

Industry

- Property, Infrastructure services

Solutions

- OpenText™ Analytics Suite
- OpenText™ Content Suite

Results

 Enabled **real-time reporting** for both external and internal projects

 Ensured **usability**, even for less technical users

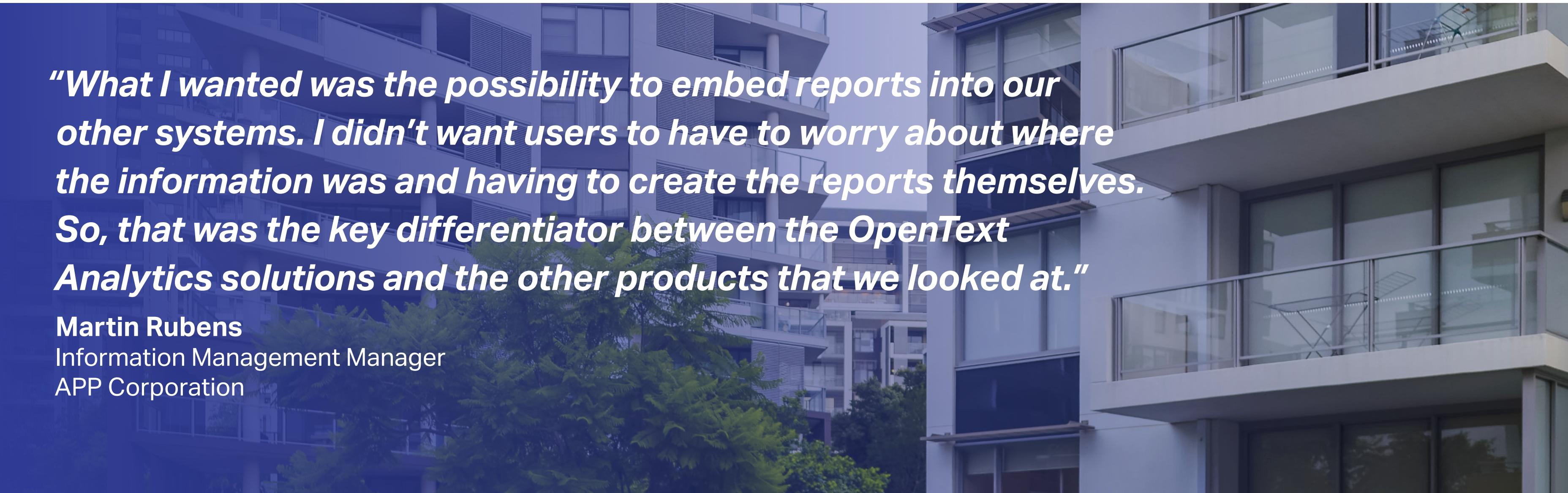
 Increased **efficiency**, saving time and resources

 Simplified **processes** and improved visibility



Professional services group aims to impress with real-time analytics and reporting

APP Corporation simplifies data discovery with the interactive, embedded offerings of the OpenText™ Analytics Suite



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Martin Rubens
Information Management Manager
APP Corporation

Based in Australia, APP Corporation has more than 350 employees across the country, providing a range of property and infrastructure services that include project management, design, independent assurance and consulting. Founded in 1989, the company works in sectors as diverse as aviation, defence, health, residential, commercial and urban development, providing strategic advice, scoping and managing projects, budgets and quality assurance on large infrastructure projects.

Improved reporting, increased efficiency

APP's project managers work closely with clients to bring their property and infrastructure projects to fruition, providing updates in the form of regular progress reports along the way. Often, the APP users are required to work with their clients' existing tools; at other times, APP can provide its own solutions, including reporting functionality that helps the project managers present ongoing information.

Reporting has traditionally been time-consuming and manually intensive, with different systems in place for each client, with little visual appeal. While OpenText™ Content Suite was used, with reporting capabilities available through OpenText™ LiveReports and OpenText™ WebReports, in most cases Microsoft® Excel® was the tool of choice, with users inputting data manually, aggregating it, checking for data accuracy and creating graphs as required.

"Typically, users spent a lot of time collating all the information and putting it into an organized format to present to the clients," said Martin Rubens, information management manager at APP Corporation. **"And sometimes, our reports are presented with reports from architects using other presentation tools, so their reports might have less information but look more flashy."**

Rubens wanted to explore a solution that would help them present that information in a more appealing and user-friendly way, while ensuring data accuracy and efficiencies in the reporting process. The goal is to free up users' time in creating reports instead of focusing on APP's progression of projects and associated financial goals. With the capability and functionality deployed, APP will be able to track and monitor areas that haven't traditionally had enough attention from users who are focused on clients' needs. The solution must be able to provide internal reporting that gives early warnings to project managers and business unit leaders by tracking trends and insights of resource utilization and key performance indicators (KPIs) that are required in the decision-making process.

