Crystal Xcelsius Provides Exceptional Data Visualization for Medsphere

Challenge

Medsphere is the leading commercial provider of open source-based electronic health record (EHR) systems and services for hospitals and clinics. With large software and professional services engagements, the company has a strong focus on project management through an established Program Management Office (PMO).

Program Management Institute PMP specialists are responsible for presenting the overall progress on the company’s projects – primarily its customer implementations – and they wanted a powerful method to communicate project status to their different stakeholder audiences including board members and customers. Sam Williams, PMP, director of the Program Management Office for Medsphere elaborated on their business challenge: “We needed to transmit essential information such as budget and milestone progress in a very concise and easy to understand fashion. We were using PowerPoint and Excel; however, these didn’t give a snapshot, visual view of the data. We needed a more effective way of communicating status.”

Approach

Why Crystal Xcelsius?

Medsphere chose Crystal Xcelsius to help them communicate project status in a graphical format. Fabian Lopez, PMP, senior business analyst for Medsphere: “After evaluating several dashboard solutions, we chose Crystal Xcelsius because we could deliver real-time performance data directly into a visually intuitive, interactive dashboard. We were able to create a fully functioning model in a matter of days. We also liked the high-impact graphics that allow us to create dramatic dashboards that get attention.”

Medsphere liked that Crystal Xcelsius could integrate with live data sources including BusinessObjects XIR2 and that it works within their existing security infrastructure [see Diagram 1].

Diagram 1: A sample workflow of how to develop a Crystal Xcelsius dashboard connected live to a Crystal or Web Intelligence report.
Process

The PMO pulls data from various data sources across the entire organization to populate their Crystal Xcelsius dashboards, ensuring that the dashboards provide a complete picture of project status. Currently the PMO manually updates these dashboards at regular intervals; however, they are transitioning to full automation using the live data connectivity feature available in certain configurations of Crystal Xcelsius.

Results

Exceptional Dashboards

The Medsphere PMO has developed various dashboards to convey project status information from across the company on each customer implementation. Crystal Xcelsius’ intuitive interface allows the PMO to easily create or modify a dashboard based on stakeholder requests. Key dashboards include enterprise performance management dashboards, such as the Project Performance Dashboard and the Project Status Dashboard, as well as others, including Scheduling, Actuals vs. Planned, Issues, Top 5 challenges, Risk Management, and Earned Value Management dashboards.

- **Project Performance Dashboard**: The Project Performance Dashboard helps Medsphere managers, executives and board members quickly obtain an understanding of the progress of customer implementations. For example, they can see at a glance budget and schedule performance that can be used to forecast future performance [see Diagram 3].

- **Project Status Dashboard**: The Project Status Dashboard helps Medsphere managers, executives and board members quickly obtain information on project challenges including burn off and aging status.

Medsphere can add these live interactive dashboards into PowerPoint, PDF or on the Web, giving users the information in whatever format they’re comfortable with. Users can also drill-down into the dashboard to study the underlying data. The source data is always the same and Medsphere can choose the preferred presentation format.

Business Benefits

Improved communication

“Crystal Xcelsius helped us accomplish one of our major goals: improved communication. Its visual display of information makes complex messages very easy to understand,” said Williams. Sam explains that a PMP Specialist has two major skills they must be well versed in: negotiation and communication. “If people don’t understand you, the right things aren’t going to happen. Crystal Xcelsius helps us make this process
simple. Now it’s hard to misinterpret the message as it’s in a clear visual format that people can readily understand.”

**Ability to get an accurate pulse on the business**

“The dashboard project is really about controlling and monitoring. The dashboards help us see the big picture, and at the same time, we can drill down into smaller pieces to make decisions based on that insight,” said Lopez. “By knowing that we are behind schedule, relevant stakeholders can make quick decisions to get things back on track. The impact is very high.”

Previously, Medsphere internal users had to sort through numerous PowerPoint slides and decks to get at critical customer project information. With Crystal Xcelsius, they can see overall status at once and drill into relevant or concern areas, helping them prioritize where decisions need to be made. Medsphere often uses the Crystal Xcelsius stoplight graphical presentation of data to give users a snapshot view of information – red indicates a problem area, yellow indicates a potential problem area, and green indicates that everything is on track.

![Diagram 3](attachment:image.png)

*Diagram 3:* One of the Medsphere Project Performance dashboards visualizing customer implementation status (data altered in order to use the dashboard as a demonstration).

**Improved ability for the PMO to accomplish its goals**

The PMO develops and implements standardized processes across the company. The PMO lays out a plan, budget, timeline, resources, quality standards and other performance measures to ensure that company-wide initiatives are done in a timely, effective and profitable manner. And Crystal Xcelsius helps them accomplish this. Explained Williams: “As a PMP Specialist, we are interested in the quality of the information and trying to determine how much information people need and what kind
of information is important for them to know at any given time. Crystal Xcelsius helps us present the right information, at the right time, in the right way. It’s what has helped us accomplish the objectives PMP specialists set out to do everyday.”

**For More Information**

**About Crystal Xcelsius**

Crystal Xcelsius provides industry leading interactive data visualization. With Crystal Xcelsius Standard and Professional, users can create Excel dashboards and business presentations from ordinary spreadsheets – then integrate them into PowerPoint, Word, PDF and the Web. Crystal Xcelsius Workgroup allows the user to create interactive business dashboards connected “live” to company data, then share them “live” to a user’s desktop, or across any Portal environment. Learn more about these editions at [www.xcelsius.com](http://www.xcelsius.com).

Crystal Xcelsius also integrates with Business Objects enterprise applications. To learn more, please visit [www.businessobjects.com/dataviz](http://www.businessobjects.com/dataviz).

**About Medsphere Systems Corporation**

Medsphere is the leading commercial provider of open source technology for the healthcare industry. The company is revolutionizing healthcare by delivering commercially supported software based on the proven VistA® electronic health record (EHR) developed by the Department of Veterans Affairs. Under the brand name of OpenVista™, Medsphere offers a portfolio of products and professional services for hospitals, clinics and integrated delivery networks. The company addresses the capital constraints of the healthcare industry through an innovative subscription-based pricing model. Medsphere’s experienced team of healthcare technology professionals and unique suite of rapid implementation tools deliver unprecedented time to value recognition. For more information, visit [www.medsphere.com](http://www.medsphere.com).