

ValleyCrest

CLIENT SUCCESS

SNAPSHOT



ValleyCrest is the largest integrated landscape company in the United States. Founded in 1949 as a small neighborhood landscape retail nursery, ValleyCrest now has more than 100 offices worldwide. Notable clients have included the Nixon Presidential Library, Centennial Olympic Park in Atlanta, and Caesars Palace in Las Vegas.

ORGANIZATION

With headquarters in Calabasas, California, ValleyCrest is the largest landscape services company in the United States offering design, installation, maintenance, and tree growing and moving. Founded in 1949, ValleyCrest is now a billion-dollar company with customers throughout the world.

CHALLENGE

Rescue a stalled BI project started by another consulting firm. Create a BI dashboard and associated reports to enable company leaders to obtain critical information about the business.

STRATEGY

Offer strategic shifts in direction for the project, including recommending and deploying the correct technology for the job. Pre-aggregate data into cubes for reporting. Tune slow-loading reports to improve performance.

SOLUTION

A map-based BI dashboard enables authorized users to view geographical representations of net profit, net revenue, labor costs and other metrics across more than 40 regions. Users can easily drill down to view the underlying data by region, branch, job and other dimensions.

RESULTS

Roles, privileges, authorizations and spending levels can be easily established, modified and updated. The console can be reused as a gateway for other university applications.

To better manage its large construction and maintenance projects, ValleyCrest developed a business intelligence (BI) environment that draws information from 80 million transaction records in the company's JD Edwards ERP system and presents it via a map-based dashboard that enables managers to quickly view major business trends by drilling down from region to branch to job.

IT professionals at ValleyCrest were part-way through an ambitious BI project when they found that some of the consulting resources they had retained did not have a firm grasp on the technology. The solution was not delivering what was required. Some reports were loading slowly or not at all. The consulting team lacked the expertise to do the performance tuning that was needed.

ValleyCrest needed additional skilled resources that understood the advanced functionality of BI technology products and could get the job done. They hired Visus LLC to help them complete the project and create a map-based BI dashboard.

"The team of BI experts from Visus got up to speed very quickly and began addressing and solving problems right away," says Howard Nusinov, Director of Applications at ValleyCrest. "They rescued the project."

Bringing in the Experts

In 2010, leaders at ValleyCrest set out to create a BI system to make more effective use of company data. They began by surveying end-users to determine what they thought was needed. The goal of the BI project was to turn data into useful information to help business leaders make better decisions more quickly, so they can reduce costs, see opportunities and identify problem areas. This would permit them to offer more competitive services to customers.

"We would definitely hire Visus again. We've met a lot of technology vendors that say they have BI expertise, but not many of those have shown the kind of strength Visus has in their understanding of BI and how to get it to work, and work right."

– John Johnston, Vice President and Chief Information Officer, ValleyCrest

In early 2011 ValleyCrest purchased iQ for Business to create a number of multidimensional databases and data warehouses. Leaders at iQ for Business recommended that ValleyCrest hire BI experts from Visus to get the solution working to expectations. "Visus had specialists in each of the areas that we needed help with," says

ValleyCrest

CLIENT SUCCESS

Fanny Palumbo, Project Manager for Business Intelligence at ValleyCrest. “They offered strategic direction changes and were able to suggest ways to approach particular BI reporting needs and performance problems.”

Delivering an Enterprise-Caliber Solution

After conducting a technology assessment, Visus determined that the previous consultants were not using all of the appropriate tools for the job. “Visus understood the best practices for BI tools and was able to clearly show us the advantages of the correct technology for what we wanted to accomplish,” says John Johnston, Vice President and Chief Information Officer at ValleyCrest.

Visus was originally brought in for a one-month engagement. But as their broad range of expertise became evident, ValleyCrest retained them for seven additional months. During that time, Visus met with ValleyCrest every day of the week, without fail. Visus offered a broad window of availability and worked diligently, responding to requests from the ValleyCrest team.

“Visus demonstrated expertise with BI and data management to qualify them for high level work with analytics, dashboards, and reporting,” Nusinov says. “We were very comfortable with the range of skills they brought to bear.”

“Visus was very responsive, which was key. They certainly had some high-powered resources that were very knowledgeable in the technologies we were using. They brought in a professional and dependable BI team that helped us out of a tough spot. We were able to obtain solutions to problems that we weren’t able to solve before.”

– Howard Nusinov, Director of Applications, ValleyCrest

Visus leveraged its Microsoft Gold partnership and its partnership with iQ for Business to help them get the job done. They implemented Microsoft SQL Server Reporting Services (SSRS) as a front-end reporting tool and then ported many of the existing reports to this new environment, saving time by retaining much of the analysis services and business logic within the reports.

Visus went on to create a BI dashboard using Microsoft Silverlight and Bing Maps to display data by business unit across more than 40 U.S. regions. They used color-coded pins in the map to represent financial metrics such as net profit, net revenue, and labor costs. Clicking on the pins lets managers gather critical information about their territories and keep tabs on the projects under their purview, drilling down to view detail data in a series of reports. Eventually, more than 800 people will use the system internally.

Improving System Performance

Visus also fixed performance problems by re-coding reports and pre-aggregating transaction data into cubes for reporting. For example, previously it took more than a minute to load and present the P & L summary report. Now it loads in less than ten seconds.

“Visus was able to suggest alternatives and changes in direction. They understood how to use aggregation to greatly increase the performance of our reports. That is a very rare skill. There aren’t many people who can look at a report and say, ‘I can make this ten times faster,’ and their solution works.”

– John Johnston, Vice President and Chief Information Officer, ValleyCrest

Johnston and his team are already getting positive feedback about the new BI system, with users reporting that they are getting better information more quickly.

“The dashboard makes it very easy for our executive team to quickly identify problem areas and take action,” he confirms. “We can manage our business more closely and be more responsive in this competitive environment. We can give our customers the best quality for the money and demonstrate the quality that we are providing at a very detailed level. That’s a big win for everyone.”

For more success stories, please visit:
visusllc.com/success-stories