

Embedding BI Analytics in Commercial Products

Business Overview

Our client, PCI, is a leader in developing software solutions for the Property and Casualty Insurance industry. PCI has developed a reputation for quality insurance solutions, knowledgeable people and outstanding customer service by creating new and innovative insurance solutions that leverage the latest technologies and bring outstanding capabilities and business results.

Business Challenge

PCI's industry leading insurance solution was recently re-designed from the ground up with a focus on usability and efficiency. PCI's application is 100% web based, has a configurable look and feel, and is an on-premise (not SaaS or Cloud) installation. The core model's design has a highly flexible custom-developed security module.

An important feature of the client's next generation application was the ability to generate dashboards that could be customized by end users. With a diverse client and user base, it was imperative that clients and their users be able to assemble dashboards from predefined components that ultimately gave the right visibility to a user's unique needs without the need to learn a development tool.

The analytics capabilities needed to be integrated seamlessly with the core web-based application and leverage the application's security mechanism. The user interface of the reports and dashboards needed to be attractive, intuitive, easy-to-use, and configurable.

"We were very impressed with LPA's understanding of the rigors of building a product and the requirement to tie up all loose ends. We loved the "dashboard on demand" capability that they designed. We definitely made the right choice selecting LPA."

Product Development Manager

Solution

PCI chose LPA to design, build, and integrate the reporting and analytics module.

LPA has worked with several dozen industry software (OEM) companies to help them embed reporting and analytics within their commercial applications. We have a well-

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defined process to elicit requirements and to ensure a shippable commercial solution that is well-tested and deployable to many customers without high support needs.

LPA's process deals with:

- the structure of the work (organizational roles, vision for PCI's offering, sales, services, and support model the client uses, go-to-market plans, demo needs of Sales during development, etc.),
- the structure of the solution (embedded or add-on components, on-premise or hosted or a combination solution, functional requirements, etc.),
- the technology (databases to be supported, refresh rates for data, metadata discussions, integration points for the portal, application and security, branding, localization, etc.)

PCI's targeted delivered technical environment consists of SQL Server 2008 R2 database technology, an Oracle Application Server, IBM Cognos 10 BI toolset, combined with PCI's internally developed portal and Microsoft Analysis Services (MDX) cubes.

LPA leveraged our OEM processes to build and integrate the reporting solution using IBM Cognos 10. We followed a sprint methodology, with one dashboard widget serving as the test case for the complete sprint to ensure what we built was what was desired. The somewhat unusual requirement of PCI's was, in addition to the reporting and dashboards, to create a mash-up to present data on a geographic map at the state and zip code level. Another then unusual (but more and more standard) request was to be able to view the application natively on an Apple iPad, which was designed and delivered as well.

Results

PCI has made several new sales in the first months of general availability as a result of the embedded analytics. Users have been especially complimentary about the "dashboard on demand" capability. The ability of a non-technical user to create a dashboard (from the widgets and framework that LPA created) has been very well received.