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PRODUCT REVIEW

GAME Group Drives Decision- Making with ARC



ARC

INTEGRATED RETAIL BUSINESS
INTELLIGENCE SUITE

www.arc-bi.com

ARC – Integrated Retail Business Intelligence Suite

GAME Group Drives Decision-Making with ARC

REVIEWER: Peter Crowne, UK Finance Director, GAME Group UK.

BACKGROUND: Game Group UK is a specialist retailer of PC and video games, video consoles and related accessories, operating more than 1120 stores, concessions and franchises across UK, Continental Europe and Australia. Game Group generated sales of £ 801.3 MM in FY2007 and employs more than 5,000 people.

PLATFORMS: IT environment: HP Proliant servers, Windows 2003 Server and SQL Server 2005.

PROBLEM SOLVED: Game's rapid expansion strategy, short product lifecycles and rapid new product introduction initiatives requires better and faster insight into our business performance, and a flexible yet comprehensive analytical environment to drive decision-making. The need to react faster to market opportunities was being restricted by our reporting infrastructure. The absence of an enterprise data warehouse limited our ability to get an integrated view of information across various operational systems. Our commercial team had to manually query several tactical databases and spreadsheets to extract management reports. The data warehouse (DW)/business intelligence (BI) infrastructure experienced frequent data loading failures especially during peak periods like Christmas, when Game's data volumes more than triple. Moreover, managing analytical requirements across our eight country-operations is a major challenge.

PRODUCT FUNCTIONALITY: ARC's retail BI capabilities gives our users analytical coverage through an intuitive set of front-end tools and utilities. ARC's retail data model gives us much-needed cross-functional analytic ability while maintaining data consistency and accuracy. Beyond analyzing sales and

margin trends for stores, products and categories, key performance measures like trade-ins, vendor returns and daily on-hand stock allow managers to easily track key measures on an everyday basis, an ability they did not have before. Standard report packs are sent daily and weekly to operating managers and user groups through ARC's report-bursting utility. ARC's optimized data warehouse architecture and high query performance have "Christmas-proofed" our environment against load processing issues during peak business seasons. Game is bringing all of its BI-DW requirements under a single ARC platform that is easy to manage and maintain. The ARC deployment will span all eight country operations, giving Game enterprise-wide visibility and a single version of truth across a multi-country, multicurrency (euro, pound and kroner) business.

STRENGTHS: ARC delivers superior performance in comparison to our old BI platforms. The analytical capability, faster reporting turnaround time and the ability to handle multi-country reporting requirements are key strengths.

WEAKNESSES: ARC should include financial analytics and what-if capability to extend its value proposition; the ARC retail data model is an ideal platform to drive financial implication analysis as well as predictive analyses. It could benefit from more user functionality with regard to favorites alerts and multiperiod views. True multicurrency functionality has yet to be achieved.

SELECTION CRITERIA: We were using an industry-leading generic BI platform that was difficult to customize and did not meet to our performance needs. This forced us to evaluate other products in the market, including ones provided by our existing application vendors. We saw an immediate fit in ARC's retail DW architecture, precon-



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figured retail key performance indicators (KPIs) and rapid deployment proposition that fulfilled our current and future analytics needs. ARC's licensing structure is independent of number of users, an approach that has given us significant savings as we roll out the product across departments and countries.

DELIVERABLES: We use ARC for a wide range of reporting and analysis needs – tracking year-on-year growth and performance against targets for comparative store and merchandise analysis, supplier performance analysis, and best and worst sellers. ARC's utilities – alerting, scheduling, exporting to PDF and Excel, and report bursting – provide an actionable analytic environment to our operating managers.

VENDOR SUPPORT: We adopted an onsite-offshore deployment strategy for implementing ARC. The majority of the implementation tasks were executed offshore, bringing in additional cost savings. We found ARC's deployment team to be highly responsive to our customization needs and proactive in suggesting best practices to optimize the deployment of the DW infrastructure. The rollout itself has been phased, with the UK and Ireland going live first, followed by the Scandinavian countries. The rest of Europe and other territories are scheduled to go live in future phases.

DOCUMENTATION: The documentation has been very helpful for users to get the most out of the system.