



Freddy
Vlaeminck

97 COUNTRIES, 1 DATA CENTER

Remuneration policies vary greatly depending on sector and country. Watson Wyatt Data Services provides companies with current information on local remuneration packages and policies in 97 countries. To optimize data management and achieve economies of scale, Watson Wyatt is gradually switching from four data centers to a single platform running on SAS. The company also relies on SAS to produce reports for its worldwide customer base. Full details on local and global remuneration policies

Sector

Data services

Business Issue

Optimize data processing and data management

Solution

SAS Server

Benefits

Improved policy formulation based on:

Economies of scale: SAS enables Watson Wyatt to consolidate four data centers into a single smoothly run center. This reduces infrastructure and maintenance costs.

Fast and accurate reporting: data analysts worldwide have remote online access to SAS generated reports.

Ease of use: users require no programming knowledge to produce reports.

SAS POWERS WORLDWIDE HR DATA GENERATION SYSTEM

The Human Capital Consulting branch of Watson Wyatt offers a wide range of HR data services to companies. What are the levels of pay for a sales engineer in a given country? Which functions are entitled to a company car? What type of pension scheme is generally offered in a specific sector? Watson Wyatt provides its customers with up-to-date information on these as well as other issues such as remuneration packages, executive compensation, HR strategy, job evaluation, and salary structuring. It conducts surveys at least every twelve months to keep its data current and produces approximately 1,600 reports a year.

Single data center reduces costs

Although the generation of reports is regionalized, data processing and management are centralized as much as possible. "Running a data center in each country is simply not cost-effective in our business," observes Freddy Vlaeminck, Head of Product Development at Watson Wyatt. "In an attempt to achieve economies of scale, we are currently running four data centers worldwide. However, our data centers each use different IT systems, which results in inconsistencies. We have therefore decided to switch to a single global data center. Using one system

instead of four will generate greater consistency as well as significant economies of scale. Having a single point for upgrades, licenses, back-ups, archiving, and disaster recovery also greatly reduces our infrastructure and maintenance costs."

SAS chosen for robustness and processing power

Watson Wyatt evaluated its different systems and decided to keep SAS for its single data center. It also opted to make the Brussels office the hub for its single processing platform, since this office already used SAS technology and hosts the company's Europe, Middle East, and Africa (EMEA) Data Services operations.

"We chose SAS because of the stability and robustness of their systems. SAS requires little maintenance," notes Frederick Raymond, Programmer at Watson Wyatt. "Compared to other tools, it is able to process larger quantities of data. In other words, it provides us with the high processing power that is essential in our business."

Reports are generated locally in the required language, but the core information is stored in a single remote server.

“Because of its capability to handle large volumes of information in a single data center, SAS has enabled us to achieve considerable economies of scale.”

Freddy Vlaeminck

Easy remote access to SAS-based server platform

The data from the other three centers are being progressively migrated to the central SAS platform. Once this transition is completed, Watson Wyatt analysts from all branches worldwide will be able to remotely access the new single data center online.

The infrastructure comprises three layers. The information at the data center is stored in various databases on an SQL server. A SAS server is used to interface with each of the databases on the SQL server. The set-up also features a browser-based user interface that runs directly on the SAS server. This means that SAS software does not need to be installed locally on workstations. Users can access the Web browser interface from anywhere (home, office, client site, etc.) by means of a user ID and password. All results and queries are securely transmitted to the user through the industry-standard Simple Object Access Protocol (SOAP).

Reporting on various sector benchmarks

Analysts at Watson Wyatt can generate reports in every local language. These reports are meant for compensation and benefits managers, who in turn use them to define policies for each country. They contain detailed information on the requirements of a job and the levels of responsibility for a given position. The reports also provide bench-

marks compared to peers. “What our clients are looking for are relevant and complete data,” notes Freddy Vlaeminck. “Is the measured sample large enough? Does it reflect data from comparable companies in their sector? Can they easily assess the alignment of jobs with the related salaries? The SAS reports provide all these details to help our clients make the right decisions in terms of salary increases and career progression rates, for instance, in whatever country they are active.”

Ease of use, quality of data

Putting the reports together does not require any programming knowledge. “Users simply need to select the information they want to feature on the reports,” explains Vlaeminck. “Our data analysts find it very easy to use the application. The tool helps them achieve advanced reports in a matter of minutes.”

Frederick Raymond adds that “in addition to enabling faster reporting, SAS also checks the veracity and quality of data. Providing customers with correct data is absolutely essential. The SAS metadata function helps us achieve just that.”



SAS INSTITUTE NV/SA | HERTENBERGSTRAAT 6 | B-3080 TERVUREN
TEL: +32 (0)2 766 07 00 | FAX: +32 (0)2 766 07 77 | WWW.SAS.COM/BELUX

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