



“The ability to compare the planning with actual figures helps us to manage better and more decisively. This also applies to dashboards: we can now see exactly how we stand.”

*Hans Moolhuijsen, Financial Director, Manpower Nederland*



Manpower is a full-service organization in the changing world of employment, acting for large and small, local, national, and international companies. The services Manpower provides include recruiting staff on a permanent, temporary, or contract basis, assessment and selection, training, outplacement, outsourcing, and consulting. Manpower operates around the world in 78 countries. The company serves approximately 400,000 clients every year from around 4,400 offices. Manpower has 150 branches in the Netherlands, employing a total of 900 consultants. The head office for Manpower Netherlands is located in Diemen.

## Challenges faced

Manpower has set itself the goal of leading the field in developing and providing services for its clients. In the rapidly changing world of employment, this requires a great deal of flexibility and decisiveness. “Our aim is to keep adjusting to what the market wants,” says Hans Moolhuijsen, Financial Director at Manpower. “And to do that, you need good management information to guide you. When you are starting up a new business, as we did recently with Manpower Senior, you need to hook up with the right management information that keeps you up to date with changes.”

Unfortunately, Manpower had previously been encountering limitations in terms of BI. “We were working with a BI environment we developed ourselves,” relates Hylke Terpstra, Manager of Information Systems. “The system provided us with full and reliable information when we needed it, but because we were approaching our own sources of data directly, it operated too slowly for our needs. It also required a lot of time and work to adjust the portal and reports, which is why we wanted to boost our quality.”

Manpower had also had a previous need to improve the quality of the planning process, too. “Our planning process was good, but it was organized in a traditional way,” says Mr Moolhuijsen. “The branches sent their

### Industry:

- Employment Services

### Geography:

- The Netherlands

### Information needs:

- The ability to respond swiftly and flexibly to developments in the marketplace
- Speeding up the provision of information
- Increasing transparency in the planning process
- Improving the quality of information

### Solutions:

- IBM Cognos 8 BI
- IBM Cognos 8 Planning
- IBM Cognos DecisionStream

### Benefits:

- Faster, better provision of information
- Better grasp of and insight into the planning process
- Better insight into performance
- The ability to respond faster to developments

annual budgets in Excel format to head office, where the information was consolidated by cutting and pasting. This meant we had insufficient insight into the status of the process, which was prone to error and time-consuming. We also wanted more transparency and to be able to compare forecast with actual values.”

## Strategy followed

To streamline the planning process, Manpower opted for a planning solution from Cognos, an IBM company. All of the branches now fill in their budgets, after which they are automatically consolidated at head office. “IBM Cognos 8 Planning is an environment that is easy to use,” says Ms Terpstra. “Because you can make people the owner of part of the planning and reconciliation process, you can monitor it properly.”

The company's BI environment was upgraded with IBM Cognos 8 BI. Manpower has designed a data warehouse as the basis for this system, containing information from a whole range of business systems. The new system handles the applications that the branches use for sales, recording hours worked and matching them to the wages and finance system. The data is then standardized and consolidated using IBM Cognos DecisionStream ETL (extraction, transformation, and load) software before it reaches the data warehouse. The data contained in the data warehouse is made available through a Web portal for producing reports, analyses, and queries.

After designing the data warehouse and BI environment, Manpower developed dashboard reports for the branches that are updated weekly. "Reporting takes place at the branches," says Mr Moolhuijsen. "We produced a dashboard with the eight primary performance indicators that show how we stand, including for actual values compared to forecast." The dashboard is available for various levels of staff, such as the consultants, branch managers, regional managers, and senior management, depending on their areas of responsibility. Individual dashboards were developed for the business and account managers.

### Benefits realized

Cognos has speeded up and improved the supply of information within Manpower, providing the foundation for increasing the company's flexibility and decisiveness. It all begins at the planning stage. "Our planning process is better organized and the information is more reliable now thanks to the integrated consolidation," says Mr Moolhuijsen. "And the fact that we can compare the forecast with the actual figures achieved enables us to manage things better. This is also the case for the dashboards: we can now see exactly where we stand, and the field is better informed, too." He goes on, "The data warehouse and Cognos also enable our analysts to analyze the figures more quickly. We have already noticed that we respond more quickly as a result."

Manpower now intends to apply BI in greater depth. To do that, the company has developed various ready-to-use reports that can be accessed through the Web portal. These reports are currently in use. "They give us an insight into the reasons behind performance, and help us to determine what type of additional action is required," says Moolhuijsen.

Manpower is also in the process of expanding Cognos analysis capabilities further at head office. This includes informing clients through an extranet about ongoing assignments, hours worked, and so on. "It is now a question of building on things further," says Ms Terpstra. "That's why it is important for users to become just as accustomed to the Cognos applications as they are, say, to Excel now."

People's perceptions and experiences with Cognos Planning have been very positive. "They are very happy with it out in the field," says Mr Moolhuijsen. "Everyone is focused on entering data into the system. It took some getting used to, but last year we did our budgets in Cognos for the second time and there were no more little phone calls with questions. That says a lot." Cognos is now supported and recommended internationally within Manpower.

### About Cognos, an IBM company

Cognos, an IBM company, is the world leader in [business intelligence](#) and [performance management](#) solutions. It provides world-class enterprise planning and BI software and services to help companies plan, understand and manage financial and operational performance. Cognos was acquired by IBM in January 2008\*. For more information, visit <http://www.ibm.com/software/data/> and <http://www.cognos.com>.

*\*As a result of the acquisition, product names have now changed to reference IBM at the beginning of the software or service.*