

## Our Customers Speak for Us



*“PowerOLAP is thoroughly embedded in our work processes. Over the past few years, we have created thousands of reports that we need to specifically analyse our financial data. This is in addition to standard management reporting—which we embed in Word documents and PowerPoint presentations to our Board of Directors. We have data that stretches back to 1997, data that is live to the present moment.”*

Theunis Viljoen is the Financial Director of Alexander Forbes PLC, a provider of financial and risk services located in London, United Kingdom. Alexander Forbes has been ranked as one of the top 10 companies of its kind in the world—its multiple divisions, subsidiaries and associates provide risk- and benefit-related services in over 30 countries. The company has been a PowerOLAP customer since late 2001 and has made successive upgrades, so that by now over 100 users log on throughout the U.K. and overseas.

*“It used to take 6 days by a team of professionals working full time and several painful steps of moving data through various software applications to publish our management reports each month. Now the whole process has been reduced to the click of a button with PowerOLAP. Management reporting is live, completely automated, and always available to all corporate users.”*

Like many firms, Alexander Forbes—before the advent of a PowerOLAP-empowered system—had to cope with the shortcomings of several software applications within their reporting and budgeting processes... and the data ended up in Excel spreadsheets, anyway!

*“There was one person ultimately responsible for all consolidations in our budgeting process. The bottleneck was terrible. As for management reporting, we had to download all the information from our accounting package and combine it in Excel, which was a real problem. It took over five days just to copy, bind and send out our management reports.*

The research for a software solution was very thorough: over 40 packages were considered. Along the way, a decision was made not to select a Web-based application. Viljoen recognized the need, instead, for an Excel-based, multidimensional (OLAP cube) solution.

*“We generally found Web-based products to have an appalling interface, and in the end their biggest drawback is that they just do not work like a spreadsheet does, which is what users want.”*



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*"Its speed and flexibility are why we selected PowerOLAP over other OLAP tools in the market. We could not find many of its core features in any other product. For example, updating can be automated and optimized in such a way so that data arrives dynamically from our relational databases, and so we know we have the most up-to-date information in our Excel-based reports at any given time."*

In the selection process, Viljoen thought that the firm might have to select 2 separate products, one for better management reporting, one for better budgeting. He therefore valued the fact that PowerOLAP could provide a solution for both processes. PowerOLAP's strengths were borne out in practice, with immediate and dramatic positive effects on the business.

*"We started with PowerOLAP by developing a Management Reporting model that was highly successful. Creating our customized business model and the connections to our data sources was simple and intuitive. PowerOLAP is user-friendly and report creation through PowerOLAP is a breeze, since it all happens in Excel."*

*"Among the many benefits is the fact that the numbers always stack back—totals tie back to group reports. As a result, people are not questioning the accuracy of the numbers, which was often the case previously."*

*"We have devised balance sheets by legal entity, which is very useful when analyzing variances. It is easy to zoom in or drill down on causes of variances in the balance sheet, and our profit and loss statements."*

*"We subsequently developed an International Budgeting application in addition to Management Reporting, which connects over 100 business users. Our budgeting processes were thereby reduced as dramatically as we did with PowerOLAP reporting."*

The returns on investment for the PowerOLAP solutions—for reporting and budgeting—speak for themselves:

*"Since we adopted PowerOLAP, our business has grown over 50%. And yet, in our Finance Department, we have not expanded our personnel at all. We have maintained a stable number of specialists, all quality people, not just number-crunchers!"*