

LIVEWIRE MOBILE BRINGS MUSIC TO YOUR EARS WITH INSIGHT FROM BUSINESS OBJECTS

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Karen Cambray, CFO, LiveWire Mobile



Industry

Mobile music service provider

Business Process

Product development, customer needs analysis, sales, services

Challenge

LiveWire Mobile needed a way of managing the royalty stream for end-user downloads, measuring performance and the end-user experience, and analyzing trends quickly.

Why Business Objects?

With on-target, near real-time reporting, LiveWire Mobile can make business-critical decisions while tuning into trends.

Business Objects Products and Services

BusinessObjects Edge Professional

Crystal Reports

BusinessObjects Web Intelligence

BusinessObjects Data Integrator

InfoView

Xcelsius

CHALLENGE

As a subsidiary of Framingham, Massachusetts-based NMS Communications Corporation, LiveWire Mobile provides managed personalization services for mobile operators globally. The market leader in ring-back products and managed services, LiveWire Mobile also offers ringtones and full-track music and video download services as part of its mobile personalization suite – a market projected by Juniper Research to reach \$17.5 billion by 2012. With LiveWire Mobile, mobile operators get a single managed service and integrated storefront for music and video-related content, and its 15 million subscribers gain a superior mobile experience, with access to ringtones, ringback tones, and full-track music and video downloads.

Partnering with cell phone carriers (such as Sprint) and a range of music labels (such as Sony BMG) to bring music to the masses, LiveWire Mobile provides digital music delivery services in Australia, Canada, Europe, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Consumers download their favorite tunes and ringtones by accessing LiveWire Mobile and partner Web stores.

In the digital music delivery arena, LiveWire Mobile has two types of customers – music labels and carriers. “The labels are really the ones selling the music. We have very good label relationships, which increases the size of the catalog that we can sell through our service,” says Matt Winitzer, manager of business intelligence (BI) at LiveWire Mobile.

Carriers are the most important customer for LiveWire Mobile. “Our managed mobile personalization services allow carriers to sell music through mobile devices,” Winitzer explains. “Typically, carriers sell music through the cell phone but also through Web stores and PC downloads. We’re taking advantage of digital music delivery, which is a rapidly growing field.”

When cell phone subscribers download music from Sprint or the UK’s Orange or 3 UK, for example, they’re downloading the music content from LiveWire Mobile servers. “We are then tasked with keeping track of those transactions and settling those transactions with the labels,” says Winitzer. He likens the process to a complex royalty stream, saying, “It’s a very complex royalty breakdown in terms of who owns the label contracts, what percentage goes where, to whom, and from what.”

Tracking and reporting on all the end-user transactions and the associated royalty stream was difficult and time-consuming. LiveWire Mobile sought an expedient and accurate way of tracking online performance and gaining insight into the end-user experience. LiveWire Mobile looked to Business Objects, an SAP company, for a solution.

APPROACH

A requirements analysis helped LiveWire Mobile establish goals and expectations for its new system. Winitzer says, “We wanted more efficiency in our reporting, and so we wanted to create a data warehouse. We also had a lot of desires on the analysis side – we wanted better analysis, better high-level insight using key performance indicators (KPIs), and dashboards.

We weren't just looking for a warehouse – we were looking for a frontend that could help furnish reports and also do online analytical processing (OLAP) analysis.”

Ad hoc reporting was also important. “Ad hoc reporting was one of the huge requirements for us,” says Winitzer. “Our music specialists, who are on the merchandising side of things, need ad hoc reporting to quickly analyze cell phone subscriber’s buying behavior – which products are selling, how cell phone subscribers are getting to the products, and so on.” Such insights, for example, help LiveWire Mobile know how to best present its catalog of products and tailor marketing suggestions for the end user. Karen Cambray, CFO at LiveWire Mobile, explains, “Examining the user behavior behind our marketing data helps us generate conclusions about consumers and the market, so we can merchandise more effectively.”

Another requirement was the ability for partners and internal users to log in to see canned reports, and, internally, to share reports with other people on the team. Security, scheduling, monitoring, and Microsoft Office integration were also factors.

After evaluating several open source BI options along with proprietary solutions, LiveWire Mobile narrowed its choices to five vendors – and then selected Business Objects technology. Winitzer says, “One of the first things that attracted us to Business Objects was Crystal Reports® and the fact that Business Objects subsumed Crystal into its BusinessObjects™ Edge Series offering. Crystal is a very accepted application in the industry, and we knew it would easily fill our requirements.”

