

MITS Discover Gives ROHL LLC a Way to Report Budgets Quickly and Efficiently



COMPANY BACKGROUND

ROHL LLC is a worldwide supplier of high-end kitchen and bath faucets and fixtures, providing distinctive products for the kitchen and bath for private homes, resorts, and hotels. ROHL offers readily available inventory, technical training, and a commitment to consistent and excellent customer service. Headquartered in Irvine, California, and employing approximately 65 employees, ROHL has regional corporate offices in San Francisco, the New York Metropolitan area, and Milan, Italy. Products are available nationwide through ROHL's customers: independent kitchen and bath showrooms.

THE CHALLENGE

Paul Satkin, ROHL's CFO, describes the company's approach to doing business: "Because our supply chain is long and our product comes from overseas, one of our competitive advantages is we carry a fair amount of inventory in our headquarters office in Irvine." Expanding on the direct benefit of this approach, Satkin notes, "When a customer calls, we can ship over 90 percent of their orders in any given day."

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ROHL had a specific Business Intelligence/reporting challenge that went beyond standard reporting practices. The company uses Eclipse as its ERP system, however, Satkin points out that the Eclipse technology is more tailored to reporting for showrooms than it is for distributors like ROHL. "Most Eclipse customers order something from a vendor, and the next week the item is there. We order something and it's not here for 6 months." On top of this supply-chain issue, being a distributor, ROHL has independent sales groups out in the field and needs to be able to budget and plan by sales group, month, and product line.

Satkin, COO Lou Rohl, and Director of Marketing Skip Johnson, attended a Six Sigma class where they learned, above all else, that if you aren't able to measure something, you can't improve it. It was clear to the executives at ROHL that "there were things that we weren't able to measure."

While Eclipse was a great tool for delivering instant access to showroom-related information, it did not allow the company to report its budgets efficiently. "So what we did," Satkin explains, "was take all our sales information—by sales rep, by month, by product line, by price line—put it into an Excel spreadsheet, and then print out the sales and budgets manually." In fact, ROHL had been maintaining massive amounts of sales and budget information in spreadsheets.

This practice was labor intensive and did not allow for real-time access to information. ROHL had access to updated information only about once a month. According to Satkin, "We knew where we were against budget in general for a month but we didn't know more specifically which lines were doing better or which sales reps were doing better on a day-to-day basis." The company simply wasn't able to compare against plan.

ROHL approached Eclipse about building a custom budgeting module to add the capability of running reports with the budget included. The project expense plus the ongoing fees for reintegrating the module every time ROHL upgraded Eclipse were out of the company's scope. Representatives at Eclipse suggested ROHL talk to MITS.

THE SOLUTION

On behalf of ROHL, Satkin contacted MITS and learned that, through MITS Discover, a separate OLAP database structure could be implemented and reported on with ROHL's Eclipse data—for less than a custom Eclipse solution and with the added benefit of the MITS Discover dashboard. An appealing benefit was the MITS-Eclipse partnership, which made MITS Discover an attractive solution for ROHL.

"We're a small company, we don't even have an IS staff, and for us to try to implement some other system into Eclipse or start from scratch wouldn't make sense for us," Satkin says. "Eclipse does all the sales modules and such. The MITS partnership with Eclipse is what made the company attractive to us."

ROHL implemented MITS Discover and the dashboard. Because the company has as much as a six-month gap between when a product is ordered and when it is received, ROHL needs to report on open purchase orders. ROHL worked with MITS' Professional Services staff to create a custom Open Purchase Analysis Hypercube. ROHL also has a Sales Analysis Hypercube and a Purchasing Analysis Hypercube.

The flash screens ROHL relies on are in a "common file" that the company defined early on. "On a regular basis," Satkin explains, "we compare our sales by product line versus plan versus last year. Also, we look at sales by sales rep and by plan. We look at purchasing for the last six months and what our purchasing trends are," he notes. The company also does ad hoc reporting and drilling down into data to see what products are selling well or are not selling.

Regarding the use of MITS Discover among ROHL employees, Satkin points out how straightforward MITS Discover is to use. With some initial MITS training by phone, ROHL's internal sales reps are able to use the technology extensively as are Satkin, the COO, and staff in the purchasing and marketing departments.

THE RESULTS

It used to take a full day for a ROHL employee to put budget numbers into Excel and then print out spreadsheets to serve as reports. "Now, with MITS Discover," Satkin states, "I'll be at a meeting and someone will ask which items within a particular product line are not selling as well as the others. Being able to go to a computer anywhere in the company, pull up MITS Discover, and find out that information in a couple minutes is the real power of it."

Another clear benefit is everyone has access to the dashboard. Key ROHL executives, including CEO Ken Rohl, who travels extensively, log onto the system on a daily basis and look at the dashboard from wherever they are, to get a visual of how the company is doing based on their chosen key metrics.

Finally, Satkin pinpoints the success of MITS Discover for ROHL: "When we implemented MITS Discover, our goal was to be able to track against plan and measure things more accurately, and it solved both of those issues."

About MITS

MITS helps hundreds of distributors and manufacturers leverage the data in their ERP and other business systems to make better decisions, every day and at every level of their organization. Established in 1996, MITS' interactive reporting and business intelligence software combines industry best practices with the flexibility to meet the unique needs of every customer. From standard to custom reports, dashboards and scorecards, MITS drives sales growth, profitability, and operational efficiency for competitive advantage.

MITS

801 Second Avenue, Suite 1210
Seattle, WA 98104

Main 206.789.8313
Toll-Free 888.700.6487
Fax 206.782.8045

info@mits.com

mits.com