Our customers speak for us

A PowerOLAP case study with comments from
Joyce Moe, Accounting Manager for ICBA, and
Linda Heinze, Accounting Manager for ICBA Subsidiaries
Independent Community Bankers of America

The highly respected Independent Community Bankers of America (ICBA), *The Nation's Voice for Community Banks*^{SM}, is one of the latest converts to a dynamic PowerOLAP budgeting solution, replacing an unwieldy spreadsheet system. Now that's an organization that can appreciate getting accurate numbers, much faster and easier, "in a single, integrated system"!

"We have seen major benefits," sums up Linda Heinze, Accounting Manager for ICBA Subsidiaries. "When we get requests from Senior Management, we can respond more quickly because the information is already there to 'slice and dice.'"

From Months of Work—to an Integrated System, Online and Dynamic

"We used Excel as our budgeting tool in the past," says Joyce Moe, Accounting Manager for ICBA. "There was a lot of linkage between worksheets and so forth. With 200-plus worksheets linked up, we had to make sure we kept links integral with each other."

File-downloading along with manual entry of data required extensive time and work to complete the budget on time: "Any report or section of a report had to be exported from our accounting system and then imported into Excel. If any dates or other variables changed, the process of exporting and importing needed to be repeated."

Of course, accuracy and timeliness are critical for financial reporting, particularly at an organization like ICBA, which has multiple companies in its subsidiary structure. "Each company has a different time period for budgeting. Last year, the budget process began in May and finished the first week in December," states Heinze,

After implementing a Solomon Accounting system, ICBA recognized that better budgeting could be achieved with PowerOLAP. Now, dynamic budgeting and financial reporting, in addition to advanced planning, forecasting, analysis and consolidations, enhance ICBA's ability to meet strategic goals *ahead of schedule*. "The old budgeting process and worksheets had us looking for a new budgeting, forecasting and reporting tool. With PowerOLAP, thinking of those processes in sync with one another—as a single, integrated system—is a great improvement," affirms Heinze.

PowerOLAP Kicks Things Up a Notch

"We really like the flexibility to look at data from different perspectives, modify dimensions, look at one scenario and then quickly change to a new one," states Moe. "The Drill-Through capability is very useful." This feature allows users to see what transactional data contributes to a point in a PowerOLAP cube, which is another example of how the product facilitates working with both relational (in this case, Solomon) and OLAP data.

Time previously spent on updating data and maintaining worksheets—not to mention preparing, editing, reviewing and securing data in reports—is now devoted to analysis of the data at hand. The result is much more efficiency and improved productivity.

Benefits derived from ICBA's PowerOLAP reporting and budgeting solution:

The Flexibility—
"We really like the flexibility to look at data from different perspectives, modify dimensions, look at one scenario and then quickly change to a new one."

Time Savings—
"We save a great deal of time for what used to be a very labor-extensive process."

Instant Access to Data—
"When we get requests from Senior Management, we can respond more quickly because the information is already there to slice and dice."

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Templates with drop-down windows, regular nightly updates, and the familiar Excel front end serve as additional features that alleviate budgeting and financial reporting pains. Heinze explains: "We've developed templates in PowerOLAP. Before, we had a worksheet for each independent manager—now we are able to take advantage of drop-down windows, which allow you to pick a different point in time and instantly access the data for that selection." The same worksheet can be used over and over, with different selections available in an instant.

An End to Import and Export Difficulties and Delays

Previous reporting required Heinze and Moe to download a report prior to each individual update. "Now the PowerOLAP cube is updated from Solomon on a nightly basis," says Heinze. "Synchronizing the template using nightly updates or rebuilding the cube on an as-needed basis is much easier than the constant importing and exporting," she explains. "And we are more confident the data is accurate since the data is synchronized on this basis."

"Also, because we have all of our information stored in PowerOLAP, we no longer have to take the budget data and import it into the accounting systems, which took months to gather and an additional month to enter the information," Moe continues. "Now, using PowerOLAP combined with Solomon's capabilities, we can bring the budget information captured in PowerOLAP into Solomon with minimal effort."

Integral Data and PowerOLAP: The Best Is Yet to Come

Heinze and Moe are already looking forward to additional benefits beyond those that they now associate with their budgeting process. "We are just reaching the tip of the iceberg," says Moe. "We are not even one year into the process of using PowerOLAP."

"PowerOLAP is going to save a lot more time than what we experienced before with Excel and our accounting systems. We save a great deal of time for what used to be a very labor-extensive process," states Heinze.

Based on their recent success, Moe believes, "During this second round there will be more efficiencies. We can already see it happening—there will be more to come."

"We plan to take PowerOLAP to the next level," says Heinze. "We will explore other things to enhance this very powerful tool and make it even more robust."

For more information about the ICBA, visit their Web site: www.icba.org

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Some of ICBA's Favorite Features:

- **Drill-Through Functionality** "The Drill-Through capability is very useful."

- **Regular Updates** "We are more confident the data is accurate since the data is synchronized through nightly updates."

- **User-Friendly:** "Drop-down windows allow you to pick a different point in time and instantly access the data for that selection."