



IIMC-CRC-2016-11

IIMC CASE RESEARCH CENTER (IIMCCRC)
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JANUARY 2017

HPCL AND THE PROJECT BLITZ: EVANGELIZING BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE

SEPTEMBER 2016, HINDUSTAN PETROLEUM CORPORATION LIMITED
(HPCL) ZONAL OFFICE, KOLKATA

“For a large and market leading organization like HPCL it is absolutely essential to drive the critical business decisions with the aid of analytics based intelligence. We had huge volume of data, but creating intelligence out of it and using that in developing our strategy was the key challenge. We had envisioned BI implementation as an opportunity to mature the HPCL workforce all the way from computer literacy to data literacy and finally to information literacy. Today I am happy to see that a considerable progress has happened towards that goal.”

With these words Mr. R. Radhakrishnan, Executive Director, Information Systems (Functional) at HPCL concluded his speech. He was addressing employees at the HPCL Kolkata office during an appreciation program organized on the occasion of the release of a new upgraded version of the Business Intelligence (BI)¹ system to the users. The BI system in HPCL was upgraded from Oracle version 10g to version 11g with lot of expectation. Most of the Senior management team of HPCL were waiting for this software upgrade so that they

¹ Business Intelligence (BI) refers to the set of technologies and software used for collection, integration, analysis and presentation of business information from the organization's data. The purpose of BI is to help the corporate executives make more informed business decisions.

Indranil Bose and Saikat Dutt of the Indian Institute of Management Calcutta developed this case study as the basis for class discussion rather than to illustrate the effective or ineffective running of an organization.

Indian Institute of Management Calcutta gratefully acknowledges the financial contribution of 23rd batch of PGP alumni in fully supporting the expenses toward development of this case study at the Case Research Centre of the institute.

could use the new enhanced features of BI to manage their business units. After the session Radhakrishnan was in his cabin sipping coffee. Suddenly his eyes stopped on a banner displaying the BI evangelization event 'Blitz' that took place last year. The memories started pouring in, it took him a lot to reach this point of BI awareness in the organization today. Looking back at the journey of the BI system in the last three years, he felt content about the steps taken by his team in not only overhauling the BI system but also in evangelizing it across the organization. Certainly it was not an easy journey and he was aware that there was a scope for improvement as well.

The major achievements in the BI evangelization journey were to make the system technically stable and also to align the functionalities with the end user needs. The adoption of it by important business units also ratified the usefulness of the BI system in driving significant business decisions. But Radhakrishnan and his team were also well aware of the BI reports usage being limited only to pockets and a widespread adoption would need some out of the box strategic planning by his team. How the BI system could generate more predictive analytics and 'what-if' reports² so that the strategic decisions were more data driven and scientific was also a constant ask from the users. Radhakrishnan recalled that such reports were shown by the Oracle marketing team during the demonstration of Oracle 11g software, but his team would need to analyse the new requirements related to this from the business users and update the report marts with the new features that were available. One such expectation was also to get more mobility features from the upgraded BI system as the number of users checking the BI reports on mobile and tabs instead of laptops or desktops were on the rise. He hoped that all these should also help improve the user adoption of the BI system and hence those should be the focus areas for him in the coming years.

²What-if analysis is a kind of predictive analysis where a set of outcomes are arrived at based on an organization's historical data about a particular business inputs to the system. This is part of the advanced features in most of BI systems and enables organizations to analyze prospective outcomes based on likely business scenarios.