

Streamlining the Budgeting and Forecasting Process

Business Overview

Our client is a fully integrated, independent hotel ownership, development and operations company. They currently manage close to 160 hotels across 20 states, including iconic brands like Marriott, Hilton, and Holiday Inn. This company focuses on premium multi-brand and multi-segment hotel opportunities in major urban and high-grade suburban markets. Their property portfolio includes innovative “co-branded” urban select service hotel experiences, as well as large convention hotel developments.

Business Challenge

Given the large number of disparate property brands in their portfolio, the client needed to streamline and standardize their budgeting and forecasting processes. They were far too dependent on manual, Excel-based processes and unable to rely on the data they were seeing. Their overall goal was to provide both timely and accurate insight into the financial data, providing hotel managers with the necessary information to make better decisions. LPA was engaged to design and develop a scalable technology solution that integrated all of the different forecasting templates accompanying each new hotel being added to the portfolio. The data is only useful if it represents the financial picture across all of their hotels.

Solution

LPA implemented IBM TM1 as the technology platform, replacing Oracle Essbase across the enterprise. Both LPA and the customer worked together to completely assess requirements from all stakeholders at varying levels of the company. Using those requirements, LPA designed a long-term scalable solution leveraging IBM’s powerful financial performance management platform, TM1. The final solution satisfied all requirements, replacing any existing manual processes, and enabled a standard, automated financial budgeting and forecasting process to be implemented.

LPA implemented a complete turn-key solution that included data source extraction routines, hierarchical cube components, dimensions, rules, measures, security modules, and data automation rules. As scope changed throughout the project, LPA worked closely with project stakeholders to refine and reprioritize requirements based on the workload and overall project timeline initially agreed upon by both parties.

In preparation for deployment, LPA developed and delivered hands-on training to enable end-user adoption, and provided peer to peer mentoring for post deployment support.

Results

- A **standardized** budgeting and forecasting platform that can easily **integrate new hotels** as the company continues to grow
- A **best-practices approach** to planning and budgeting, integrated into the tool so ongoing governance is simpler
- The ability to produce **dynamic, detailed reporting** and analysis quickly and efficiently
- **Streamlined and real time forecast process** across all hotels with actuals updated automatically using **one standard template**
- Information that gives hotel management **up-to-date** information and the ability to **spot problems in advance** providing fast, accurate and flexible reporting
- Vast reduction in **the manual steps required** for reporting by automating the data integration, calculations and report creation
- **Immediate access** for hotel managers to updated financials on a daily basis

