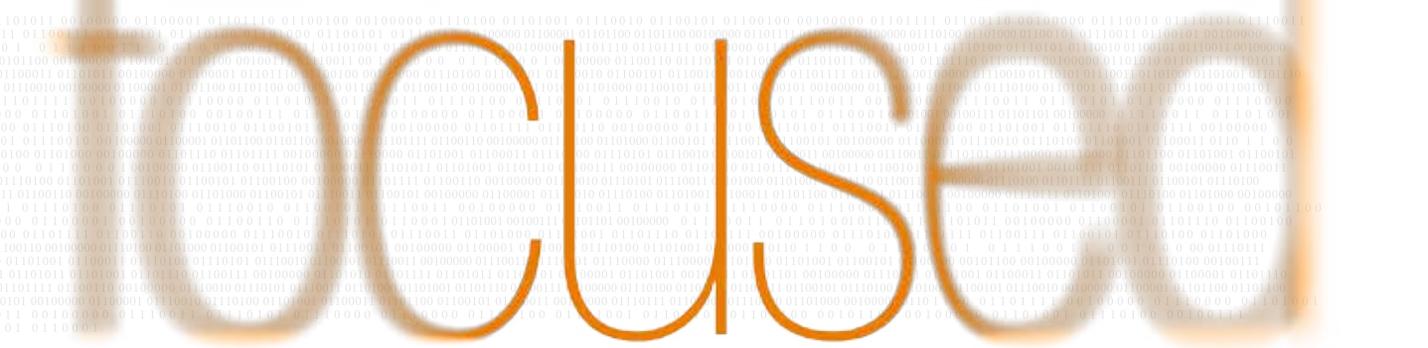




Experts in Microsoft Dynamics

FAST AND



*When the situation calls for a Business Intelligence application to extract data from ERP, a focused project delivers rapid and assured results, finds **Malcolm Wheatley**.*

**W**hen wind farm and solar power specialist Mainstream Renewable Power discovered that it needed Business Intelligence (BI), it recognised that it needed it fast.

For reasons of taxation and corporate law, every one of the company's renewable power projects – in countries including as Chile, Australia, Germany, Eire, the United States, and the UK – has to be constituted as a separate legal entity.

And as the number of the Mainstream projects rose from a dozen towards the present level of 140 or so, the complications of financial reporting quickly mounted, explains Mainstream enterprise architect Mark Kane.

"We realised we were outstripping the reporting capabilities of our ERP system, and that the challenges of reporting from so many 'data cubes' was starting to impact our business," says Kane. "We needed Microsoft Business Intelligence, alongside our Microsoft Dynamics AX enterprise ERP system."

But Mainstream's first attempt to implement BI ended in failure in 2011. The implementation partner couldn't deliver.

**From the jaws of failure**

Enter award-winning Microsoft Dynamics ERP, Business Intelligence and CRM implementation experts eBECS.

For eBECS, says BI sales lead Shailan Chudasama, a multi-currency, multi-country, multi-company challenge on this scale was business as usual.

complications that dog many BI projects.

"Traditionally, there's a consultant-led approach to Business Intelligence which involves identifying user needs at the enterprise level, and then delivering an enterprise-wide solution to meet those needs, starting with the construction of a data warehouse," Mr Chudasama says.

"Rapid Return, on the other hand, identifies the critical sources of information and provides immediate answers via visualisation and reporting, thus gaining user buy-in and delivering a virtually immediate ROI."

In other words, Rapid Return starts small, and then scales up: answering immediate needs through scorecards, dashboards, reports, performance charts and metrics; before moving on to the next requirement, adding value and ROI as the project progresses.

"We aim to empower business users as early as possible. The end point might well be a data warehouse and a full Business Intelligence solution, but the customer and their users have had return from the analysis phase, without waiting months or years for their needs to be met."

Which was exactly the experience at Mainstream, relates Kane.

"eBECS came in, and in a matter of days we went from getting individual reports from Dynamics AX to running reports straight from the data cubes," he says. "It was an efficiency improvement of at least tenfold on the general ledger side – a huge win for us."

Further projects have followed. "It's taught us a lot about effective Business Intelligence," sums up Kane. "Have a project that you can put your hands around, with clear deliverables and a clear sponsor, and deliver against it. Try to reach too far, and you'll fail." **END**

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*Mark Kane, Enterprise Architect, Mainstream Renewable Power*