



Success story

North Star BlueScope Steel

Industry

- Manufacturing

Solutions

- OpenText™ Big Data Analytics
- OpenText™ Information Hub (iHub)



Steel band manufacturer makes costing clearer through analytics

North Star BlueScope Steel uses OpenText Analytics Suite for a fuller, less resource-intensive view at customer costing

Results



A deeper analysis of costing data, pinpointing higher profit potential and upselling prospects



A better understanding of customer trends and needs



Quicker, more intelligent, decision making, inspired by accessible data

"This is an attempt to obviously improve profitability, but also to increase the margin for every coil that we produce. A lot of that depends upon the buying habits of our customers, so we are going to be giving our sales folks much more detailed analytical information."

Malcolm Edge
Director of Technology
North Star BlueScope Steel



A subsidiary of Australia-based BlueScope, North Star BlueScope Steel produces and supplies hot-rolled steel bands for coil processors, cold rolled strip producers, pipe and tubers, equipment manufacturers and steel service centers. Founded in 1997, the company is the largest scrap steel recycler in Ohio, recycling nearly 1.5 million tons of scrap steel every year.

Better analysis, fewer resources

A longstanding customer, North Star BlueScope Steel has been using OpenText™ Information Hub (iHub) as a business intelligence platform within its IBM® Maximo® Asset Management environment, allowing the company to engage with its data and visualize it through reports and dashboards. iHub allows the company to pull in data from any source and leverage its investment in Maximo, as well as any pertinent business data from its ERP and process systems.

In 2015, the company realized it needed a new tool to assist in another area of business that was lagging due to out-dated technology. At the time, costing was still being managed through Microsoft® Excel®, a time-consuming process that saw disparate areas of the enterprise manually collecting data in a file so large and inefficient that it could take up to 10 minutes just to open. The system clearly wasn't meeting its needs. ***"There was really no window into that vehicle for month-over-month comparisons,"*** said Malcolm Edge, Director of Technology with North Star BlueScope Steel. ***"If you wanted to look at May, you had May."***

"To look at January through May, you literally had to go through five different spreadsheets and combine that information manually."

North Star BlueScope needed a more efficient tool to help it more accurately understand its costing data and workflow, so the company could use it to engage with customers, conduct market-based analysis and build purchasing breakdowns. The technology would have to eliminate the manually intensive process and be able to collect data automatically from a variety of sources—including Microsoft® Access® databases and the company's electric arc furnaces (EAF)—allowing it to reallocate staff from the manual process and save on resources, all while better meeting customers' needs.

Automated data collection and analytics

After considering three different analytics solutions, Edge and his team ultimately opted for the OpenText Analytics Suite, adding OpenText™ Big Data Analytics to its existing iHub implementation. With an advanced approach to analytics, it is designed to automatically access, blend, explore and analyze data. ***"What we saw with the Big Data Analytics product was the ability to build in data points,"*** Edge said. ***"Big Data Analytics could point to a particular database and we could extract information automatically and have it pulled into the algorithms that we will use within Big Data Analytics to generate the final monthly report. That would lead to a higher level of automation and far less reliance upon manual intervention and manual work every month end."***

OpenText Analytics Suite also allows the company to compare data month-to-month and analyze how events such as plant delays and bottlenecks might affect company profitability. North Star BlueScope would also now be able to drill down to a cost-per-minute understanding of its business dynamics and—in conjunction with iHub—generate reports that delve into up to five years of data for big picture costing analysis.



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Improving profitability, making data more visible

Big Data Analytics, alongside iHub, has allowed North Star BlueScope to better understand and engage with its business. By analyzing its costing data through the OpenText technology, the company is able to delve deeper into the grades and mixes of steel most likely to generate higher profit margins, and the customers most likely to make a switch. ***“This is an attempt to obviously improve profitability, but also to increase the margin for every coil that we produce,”*** Edge said. ***“A lot of that depends upon the buying habits of our customers. So we are going to be giving our sales folks much more detailed analytical information.”***

As they integrate the technology further into their business, Edge also envisions Big Data Analytics helping North Star BlueScope better present costing and sales updates to their executive and sales teams, broken down on a weekly basis, or as required. These reports will help the company make quality decisions sooner and more intelligently, rather than waiting until the end of any given month. ***“We want to speed up the generation, the collation and the presentation of the data so that we can start to make higher quality decisions in a quicker fashion,”*** Edge said. The executives will also be able to compare data to see changes and trends, and look at the month-to-month performance of their own sales reps to track individual performance.

Once Big Data Analytics becomes an established part of the company culture, Edge and his team plan on expanding its usage even further, making data more visible and accessible while creating a committee within the organization charged with evaluating the analytics available within the two integrated products of the OpenText suite, and all their potential usages within the enterprise.

“This is where I think the future is and I’m excited by it,” Edge said. ***“I see Big Data Analytics being the vehicle to transform analytics within this enterprise and to have one consolidated view and program of analytics. Long term, analytics is so important to us. We are number one in our industry for service and quality, and we want to maintain that. We are now introducing analytics as part of our culture and bringing it under the umbrella of Big Data Analytics.”***

Embracing the Internet of Things, the company also hopes to integrate Big Data Analytics into data points coming directly from its instruments, to analyze electricity consumption, weather patterns, material usage and steel prices for a better idea of future needs and sales potential. ***“We want to be able to use Big Data Analytics for forecasting,”*** Edge said. ***“What does the next six months look like based upon the parameters that we know today? Forecasting is a big thing.”***

About OpenText

OpenText, The Information Company, enables organizations to gain insight through market leading information management solutions, on-premises or in the cloud. For more information about OpenText (NASDAQ: OTEX, TSX: OTEX) visit opentext.com.

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