



3Com Leverages Informatica to Gain Valuable Business Insight Across its Global Enterprise

“Since the successful roll-out of our enterprise data warehouse built upon the Informatica data integration platform, 3Com is now realizing the tremendous benefits that come from conducting true enterprise analysis.”

— Ari Bose, Vice President, 3Com

CHALLENGE

Creating an enterprise-wide reporting infrastructure by consolidating data across multiple data warehouses and ERP systems

Informatica Solution

- Informatica PowerCenter®
- Informatica PowerConnect® for SAP

Benefits

- Decreased total cost of ownership
- Reduced IT development
- Streamlined, more efficient business processes
- Improved sales measurement

Nuts and Bolts

- Data Integration: Informatica
- Sources: SAP, MAX, ASK, PeopleSoft, Clarify, flat files

3Com is a global leader in functionally rich, easy-to-use networking products that connect businesses to their employees, customers and suppliers anytime, anywhere.

The Challenge

Since 1995, 3Com’s business has diversified into several product lines through mergers, acquisitions, and new business opportunities. However, with every change, such as its 1998 merger with U.S. Robotics, additional information systems were added. Soon, 3Com found itself with seven disparate systems, each designed to support individual units and not the consolidated business 3Com had become. To consolidate information systems, 3Com needed to build a solid underlying architecture to support an enterprise data warehouse.

Specifically, some of the challenges 3Com faced prior to implementing an enterprise data warehouse included the limited availability of information due to a lack of common data definitions and rigid business rules. For example, data from only one area of the company was addressed, namely sales financial data by individual business units, and critical business data was locked in numerous heterogeneous transactional systems and multiple data warehouses—all using non standardized data structures. As a result, the company’s fragmented reporting environment required intensive manual data reconciliation processes and significant system downtime to produce daily updates.

These challenges were negatively impacting 3Com’s ability to compete globally. With data locked in heterogeneous data warehouses and transactional ERP systems that were not optimized for multi-dimensional and cross-functional business analysis, 3Com was unable to quickly analyze and respond to market conditions.

The Solution

3Com understood a strategy of building functional data marts in support of business users would not resolve its information challenges. Creating multiple functional data marts would only contribute to current conditions, adding a costly support layer. If 3Com wanted to achieve a clear and accurate view of its global business, it needed to pursue a strategy that consolidated customer and transactional information into an enterprise data warehouse where data integrity was assured.



3Com uses their Informatica data integration solution to build and maintain a single enterprise platform instead of supporting several existing data warehouses. By using Informatica, once the enterprise platform was built, 3Com's other data warehouses were shut down. This resulted in an immediate 35 percent reduction in data warehousing operating costs.

In full production since 1999, 3Com's The Data Warehousing Institute (TDWI) award winning "Wisdom Enterprise Data Warehouse" delivers critical business information from operations around the world to thousands of business users across all levels of its worldwide organization, including finance, sales, and manufacturing. And since its original implementation, 3Com's data warehouse has continued to add value and provide strong return on investment.

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Informatica PowerCenter was then used to create an operational data store (ODS) that would serve as 3Com's executive reporting system. In real time, Informatica continually sources data from active ERP systems (SAP, PeopleSoft, Clarify) that in turn populates a data store where business executives have immediate access to real-time business information.

Informatica PowerCenter is also configured to load summarized and dimensioned data from the ODS into the enterprise data warehouse where both current and historic business information is stored. This real-time updating of the data warehouse makes information

immediately available to business users who interact with the warehouse either directly or via the functional data marts, providing the ability to make informed business decisions based on current and historical information.

3Com's data marts were then created by building sales and manufacturing metadata repositories that define the data mart functional domains. These repositories are linked to the metadata layer of the enterprise data warehouse and to 3Com's business intelligence solution. This provides consistent data and business definitions across 3Com's two-tiered information infrastructure, which consists of its enterprise data warehouse and functional data marts.

Informatica PowerMart is also configured to automatically update the ODS with business intelligence information produced by business users via the data marts. These updates are then immediately loaded into the data warehouse by Informatica PowerCenter. This architecture gives 3Com executives and business users access to current and historical information through the ODS and the enterprise data warehouse, respectively.

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The Results

Decreased cost of ownership

With its centralized architecture, 3Com's data warehouse has simplified the overall information management infrastructure, providing optimal cost of ownership. Indeed, these initiatives have led to a 35 percent reduction in data warehouse operating costs.

Reduced IT development

Enforcement of standard data definitions have reduced the time required defining and establishing technical and business parameters.

Streamlined, more efficient business processes

3Com's architecture has enabled it to streamline business processes while maintaining data integrity, improving efficiencies, and reducing operational costs.

Improved sales measurement and customer relationship management

By producing daily reports that monitor order and shipment activity, 3Com is able to perform real-time comparisons of daily results to budgeted and historical results going back over several years. And by having timely sales information, 3Com is able to analyze and adjust sales strategies, enabling a strong market response that positively impacts core earnings.

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