



Association of Fundraising Professionals (AFP)

www.afpnet.org

- An international association that supports and promotes ethical fundraising for charities around the world.
- The association also manages a foundation as well as a political action committee.
- Established in 1960, now operates 213 chapters globally with 30,000 members worldwide.
- Manages over 11 million dollars in net assets annually.

Key Business Pains

- Lack of visibility into data, with no access to real-time data.
- No lower level reporting capabilities available; all reporting, forecasting and budgeting driven from the top and down.
- Labor-intensive exercise to get the required reports for semi-annual budget cycles, requiring a team of IT professionals to facilitate the process.

“Our forecasting and budgeting accuracy has improved tremendously and we see that every month. We are now meeting our forecasts dead on. We have also significantly increased our credibility with our Board of Directors, which is always good news for the association as a whole.”

- Michael Eason, CFO at AFP

The Client

For over 50 years, the Association of Fundraising Professionals (AFP) has helped support charities around the world while advancing ethical and effective fundraising. AFP has more than 30,000 members in 213 chapters around the globe.

With their commitment to foster the growth of fundraising professionals, implement programs to enhance diversity of their membership base and publish relevant research on philanthropy, they continually progress the fundraising industry for all professionals in the field.

Managing over 11 million dollars in net assets, including *The Foundation for Philanthropy* as well as a Political Action Committee (PAC), through 60 cost centers has required an emphasis on enhanced, simplified reporting.

The Challenge

Running 60 separate cost centers with a top-down forecasting and budgeting approach during semi-annual meetings made staying on budget nearly impossible. Visibility into each cost center was limited, giving the executive team a very challenging task when trying to assign forecasts and budgets, especially when dealing with large, cumbersome paper reports that quickly became out-dated.

Cost center managers also dealt with ambiguity throughout the long budgeting cycle, ultimately being given a budget they did not create but were responsible for managing. Without participating in reporting and budgeting meetings cost center managers did not feel personal accountability for the budgets they were given.

Acquiring the reports to commence the budget process also required a team of IT professional to extract the data needed for these budgeting and forecasting sessions.



- Large paper reporting books had to be manually distributed by division, producing outdated data as it was printed.

Solution

- Solver's BI360 solution on a Microsoft Dynamics GP platform providing the lower level, real-time reporting required for quick analysis of accurate figures daily, instead of semi-annually, and for proactively managing and adjusting budgets by cost center.

This process could take over a week and did not provide the 360 degree view of the association necessary to compose accurate, realistic budgets for each cost center.

The day-to-day operations of the cost centers also suffered without access to real-time reporting. Managers were only notified two to three times a year whether they were on target to hit their budget. This meant managers only had a real pulse on their business, at best, three days a year.

The Solution

Recognizing that their proprietary reporting software was not allowing AFP to gain the visibility into their data they required to produce accurate, intelligent, real-time reporting they turned to Solver. Solver understood that AFP wanted to move from their top-down reporting structure to a bottom-up approach, empowering and enabling their cost center managers to hold the onus of developing and sticking to their own budgets.

Moving to Solver's BI360 solution on a Microsoft Dynamics GP enterprise resource planning platform, revolutionized the way AFP performed reporting, forecasting and budgeting. Instead of having the executive team setting and dictating the cost center budgets, the cost center managers were given the visibility and control into their cost

structures to create, adjust and execute on budgets daily.

AFP moved from a semi-annual forecasting and budgeting cycle to a monthly cycle driven by their cost center managers; eliminating the bottleneck of the executive team. Cost center managers developed the credibility and accountability the executive team was looking for – "I used to be given a budget, now it's mine, I created it".

"Before, we never had the tools to empower our managers to maintain their own budgets. Now, with BI360, they have been given the tools and discipline to entrench this practice into their daily life," says AFP CFO, Michael Eason. "These tools (BI360) have allowed me to bring large company discipline to a small company at a fraction of the cost."

The Benefits

BI360 not only evolved AFP from a top-down to a bottom-up budgeting approach, but these changes all took place at the most opportune time to discover how well in-tune each cost center had become. During the recent downturn in the marketplace, many organizations needed to readjust their budgets and react quickly to the changes in the business environment.



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Key Benefits

- Lower level reporting capabilities enabling quick query, analysis and reaction time.
- Better management tools providing the opportunity to create and implement contingency plans.
- Keep an accurate pulse on cost structures and actual cost by cost managers daily.
- Quick analysis of real-time actuals versus budget to drive forecast adjustments.
- Shortened and streamlined budget cycles to provide consistency, accuracy and visibility.
- Time and cost savings recognized daily without requiring IT manpower to run reports.

Because of BI360 from Solver, AFP did exactly that. With a microscope view for each manager at the cost center level, they adjusted their forecasts and budgets almost instantaneously to accommodate the changes in the marketplace while still providing the best value to the AFP members.

AFP recognizes BI360 from Solver as the perfect answer to their business challenges as it:

- Delivers lower level, operational reporting capabilities enabling quick query, analysis and actionable data.
- Drives better management tools to create and implement contingency plans as needed.
- Allows cost center managers to keep an accurate pulse on their business and cost structure.
- Requires action and analysis with real-time actuals by budget to drive forecast adjustments.
- Shortens and streamlines budget cycles to provide consistency, accuracy and visibility.
- Provides time and cost savings recognized daily without requiring IT manpower to run reports.

The Summary:

Michael Eason, CFO at AFP, sums up the benefits of BI 360 from Solver:

“Our forecasting and budgeting accuracy has improved tremendously and we see that every month. We are now meeting our forecasts dead on. We have also significantly increased our credibility with our Board of Directors, which is always good news for the association as a whole.”

“We no longer need an army of IT professionals to get the data out of our system we should have had access to in the first place. I’ve spent millions on Oracle systems that required a team of technical experts to operate. Now (with BI360), I can do it all myself – saving us time and money.”