

CRYSTAL DECISIONS SOLUTION

Crystal Decisions phones home for telecommunications information management.

Crystal Telecom

"A Crystal Decisions information management solution enables us to deliver fast and personalized telecom usage data to the desk of every Crystal Decisions employee. Empowering the entire company to share responsibility for these expenses is lowering our telecom spending dramatically, truly demonstrating the power of business intelligence."

Jason Witzel
Telecommunications Analyst
Crystal Decisions

Solution Snapshot

Customer Profile: Crystal Decisions is one of the world's leading information management software companies with more than 14 million licenses shipped to customers around the world. The IT Telecom team at Crystal Decisions manages the corporate IT network and telephony structure worldwide.

Industry: Information technology

Crystal Decisions Solution:

Crystal Enterprise, Crystal Reports

Application Environment:

Telecommunications, Finance, Sales, Marketing

Data source: Microsoft SQL Server 2000

Business Challenge

With over 30 offices and over 1750 employees worldwide, all relying on dependable telephone systems and other devices like Palm™ Pilots, Blackberries™, and cell phones, the Crystal Decisions IT Telecom Department is a key business unit with big responsibilities.

Before implementing a Crystal Enterprise™ solution, managing telecom needs and reporting spending was a source of business pain for Jason Witzel, Telecommunications Analyst, at Crystal Decisions. In fact, a multitude of billing systems from vendors, and the lack of automated business processes made information management so complex, that analyzing results to reduce spending would have been too time-consuming. "It was an ongoing exercise in administration just to get basic information to our internal employees," says Witzel. "Rather than being able to move on to more strategic issues like reducing spending, ineffective information management was a continuing and costly drain on time and resources. When it came to providing business intelligence information about more profitable ways to run the telecommunications division, we just couldn't get ahead of the curve."

"Many of our 200 telecommunication vendors either assigned an account number to employees matching our internal cost center, or simply recorded the employee name. This system became quickly out of date as employees moved departments, and telecommunications devices changed owners," says Witzel. "We used an Excel spreadsheet to align our internal accounting and cost center codes with each employee but this meant employees had to be looked up individually, and then added to the cost center. All this data was then entered into our financial system at an aggregate level, so if a department had 30 users, it still only got one line item."

With time-consuming administration, minimal access to useful data, and practically no ability to quickly perform cost analysis, a "one-organization view" of corporate telephony spending was impossible. Choosing a telecommunications information management solution, according to Witzel, "wasn't just a good business decision, it was an absolute must-have for the IT Telecom department".

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Crystal Decisions Solution

Crystal Decisions chose Crystal Enterprise to create an integrated system for the analysis, reporting, and delivery of telecommunications vendor and account information across the company via the web. Besides being the company that makes this product, Crystal Decisions needed a solution that could meet the specific needs and volume demands of their business. "Crystal Enterprise fit the bill, providing us with a reliable, scalable, and customizable infrastructure for delivery of Crystal Reports to IT Telecom, Finance, business unit managers, and every Crystal Decisions employee."

Witzel, and colleague Sam Sun , deployed a centralized account management database, and a customized interface to streamline data input and eliminate multiple Excel spreadsheets for IT Telecom and Finance department staff. End users can now input highly granular data, including individual users, serial numbers, and all related telecommunication devices. With the ability to enter contextual vendor information and set billing parameters for exception reporting, generating fast and in-depth reports is now a reality. "For example, it only takes a couple of minutes to approve a new vendor, instead of up to five days, " says Witzel. "Auditing the monthly accounts is much faster, a single report generated with a few mouse clicks replaces the days of manual work required with the old system."

In addition to providing the architecture for end-user reporting, Crystal Enterprise also extends on-demand information delivery across the enterprise to every employee via an intranet web portal on the IT intranet site. The solution couples database access to employee network permissions and returns customized reports to them on-demand.

Business Benefits

Web-based access to vendor and account data has significantly improved Crystal Decisions' ability to analyze telecommunications spending and usage patterns. Enhanced vendor relations, improved device tracking, more accurate cost allocations, and reduced spending are just a few of the benefits this system has already generated.

"What can be measured, can be improved," says Witzel. "With previously unattainable information now delivered to IT, Finance, and straight to users' desktops, we're taking the necessary steps to reduce costs and ensure spending makes business sense."

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Business Benefits

- Crystal Enterprise and Crystal Reports provide previously unattainable telecommunications information directly to users' desktops.
- Web access to telecommunications data empowers managers and employees to reduce costs and make informed business decisions.
- Canceling invalid accounts has generated \$60,000 (annualized) in one time savings.
- Improving tracking of employees and telecommunications devices has reduced cost misallocations by 10 percent, and minimized outdated services.
- A view of all vendors and spending allowed prioritized renegotiation of rates including an annualized savings of \$17,000 from one vendor in particular.
- Automating business processes has saved 10 hours a week (\$10,000 a year) of valuable employee time.

So far, Crystal Decisions has renegotiated several contracts, already seeing significant savings in cellular and Blackberry leasing costs from one particular vendor. "We've also saved approximately \$60,000 per annum, simply by canceling accounts that were no longer valid," says Witzel. "And with users and devices linked to each other we've improved tracking and reduced cost misallocations by over 10 percent. Auditing at the account, business-manager, and end-user level, has even helped us to identify and stop paying for services we aren't using."

With enhanced visibility into corporate telecommunications data, according to Witzel, "Practically everyone is thinking about the cost of conference calls, or traveling abroad with their cell phones. We're seeing more conscientious use of devices, better decision-making, and even changes to corporate policies as the result of improved information access."

Based on reports from the Crystal Enterprise Solution, IT has been able to recommend changes in cell phone plans to reduce spending, especially on travel. "Suddenly we're eliminating a lot of \$2,000 monthly cell phone bills." Says Witzel, "And with self-serve information access we've freed up \$10,000 worth of annual employee time allowing our people to work on other critical areas of the business."

Witzel concludes, "By no longer relying on time-consuming manual business processes, we're getting ahead of the curve to make our business more profitable and more successful. Using Crystal Enterprise to provide faster, more advanced information access for employees, to help run our business better is an accomplishment we're proud of and a true demonstration of the power of business intelligence."

Cost Savings

Crystal Decisions' used their own products, including leveraging an existing deployment of Crystal Reports and Crystal Enterprise, to generate significant annualized savings*.

Invalid account savings:	\$60,000
Informed re-negotiation of rates:	\$30,000
Employee time saved:	\$10,000
Conservative Hard Cost Annual Savings:	\$100,000

Note: Additional soft savings (such as employees reducing their own expenses as a result of simple awareness of the costs) are not included.

*Crystal Decisions is legally headquartered in Canada; dollar figures throughout this document are in Canadian dollars.

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About Crystal Decisions

Crystal Decisions is an information management company and market leader in reporting, analysis, and information delivery. Our solutions help customers make better business decisions by bringing together people and information. The company's world-class solutions are used by millions of customers in thousands of companies worldwide and include Crystal Enterprise, Crystal Reports, Crystal Analysis and Crystal Applications. Expert technical support, consulting, training and eLearning services ensure maximum return on investment. Crystal Decisions can be found around the world at www.crystaldecisions.com.

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