Since most people in the organization did not recognize any shortcomings with their current process and system, Rubens had to champion the idea of updated functionality to the company, as well as to its clients. Rubens needed a solution to show them exactly what they were missing.

Pilot projects

Rubens' first task was to find the right technology. He needed a budget-friendly option he could use to showcase this new way of doing things. By proving the business benefits that a new technology could achieve, he hoped to justify a greater investment, allowing APP to expand its usage over time. With that in mind, he considered several different reporting and business intelligence products before ultimately opting for OpenText™ Information Hub (iHub) from the OpenText™ Analytics Suite.

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Martin Rubens

Information Management Manager
APP Corporation

"I think those other solutions that we looked at are great for people who know their data and want to go in there and explore, and know the functionality. OpenText Analytics also has that kind of functionality," Rubens said. ***"But what I wanted was the possibility to embed reports into our other systems. I didn't want users to have to worry about where the information was and having to create the reports themselves. I wanted to make it simple. So, that was the key differentiator between the OpenText Analytics solutions and the other products that we looked at."***

Rubens liked that iHub makes data access easy and allows APP to embed reporting seamlessly into its own technology, so users do not know where the APP solutions ends and iHub begins. Complex reports can be created at the click of a button, while drill-down options on dashboards will allow users to access further information as needed, making it easy to use even for business users without advanced IT knowledge. To showcase the new technology to those users, Rubens immediately put OpenText Analytics to use in three pilot projects—two for clients and one to demonstrate its internal use.

First, he introduced the new functionality into APP's work for a key event the company manages every year. To track its performance from the previous year, APP traditionally used a custom-built system on Microsoft[®] Access[®], exporting the current information to create a monthly Excel-based report. This process would typically take days to complete, as users aggregated information, identified any gaps and input it into a report to present to the client. But with the help of OpenText Analytics, the process was streamlined, offering on-demand information.

"We exported the previous year once and kept that in Excel. Then we accessed the live information in an iHub report and were able to reconcile any gaps with a click of a button. It speeds up the aggregation and analysis process of data," Rubens said.

The company also introduced OpenText Analytics into a solution custom made for an insurance company client. When faced with a major event such as a natural disaster, the company engaged APP to manage repairs for its customers. iHub allowed APP to report back updates and relevant information for ongoing projects in real time, linking to Google Maps[™] for a more visually appealing, interactive interface. Reports and dashboards could be provided at any time, whether the client wanted them on a daily basis or their traditional two-week schedule. ***"Project managers click a button and they get the report already formatted with the logos and PDFs. They can attach it to an email and send it or print it straight away without any further work around it,"*** Rubens said.

Finally, Rubens demonstrated iHub's potential for internal use by adding embedded, real-time reporting to an internally built salary review system. With information readily available to managers interested in examining proposed salary changes, diversity issues, gender biases and so on, decision-making became easier. This significantly lifted the burden for the HR team, who no longer had to work around the clock to accumulate the necessary data and produce the reports requested by managers making salary decisions. ***"If they're looking to cross check that a person is in the right [salary] band based on their experience, they get all that information from our report,"*** Rubens said. ***"And that is feeding directly from the live system of this current salary review process. We also gave HR a tracking dashboard where they can see who has already entered their review."***

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Martin Rubens

Information Management Manager
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Making an impression

Rubens has a long-term plan to migrate every APP report into iHub, exposing all of the company's 350 users to the system, embedded within APP's own technology. While the project is a work in progress, he has already seen success, uncovering other champions for the new system, including the business unit leader for the insurance company that was one of the first clients to see its results. **"He loved it because he saw straight away that real-time reporting was a key differentiator,"** Rubens said.

Internally, Rubens hopes OpenText Analytics will increase visibility within the company, helping APP improve its financial system to maintain a closer look at client reporting and analysis. He wants to expand APP's internal usage of iHub even further, embedding the solution into portlets available through OpenText Content Suite Release 16, to give business users a constant view on-screen of the financial status for their unit.

"For example, if a business unit leader is logged in, it will allow them to have the financial status of their business unit in the corner of the screen. That is information generated through iHub and presented on the screen," explained Rubens. **"Similar to that functionality, is the concept that users can build customized dashboards displaying corporate or project information relevant for their role. For example, this information could relate to projects they are running, the division they are running, the branch, whatever that is. We are hopefully working towards that direction."**

Rubens also wants to extend the offerings they have created for existing clients to all clients and projects, including the option to allow select clients to directly access information in a self-serve option.

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