



DC Thomson

Famous publishing house deploys highly functional and user friendly planning application to their Finance team using IBM Cognos Enterprise Planning and Simpson Associates



Company Overview

DC Thomson & Co Ltd is a private company and one of the leading publishing houses in the UK. The company's headquarters is in Dundee, Scotland, with a London base in Fleet Street. DC Thomson publishes newspapers, magazines, comics and books. The company also has interests in radio, printing, retailing and online services.

Key Benefits

- The application is owned by the business within the Finance Team.
- Easy to use screens and step by step instructions enables the business to run and enhance the model continuously.
- Budgets and Forecasts can now be viewed by Title, this allows the business to understand which Titles are profitable and which ones are not.
- The business regained its trust in the IBM planning tool.
- The business can now create monthly and quarterly forecasts and achieve rolling monthly forecasts.

Problem

DC Thomson had a budget model built using IBM Cognos Enterprise Planning. The budget data for the model was fed from various Excel spreadsheets from across the business. Several mappings had to be maintained in order for the numbers to load through and checking what was required to ensure that the numbers were correct. In terms of functionality, the model was only capable of holding last year's actual numbers and this year's budget numbers, no variance, forecast or rolling forecast capabilities were available. Also, visibility of profitability at title level was limited.

DC Thomson Requirement

The company required a simplified budget modelling system that was easy for staff to use whilst providing a more efficient service. The Finance team at DC Thomson also required the ability to fix or update the system internally.

"Simpson Associates demonstrated that they were true experts in the field; within a few weeks they had a solid understanding of our business requirements and turned around an initial solution within an astonishingly quick timescale."

Gillian Troup, Group Financial Controller

The Solution

Simpson Associates replaced the need for spreadsheets. A manager screen was built so that the Finance team could key in the latest budget information. All updates were built using macros and user instructions were attached to ensure the process was easy to run and understand – the whole process became task driven and easy to follow.

To allow DC Thomson to forecast, a dimension was added so that actual data, from the company's source ERP, system could be uploaded automatically. Simpson Associates also added an item allowing for forecast numbers to be keyed in at a monthly or quarterly level. By doing this, DC Thomson could not only hold budget and forecast numbers but the Finance team could also view a rolling monthly forecast using up-to-date Management Accounts.

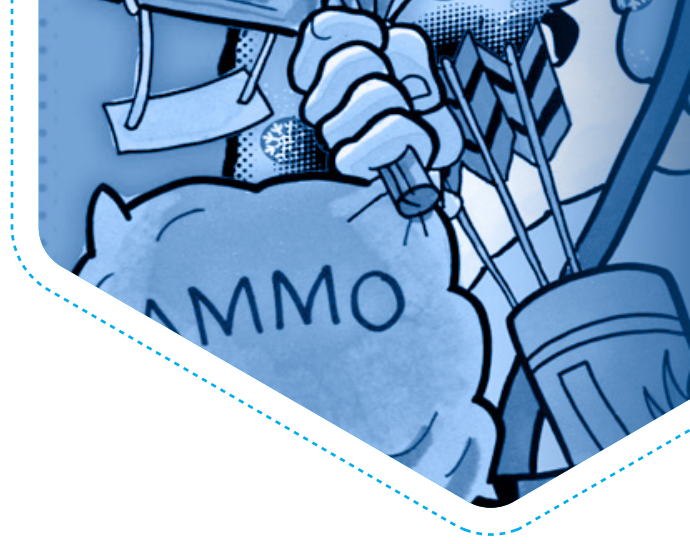
In order to achieve a P&L by title, extra fields were added to take attributes from the source data through to IBM Cognos EP. Mapping cubes, based on these attributes, were set-up and numbers were assigned to titles. A check was also set-up to ensure that these numbers reconciled back to the P&L in both IBM Cognos EP and the Management Accounts.

Simpson Associates worked collaboratively with DC Thomson to build the budget model and formal training was delivered at the end of the project to ensure the business became self-sufficient.

Built for speed and performance

DC Thomson has a user-friendly planning application which offers a high level of functionality, in terms of forecasting, and profit and loss budgeting by title.

1. The business no longer needs to maintain budget data in spreadsheets or maintain the overhead required to upload these budget models.
2. The budget can now be viewed by business unit and by title; this allows the profitability of each title to be analysed.
3. The business can now create monthly and quarterly forecasts using actual data that is updated automatically; this can be used to achieve a rolling forecast (i.e. 3 months' actual and 9 months' forecast figures).
4. The budget and forecast can now be completed by the in-house Finance team; no outside assistance is required and minimal knowledge of IBM Cognos EP is required.
5. Tasks specific to IBM Cognos EP, such as the need to update dimensions, update numbers and run links and macros are quick and easy to carry out using a series of Manager Screens.



Support from Simpson Associates

Simpson Associates are specialists in defining, building and implementing information management solutions, which provide better business understanding and improved business management performance.

Our considerable skills and experience enable long-standing relationships with our clients and we have established long standing partner relationships with Microsoft, IBM and BOARD.

“From delivering the budget within a tight timeframe to supporting our learning and development, Simpson Associates has allowed us to become genuinely self-sufficient, sharing their knowledge and expertise at every step of our journey.”

Gillian Troup, Group Financial Controller

Contact us

Should you have any questions or require any further information, the team at Simpson Associates will be happy to help you with your request.

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