

Case Study - Balfour Beatty Rail

The task:

The implementation of a Budgeting, Planning and Forecasting solution using Hyperion Planning and Hyperion Essbase

Background:

Having been acquired and developed by Balfour Beatty as more or less autonomous units, the various rail businesses that make up Balfour Beatty Rail had separate ledgers and over time had developed their own largely spreadsheet based management reporting and budgeting systems. Consequently, the budgeting, planning and forecasting processes were too time consuming to carry out in any detail, but, more importantly, the inconsistency of approach and interpretation lead to a lack of confidence in the accuracy of the figures generated.

The Solution:

In order to provide a secure, common platform, Hyperion Planning with Essbase was chosen to enable a collaborative approach to a faster delivery of their reporting and planning requirements, and at a more meaningful level of detail.

Thought IT Limited was selected to deliver the system, having demonstrated the capability, experience and commitment that the Group were seeking.

Thought IT's role was to:

- Give guidance in the design and scoping
- Carry out the technical build
- Load the COA
- Build the system logic
- Provide an interface with Hyperion Enterprise
- Write and test reports
- User Acceptance Testing
- 1st phase training
- Manage the system pending the appointment of a System Administrator
- Provide post implementation support

Mapping to the many different ledger systems was a substantial exercise, but once set up, easily maintained by the key users. Thought IT's TIL Data Prep tool simplified this process and is an integral part of the solution. The creation of the web forms for budget and forecast data collection was a simple process following the definition of the analysis dimensions and reporting requirements. With web-forms in place, users can now develop their own driver based forms to more fully automate their part of the forecast process.

Looking ahead:

Having successfully met the initial project expectations, the enthusiasm for Hyperion Planning's capabilities has generated an ongoing demand for further applications, which, as a result of their engagement in the earlier work, will be largely driven by Balfour Beatty Rail's own internal expertise.

Conclusion:

A significant contributor to the success of the project was the project team's preparation of a core design based on the requirements of the group as a whole, with workshops and individual sessions held with each operating unit to ensure key users were fully engaged in the development process.

The result of this collaboration was a centrally managed system with a common chart of accounts, with analysis dimensions that mirrored the coding already held in the ledgers of each operating unit.

"This ability to engage representatives from across the business in the design process was key to the success of the project" - UK Rail Group Controller