



Grant Felsing
Decision Support Manager
Briggs & Stratton

BRIGGS & STRATTON HARNESSES OPERATIONAL DATA

SAS® powers executive decision making with advanced analytics, dashboards, early warnings and more

Industry

Manufacturing

Business Issue

Move beyond operational reporting to provide managers and executives with strategic information.

Solution

SAS® powers business intelligence at all levels of the company – from quality improvement to supply chain intelligence.

Benefits

New quality application saves more than \$1 million in first year alone.

As the world's largest manufacturer of air-cooled gasoline engines, Briggs & Stratton powers lawn equipment, pressure washers and generators for thousands of original equipment manufacturers around the world – including Campbell Hausfeld, John Deere, Craftsman and Toro. But when it comes to setting the stage for advanced data warehousing and state-of-the-art business intelligence, Briggs & Stratton turns to SAS.

A SAS customer for nearly 20 years, Briggs & Stratton has a long history of using SAS to transform operational data into strategic intelligence. “Even though we have disparate pieces of software that actually operate the business, including SAP R/3 and Oracle, we use SAS for our business intelligence endeavors,” says Grant Felsing, the company's Decision Support Manager.

Led by Felsing, the IT department began building its data warehousing infrastructure in 1988; by 1995, SAS software supported 15 extract engines and more than 4,000 reports. In 1998, Briggs & Stratton invested in R/3, but the new ERP system essentially wiped out its entire reporting infrastructure. Felsing again turned to SAS.

While SAP R/3 updated the company's operational environment and removed the bulk of its legacy systems, it also removed most of the sources for the company's advanced data warehouse. The legacy systems had contained not only the data management component but also the accumulated programming layers unique to Briggs & Stratton.

Because the company had come to rely on daily access to this information, it had to reacquire all of its business intelligence as quickly as possible.

“SAS, as a company, really stepped up to the plate for us to resolve the situation,” says Felsing. “We moved from a legacy mainframe environment to UNIX-based servers, and SAS added the insight and business reporting we needed on top of SAP R/3 to make the system complete.” Now, Felsing says his team can concentrate on providing executives with a more strategic level of information.

Informing executives, empowering managers

According to Felsing, SAS takes data from dozens of operational sources throughout the company and uses that information to tell a story. “With SAS, we're not just presenting rows and columns; we're presenting a complete story that will inform executives.”



Using SAS, Felsing's team created an executive management system that presents high-level business intelligence in a scorecard format. “The corporate scorecard is a single place where executives can go to see where we are today compared to where we were at the same point last year,” he explains. Everything is delivered with SAS graphics and SAS reports; executives select

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and modify reports, so they can recognize very quickly when an unusual or unexpected event has occurred.

Operational managers use a similar decision support application that provides a range of metrics for major product lines. Data can be viewed by customer, by product line or by time period. Sales managers, for example, can run reports to understand how well their products are selling around the country. Manufacturing supervisors use the information to optimize production levels based on customer inventory and demand. Supply chain managers can quickly compare inventory levels with sales and shipment levels to see whether all areas are aligned with company expectations.

Quality initiative saves more than \$1 million in first year

Using SAS, Felsing’s team also has developed a system for tracking historical information and monitoring quality trends, facilities operations and failure rates for each engine series. This sophisticated quality improvement application

automatically flags potential areas of concern and sends e-mails to notify managers and executives when problems may be emerging.

Early warning alerts like these help managers address potential concerns before they affect thousands of customers. In fact, Felsing says the manufacturing team was able to identify and address a million-dollar quality issue as soon as the SAS application was implemented. “Identifying that one problem at such an early stage in production may have saved us more than \$1 million alone, and that’s just the tactical savings. Without SAS, our managers wouldn’t have had the ability to pinpoint the problem for at least four more months.”

The strategic benefits – such as fewer warranty claims and enhanced customer satisfaction – can be even more important than the immediate financial gains, explains Felsing. “Finding problems early not only helps the bottom line,” he says, “but it helps you with your entire customer satisfaction level. And there really isn’t anything more important to our company.”

The SAS quality solution also has fostered newfound collaboration between plant managers and corporate managers. “This is something that they can both get excited about,” says Felsing. “SAS helps pick problems off the line and shows them what to fix, giving plant managers a lot of power.”

SAS® does it all

Whether developing analytic applications, early warning systems or executive dashboards, Felsing is confident that SAS will always provide the solutions that meet his requirements.

“With SAS, I’m able to do anything my company needs very quickly and inexpensively,” he says. “SAS puts me in the position to draw on a very high level of expertise, and the quality of the software is an enormous benefit to me and to Briggs & Stratton. Because of our partnership with SAS, I’ve been able to serve my company at a level that I would not be able to with any other platform.”



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