



CUSTOMER STORY



STRATEGIC REPORTING – WITH BUSINESS ANALYTICS

GFKL Financial Services AG automates Reporting by integrating Excel with SAS® Business Analytics Framework

**THE
POWER
TO KNOW®**



“With SAS Business Analytics Framework we have significantly reduced the manual activities in our reporting and can now dedicate more time to strategic analysis and controlling our portfolios.”

Melanie von der Lippe

Team Manager Portfolio Analytics & Valuation, GFKL Financial Services AG

■ **Industry**

Financial Services

■ **Task**

Automating analysis and reporting in the areas of portfolio valuation, controlling and risk management

■ **TOP Challenge**

Inventory, analysis and structuring of existing Excel spreadsheet

■ **Solution**

Integrated analysis and reporting environment with SAS® Business Analytics Framework

■ **TOP Benefits**

Automated data management frees up valuable space for strategic analysis and valuation

■ **SAS Partner**

ClusterSeven

The Customer

GFKL Financial Services AG, founded in 1992, is a financial services company covering the areas of Receivables Management and Software. In the business area of Receivables Management, the company is servicing receivables worth about Euro 21.5 billion. GFKL is one of the leading providers of receivables management services in Germany. The services include both administration in trust and the collection of distressed receivables; they also include the evaluation and purchase of such receivables. The classes of receivables range from real estate mortgages, including the utilization of collateral; they encompass consumers’ credits and volume-business receivables, involving small amounts, and go through to short-term receivables from commerce, tradespeople and industry. The GFKL Group’s product portfolio in the business area of software technology covers products supporting all important administration and sales processes in insurance companies as well as a complete credit process for banks.

The Task

Since its foundation GFKL has been growing significantly. The challenges for reporting and control have grown accordingly with its expanded business. The consequence: It was foreseeable that the Excel and Powerpoint based reporting of the past would stretch to its limits. “It was important to us to be ready for additional growth. And with

an even higher amount of data and Excel spreadsheets the spreadsheet-based reporting would have easily become confusing”, says Melanie von der Lippe, Team Manager Portfolio Analytics & Valuation with GFKL Financial Services AG. “Considering the growing reporting demands and to avoid risks, it was clear to us that we needed to build a new reporting solution which combined Excel with efficient software for analysis”. Moreover, analysts at GFKL wanted to spend less time on data management in the future and to gain more time for strategic data analysis. “In the past, we spent about 70 per cent of our time with data handling”, remembers Melanie von der Lippe. “Only 30 per cent was left for strategic data analysis. We wanted to reverse this ratio”. Since portfolio analysis and reporting are essential parts in receivables management, GFKL decided to migrate its Excel based reporting in the ‘Portfolio Analytics & Valuation’ division to a more powerful business analytics environment. In addition to a significant gain in speed the management of GFKL also expected compliance with standards in security, reliability and accuracy in reporting that could be maintained within the continuously growing GFKL group of companies.

The Solution

Today, GFKL relies on a modern analysis and reporting solution based on SAS Business Analytics Framework. Portfolio valuation, (i.e. price definition

for purchased portfolios and inventory control), and reporting to the board and the managing directors of subsidiaries are now almost completely automated. “In the past, we had to manually work on data in many Excel-based lists for each report. This process will now be a matter of hitting a button”, says Melanie von der Lippe. SAS with its sophisticated data management functionality ensures the highest data quality and model-reliability as well as supporting perfect editing in Powerpoint. Employees used to the functions of Excel can still work with an Excel user interface in the new SAS environment due to the SAS add-in functionality for Microsoft Office. In the future, Melanie von der Lippe and her team will use the efficiencies gained for further analysis and assessment of the results. “SAS provides us with the necessary time to perform our strategic tasks and our consulting function for the company with greater depth.” This is supported by a variety of analysis capabilities in the SAS Business Analytics Framework to discover hidden data correlations and derive future trends from historical data.

The Benefits

- Reporting by ‘one-click’ without the need to constantly update Excel spreadsheets and Powerpoint
- Planning of the migration process in a workshop with SAS and ClusterSeven
- More intensive analysis using the SAS Business Analytics Framework

- Reduced reporting efforts with data management and editing down from 70% to 30%
- More time for analysis, results assessments and strategic controls resulting in higher efficiency in data analysis
- Significantly higher qualitative benefits of data analysis for risk detection and risk management plus early planning and implementation of necessary actions

The Project

GFKL justified the construction of its new reporting platform on the consulting and hands-on support of SAS and SAS partner ClusterSeven, a specialist in analysis of large spreadsheet environments. “We started the project with a workshop to establish an inventory of all our Excel documents with the support of SAS and ClusterSeven”, says Melanie von der Lippe. “I had heard a presentation on ‘Spreadsheet Risk’ at an SAS Germany Forum which quickly convinced me of the effectiveness of this approach.” In this workshop specialists from ClusterSeven analysed the structure of the existing Excel spreadsheets and delivered impressive results. “We got a clear picture of our spreadsheet landscape and the many formulae in it”, says Melanie von der Lippe. “And it was obvious to us how effective a migration of the formulae from Excel to SAS would be to achieve less complexity, a higher degree of automation and last, but not least, significantly smaller Excel files”. Based on this analysis the

project team could prioritize the existing documents and finally develop a timetable for the migration of the formulae to the SAS environment. “It was largely due to GFKL that we could achieve tangible results so quickly since they conducted the project with us very efficiently”, says Tülay Stecher, Business Intelligence Expert with SAS. “No later than eight weeks after our first talks at SAS Forum Germany we conducted the workshop. And by the end of it we already had results”. Starting with the workshop proved the right approach for GFKL. “I would like to recommend this approach to everyone having similar plans”, confirms Melanie von der Lippe. “It provided the best opportunity to plan for a structured migration. And the decision to combine Excel with a modern Business Analytics platform has advanced our Controlling”.

About ClusterSeven

ClusterSeven (www.clusterseven.com) provides enterprise-wide, strategic spreadsheet and data management software to financial institutions and Fortune 500 financial reporting divisions. ClusterSeven’s software non-intrusively monitors and tracks spreadsheets to enable users to more effectively manage governance, risk and regulatory compliance obligations in order to generate revenue, enhance staff efficiency and boost productivity.



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