in a day is so much easier than, say, a three-day



“Mi Vaca” milk sold in a Caracas supermarket, Venezuela.

training event and follow-ups.”

The Board began with a single server and has since scaled up to a pair of HP NT boxes, each powered by four processors.

“We didn’t have to invest in back end architecture from day one, but we are protected because it is so scalable,” Peters says.

Peter Schuyt sums up, saying with the Cognos solution, Operating Companies, “can get far more information around all parts of their business far faster - that’s the bottom line.”



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