

ELITE CASE STUDY DUANE MORRIS LLP

ELITE REPORTING AND ANALYTICS FOUNDATION TURNS
DATA INTO ACTIONABLE INFORMATION



THOMSON REUTERS™

ELITE®

DUANE MORRIS LLP

ELITE REPORTING AND ANALYTICS FOUNDATION TURNS DATA INTO ACTIONABLE INFORMATION

FIRM GROWTH DICTATES ADVANCED REPORTING CAPABILITIES

Duane Morris LLP, a 650-attorney firm based in Philadelphia, is frequently acknowledged among top law firms for its success in utilizing technology. As a long-time Elite Enterprise® customer, the firm has implemented numerous Enterprise software modules to efficiently manage its large workforce around the globe. Yet the firm's continued growth eventually demonstrated that the firm's custom-built application for financial reporting purposes had outlived its usefulness.

"Our proprietary reporting system was so time intensive," says Mike Kinney, financial analysis manager at Duane Morris. "We were taking data out of the current system, dumping it into Microsoft® Excel, creating pivot tables and running macros and complex formulas to consolidate the data with the exact report we needed."

Furthermore, financial analysts were receiving requests for information faster than they could handle and were unable to meet increasing demands for quick turnarounds. Whether it was routine month-end reports or custom report requests, the team had to import data, wash it through analysis models and print out the resulting spreadsheets—all of it paper-based.

"The amount of data naturally increased as the firm expanded and the system we were using became more cumbersome," shares Kinney. "Gathering the data was time-consuming and often difficult to reconcile." For example, changes to a code in one report would not be reflected in a similar data field in another report. As a result, if the team changed someone's title in one place, it didn't change throughout the code. They had to update the same data, often in dozens of places.

SEEKING THE RIGHT PARTNER

It was obviously time for a change. Firm management needed to identify a solution that provided accurate data warehousing as well as robust functionality to create meaningful, actionable reports in short order.

"We met with four organizations that each promised us they could provide us with the perfect solution," Kinney recalls of the selection process. "While some of them were just start-ups, others were more established, including Elite."

Ultimately, the team selected the Elite Reporting and Analytics Foundation™ (RAF) solution because of their comfort with the company and the people. Most importantly, the solution can easily operate directly with the firm's current Enterprise system.

RAF provides a robust business intelligence warehouse through its seamless integration with Enterprise. Before RAF was implemented, the financial analyst team would typically call Elite to have a desired report developed in Enterprise. With the integrated RAF solution, the team now has the "self-serve" capability to retrieve the information they need. The RAF reporting tools enable the team to present the data in a very aesthetic and actionable way. The firm is able to identify and analyze trends and other key performance indicators with greater accuracy and ease and to accelerate access to information with individual reporting functionality.

"It's fantastic. RAF gives us a whole new playing field where we can bring in different fields, metrics and variables and merge them together to create one report that accounts for all the information previously required in multiple reports."

Mike Kinney
financial analysis manager

DUANE MORRIS LLP

Duane Morris, a full-service law firm of more than 650 attorneys, offers innovative solutions across diverse industries worldwide to address the legal and business challenges of today's evolving global markets.

STRATEGIC GOALS

To transform a time-intensive and paper-laden reporting process into an advanced business intelligence system with easy access to a wide range of data.

WHY REPORTING AND ANALYTICS FOUNDATION?

RAF was designed specifically for the professional services firm that wants to access business data on a near real-time basis to improve firm performance and ultimately profitability.

RESULTS

- Improved ability to analyze trends and key performance indicators with greater accuracy
- More efficient and reliable report generation
- Faster response time to increased report requests

The team at Duane Morris was also impressed with the capabilities of the Elite Performance Dashboard, which gives management-level insight into all aspects of the firm. This system helps the firm manage its operational and profitability analysis activities with aggregated, high-level visualizations that can be drilled into with a few clicks. The solution also can include information from the firm's other systems, like human resources, for example. Unlike traditional solutions that force users to dig through large volumes of data to identify issues, the Performance Dashboard presents data visually through the use of graphs and alerts, and clearly highlights exceptional activity or potential concerns.

