



TIMEXTENDER | **AVR**

Danish engineering firm AVK Group data warehouses its international operations with TimeXtender's Discovery Hub®

Across borders, continents and time zones, AVK Group gains insight into the data generated by its international business through fast, agile data warehousing

PEOPLE AND PIPELINES

Based in Denmark, The AVK Group was established by, and named after, Aage Valdemar Kjaer who, in 1941, set up a machine shop to serve his local community. From these humble beginnings, the group now comprises of AVK Water, AVK Industrial and AVK Advanced Manufacturing, which makes up more than 100 companies that primarily supply valves, hydrants and components to the water and gas supply, sewage and fire protection sectors; including a wide range of other types of valves and accessories for industrial applications.

With these sectors serving numerous international businesses — dealing in everything from mining and the marine sector to water treatment, power generation and industrial chemical processing — AVK sells its products all around the world. With the megacities of the 21st century predicted to be in Africa due to population growth and increased urbanization, and climate change set to make drinkable water a valuable commodity everywhere, AVK Group is increasing its scope and scale through acquisitions in order to serve an ever-growing global need for its services.

MAKING THE MOST OF BUSINESS DATA

Soon, the AVK Group was in a similar position to many other businesses, in that while it was generating large amounts of data, it wasn't in a position to analyze it quickly enough to allow agile decision-making.

At the time, most of the company was using Microsoft's Dynamics NAV. With its mix of budget and human resource management tools and its ability to operate across multiple sites, Dynamics NAV gave AVK a certain amount of analytical power, yet it still wasn't enough. Reports were being made locally by each company in Dynamics NAV, who then handed them to the finance, sales or supply chain management. Not only did this require a lot of manpower, it also meant that reports took time to compile and often led to reporting of the past rather than the present state of each company.

To address this, AVK launched an internal project called SCIPPER, with a goal to provide an umbrella of business applications to the operational companies (OC) as well as increasing speed of production, customer service, effectiveness and employee motivation. A part of this project was a single, global analysis and reporting tool. The areas of focus were laid

PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

CUSTOMER BACKGROUND

- A Danish business with 3,800 employees worldwide
- Its core business is supplying valves and hydrants for water and gas supply, sewage and fire protection
- Net sales of DKK 4.7bn with a year-on-year growth of 26% driven by acquisitions in the UK and Australia

CHALLENGES

- To find a data-based solution to the company's SCIPPER needs
- To ensure a future-proof data warehousing system capable of working globally and growing with the business
- To successfully integrate existing Microsoft products into a single, unified system

SOLUTION & BENEFITS

- AVK Group implemented TimeXtender's Discovery Hub® in 2010
- Using Discovery Hub® as a data estate and TARGIT for reporting, companies around the globe can report daily
- Greater insights and analysis are available company-wide, yet the system is maintained with the minimum of IT staff

out in the letters of SCIPPER and the objective was to enable integration and communication between all the OC's. Although at that point, how they planned on achieving them had not been decided:

- S – Supply chain
- C – Customer service
- I – Integration
- P – Planning
- P - Production
- E – E-business
- R – Reporting

FINDING A GLOBAL SOLUTION

Whatever system they eventually went with, AVK Group knew that it would not only need to serve the needs of SCIPPER but also had to be compatible with existing Microsoft products running on SQL servers. As Brian Søggaard Søby, Senior Business Application Consultant at AVK explains, when they saw TimeXtender's Discovery Hub®, they realized they'd found what they were looking for.

"We said, 'Okay, we don't need to go any further with other products,' because Discovery Hub® did the job," recalls Brian. "It was clear that we could easily get data from all the companies making up the group, and that we could build up something that was useful without huge amounts of people getting involved."

How few people? Well, with Discovery Hub® implemented across the company since 2010, its automation of numerous functions is such that Brian himself handles all the day-to-day needs of the system. With Discovery Hub® building up all the cubes within the data warehouse, TARGIT is then used on the top for analysis and reporting.

The initial rollout upgrading all the groups' UK companies went so well that other parts of the business quickly followed. "We found that we could add new companies to the BI solution very easily because we had the templates already built in TimeXtender picking up what we needed for tables, fields, and so on," says Brian. "It was just a matter of finding a new NAV database source at each company." The group now has 60 Dynamics NAV and 2 Dynamics AX companies on SCIPPER.

DATA FLOWING AROUND THE WORLD

Although reporting and analysis timeframes have been slashed by the SCIPPER project and the implementation of Discovery Hub®, the group still must contend with certain infrastructure limitations. Companies in China, for example, initially had to work from an intermediate database due to poor connection speeds, as did ones in Brazil. Now that these issues have been solved, a similar situation with recently acquired Australian companies is being dealt with.

Yet overall, the group has encountered few friction points implementing its SCIPPER principles everywhere. Even though AVK Group currently comprises of 115 companies all around the world, and not all of them currently run Dynamics NAV or AX, the implementation of Discovery Hub® still allows just a single person – Brian – to oversee the whole group's reporting needs.

Why has Discovery Hub® been so instrumental in AVK Group meeting its data management objectives? "I think the first thing is that it's so simple and automated," says Brian. "Also, it's flexible and agile, it's quick to adjust, quick to publish, and it is always online, even when we're working behind the system and doing some changes. These are the three biggest benefits to us."

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Brian Søggaard Søby, Senior Business Application Consultant, AVK Holding

You're in good company

TimeXtender's Discovery Hub® provides companies with instant access to data, enabling them to make quality business decisions with data, mind and heart. Because time matters.

To learn more about Discovery Hub® and how the power of automation can move your business forward, visit:

www.timextender.com