

Poly-Wood, LLC streamlines data warehouse creation to support continued business growth

“We were looking for a data warehouse automation tool with a visual and model-based approach, as well as one that would reduce the need for our IT team to do large amounts of coding themselves. Attunity Compose is that solution. It has saved and will continue to save us many hours of labor.”

— René Valencourt, Software and Data Architect, Poly-Wood, LLC

Poly-Wood manufactures outdoor furniture using genuine POLYWOOD lumber made from high-density polyethylene, one of the easiest plastics to recycle. The company's goal is to deliver a quality product that customers want in a timely fashion. To achieve this vision, Poly-Wood has developed state-of-the-art technology and lean manufacturing processes that minimize waste streams and ensure that products be built quickly and accurately.

For the past several years, the company has been growing significantly and the management team recognized that data is the key to making informed decisions. Poly-Wood had been using a third-party BI tool to create a data warehouse and apps to run on top of it. A major limitation, however, was that this tool's data warehouses can only be used by its proprietary tools. Another issue was that data governance wasn't natively available in the existing solution. Poly-Wood wanted a general purpose solution which would enable them to use the tools of their choice to access information throughout the data warehousing environment. To support data-driven decisions, Poly-Wood launched a data warehousing initiative that included BI, analytics, and enterprise data modeling.

Finding a Data Warehouse Automation Solution

With its data warehousing project, Poly-Wood hoped to unify data from its Sage ERP system, as well as from internal systems, a Podio CRM system, and geospatial data from a third-party vendor. Although the ERP and internal systems use relational databases (SQL Server and MySQL respectively), other data sources are in unstructured XML and Excel form.

As a first step René Valencourt, Poly-Wood's Software and Data Architect, began to evaluate data warehouse automation software. While Kalido was attractive, the product cost exceeded the project budget. The company conducted proof of concepts with TimeXtender and WhereScape, but as Valencourt noted “neither product hit a home run.” The Poly-Wood team felt that it was difficult to discern the process flow in both products.

Next, the company saw a demo of Attunity Compose. “We liked the model-based approach which offers insight into the data and how it is used,” said Valencourt. “In addition, Attunity Compose is laid out visually. In a Compose project, you see four sections: database, model, data warehouse, and data mart. This helps users easily



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About the Customer

Poly-Wood, LLC manufactures outdoor furniture using genuine POLYWOOD lumber made from high-density polyethylene, one of the easiest plastics to recycle. It has developed state-of-the-art technology and lean manufacturing processes that minimize waste streams and ensure that products are built quickly and accurately.

To maintain its trajectory of year-over-year business growth, the company decided it needed to augment its existing business intelligence solution with a formal data warehouse initiative. Poly-Wood evaluated multiple data warehouse automation tools and adopted Attunity Compose. Using Attunity Compose, the team can now create a data warehouse in one day, rather than ten, and enable access to real-time information so that Poly-Wood employees, customers, and investors can make faster and more effective business decisions.

understand how things relate and enables them to work at a higher level, while accessing more detail if needed.” Managing the product also seemed easy and intuitive. This was a key consideration, since Valencourt wants his team to be able to easily pick up and run with the solution after the project is kicked off.

Life with Attunity Compose

Based on its ease of use, Poly-Wood decided to adopt Attunity Compose. Thus far, the data warehousing and BI project has been a success from both an IT and business perspective. With Attunity Compose, the company can create a data mart in one day, compared to the several days it used to take with the other BI solution. This success means that Valencourt and his team can devote their time to other initiatives. More efficient data warehouse creation is also important as Poly-Wood looks ahead. In the future, the company plans to analyze additional aspects of the manufacturing process which will result in larger data volumes for its data warehouses.

Adopting a data-driven approach to decision making is also helping Poly-Wood continue its impressive growth. “This is the first time that we’ve taken a truly analytical approach to sales data,” said Sean Rassi, Vice President of Design and Technology. “We used to rely solely on reports from the ERP system. Generating those reports and putting information into Excel was very time consuming.” Without implementing Attunity Compose, the company’s analytical development, and thus future growth, would have been at risk. “Making decisions based on real data matters. You can only run a business on intuition for so long. We realized that we need a complete view of our data to make discoveries and also to confirm whether our decisions are generating the desired results,” said Rassi.

Having real-time and historical data in front of employees, customers, and investors at the moment when questions arise is invaluable. “Thanks to Attunity Compose, our ability to make decisions faster and more effectively has increased at least tenfold,” said Rassi.

Objectives

Poly-Wood wanted a general purpose data warehouse and business intelligence solution that would support a wide variety of analytics tools and enable employees to make data-driven decisions.

Solution

After evaluating several data warehouse automation tools, Poly-Wood implemented Attunity Compose to unify data from its ERP and internal systems, as well as from its Podio CRM system and geospatial data from a third-party vendor.

Benefits

- A flexible solution that can be used with many different analytics tools
- Intuitive, visual user interface for creating data models
- Faster creation of data warehouses and marts (one day with Attunity Compose, compared to five-to-ten days in Poly-Wood’s case)
- Access to real-time data which enables fast, effective decision making

“One of the most useful things about Attunity Compose is that it gives us better data. This decreases anxiety in the business and we expect that it will give Poly-Wood a competitive edge in the market.”

— Sean Rassi, Vice President of Design and Technology, Poly-Wood, LLC