STREAMLINED REPORTS IMPROVE ANALYSIS AND RESPONSE TIME

After a series of intensive training and follow-up sessions, Duane Morris fully launched RAF integrated with Elite Enterprise in April 2008. As with any new technology solution, the greatest challenge for Kinney and his team was becoming familiar with the product.

In addition to the quality support from Elite, the firm hired two new staff dedicated to business intelligence: a senior financial analyst and a software developer, both familiar with Elite. According to Ernie Coats, manager of software development, a major benefit of RAF is the short learning curve: firm leaders didn't have to learn a whole new way of reviewing reports other than upgrading their reporting skill set. "RAF has the flexibility to match nearly any work style. No behavioral or culture changes were necessary," notes Coats.

During the process of converting existing reports, Kinney and his team were very pleased to condense several previous reports into just one. "It's fantastic. We had a menu of about 100 reports that we cut down to about 35. That's the beauty of this solution. RAF gives us a whole new playing field where we can bring in different fields, metrics and variables and merge them together to create one report that accounts for all the information previously required in multiple reports," he says.

The ability of RAF to manipulate data in a single report is important—not only to identify potential areas of concern, but also to decrease response time on report inquiries. For example, a single RAF report presents information at a billing timekeeper level and allows staff to drill down for more details, all the way to the timecard if necessary. With the old system, several separate reports would have to be generated to provide management with the detailed answers they need.

Another key report the team converted was the Actual-to-Budget Time Value Variance report. With the prior application, it took a day to build the report in the data warehouse, massage it and run about 22 different sorts. With RAF, the report is automatically generated at a scheduled date and time and emailed directly to the recipients.

Kinney notes that requests for new and different reports are growing. Now that the team has the ability to create new reports by simply dragging and dropping fields, new demands are much easier to meet. "We used to have to rely on our programmers to get the data for us," he says. "Now we can go out and get the data ourselves and drop it in with the click of a button."

"It's an involved process, but the end result is so much better than what we previously had. Every day you realize a different functionality or capability, and say, 'Wow, that's pretty amazing.'"

Mike Kinney

EFFICIENTLY TRANSFORM DATA INTO ACTIONABLE INFORMATION

Improved speed, reliability, flexibility and drill-down capabilities are among the efficiencies realized by Duane Morris to date. "I can generate macro to micro views in a single report with about five clicks," Kinney says. "The time we save with RAF has allowed us to go from more of a production shop to more of an analytical shop. We spend more of our time these days focusing on areas that need attention rather than just producing and checking reports. We are able to do more analytical work—identifying trends and areas of weakness or strength."

Another time-saver the team has been testing is the Performance Dashboard, which features pre-aggregated data compiled into easy-to-read graphics. Instead of reading through lines of numbers, management can visually see statistics with graphs and charts, such as percentage of hours recorded, billings and accounts receivable. The plan is to refine the Dashboard and distribute it to decision makers at the practice group levels throughout the firm's 23 offices.

“The time we save with RAF has allowed us to go from more of a production shop to more of an analytical shop. We spend more of our time these days focusing on areas that need attention rather than just producing and checking reports. We are able to do more analytical work—identifying trends and areas of weakness or strength”

Mike Kinney

“We are just scratching the surface with Dashboards and the possibilities are limitless,” says Kinney. “Each day the data is refreshed and posted, so our decision makers will have instantaneous access via the Dashboard to a visual format that is easily digestible. This is just one way that RAF will be very, very helpful as a management tool.”

For Duane Morris, the time and effort in implementing RAF has been well worth the investment. “It’s an involved process, but the end result is so much better than what we previously had. Every day you realize a different functionality or capability, and say, ‘Wow, that’s pretty amazing,’” Kinney adds.

For more information about Elite Reporting and Analytics Foundation, please call (323) 642-5200 or visit elite.com.



THOMSON REUTERS™

ELITE®