BusinessObjects Edge gives LiveWire Mobile access to enterprise BI functionality – including Crystal Reports, BusinessObjects Web Intelligence®, Xcelsius®, and other key Business Objects offerings – at midmarket prices. For ad hoc query, LiveWire Mobile uses Web Intelligence. “Web Intelligence is very important to us,” says Winitzer. “That was one of the big standouts for Business Objects – not only did it include ad hoc query like a lot of the products do, but Business Objects really hit it out of the park. It definitely was the best presentation for ad hoc query, both in creating the query and also in looking at the report through Crystal. That was actually the case for a lot of our requirements, and it was an important factor in choosing Business Objects. When you’re trying to support a diverse user group, it’s very important to have an application that is very easy to use and makes sense to navigate.”

Scalability was another key element in LiveWire Mobile’s adoption of Business Objects technology. Winitzer says, “A big part of our analysis was getting a platform that would scale and also be appealing enough to show off to clients. Business Objects is definitely a value-add that we see for offering our clients.” Winitzer envisions giving channel partners access to their data by logging in through InfoView. Instead of waiting for LiveWire Mobile to email reports to its partners, “the InfoView portal will give them direct marketing ability,” says Winitzer.

RESULTS

Although it’s just on the cusp of deploying the BusinessObjects Edge Series, LiveWire Mobile is excited about the BI possibilities. “Until now, reporting has been really hard to do. Before BusinessObjects, all of our reporting was per channel or per client, but we want to analyze the data *across* clients. Now we can compare our sales across channels,” says Cambray. “We can examine consumer buying patterns and identify market trends, such as which artists are hot, top sales by category, or top sales by artists or genre – basically, we can look at the many different ways to slice the data.”

By tracking KPIs such as sales and conversion ratios, LiveWire Mobile is better able to understand cell phone subscribers’ buying patterns and so make timely and trendy recommendations. Another advantage of using BusinessObjects is the ability to spot and resolve critical issues in a timelier manner. Winitzer says, “Increasing the frequency of reports and availability of near-time information to more members of our team allows us to respond quickly to problems with our product line.” Examples of issues that need immediate attention include the need to remove content, perhaps due to a copyright issue or the loss of selling rights. “A lot of our sales are chart-driven,” says Winitzer. “When we create a new chart, BusinessObjects gives our merchandisers – the music specialists – the ability to see consumer

behavior in 'near-time,' to see if there are sales from that chart. No sales after a chart has been posted for two hours might indicate an error, possible because the content didn't get into the chart, or it's not linked properly. By analyzing sales data in a more near-time fashion, we can elicit problems and correct them."

Cambray adds, "We also need to understand how 'sticky' the application is – that is, how often users repeatedly come in and shop and browse and buy. BusinessObjects helps us measure the effectiveness of the charts we create, the stickiness of our application, and its ease of use." Such insight helps LiveWire Mobile determine how to develop and enhance its products. Cambray says, "Prior to using BusinessObjects, our decision-making was more intuitive. Now, we're replacing those intuitive decisions with data-driven decisions – based on the greater data analysis enabled by BusinessObjects. BusinessObjects helps us to build a better product for our end users."

LiveWire Mobile sees BusinessObjects as offering competitive advantage. "We're able to differentiate our products from our competitors by virtue of the platform and the technology that we offer," says Cambray. "BusinessObjects enables us to be more efficient. For example, when we set up new record labels and partner with new carriers, we can address their requirements quickly. That gives us a competitive advantage."

Winitzer agrees. "BusinessObjects also gives us the benefit of improved customer and partner satisfaction through better information sharing – whether that information comes in the form of better reports that we run through the platform and then email to partners, or whether they can log in to the platform," he says. "Either way, we're improving our information that we're able to share, and that's a huge benefit to us. It's also a differentiator. We're improving the scope as well as the speed of our analysis. Better report sharing impresses our customers and partners and helps us differentiate from competitors."

"Of all the solutions we evaluated, we feel that Business Objects offers the best business intelligence solution. Not only does Business Objects obviously exceed all the requirements and needs of our company, but also being such a leader in the market space, it will fit into our future business growth," says Winitzer. "Why would anyone go to another vendor when they're still learning how to do it, versus a company that's done it and is building quickly toward the future? We're fully confident in our choice of Business Objects."

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