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KLM OPTIMIZES ITS SAS[®] EXPERTISE

Business Issue

KLM needs continuity in its business intelligence and management information projects.

Solution

A centralized competency center merges SAS[®] and MIS skills.

Benefits

KLM's competency center provides more effective use of resources and SAS[®] skills, standardization based on best practices, continuity of expertise and increased staff motivation.

Effective use of information is key to increasing revenues, improving service and cutting costs – and one of the ways that international airline KLM has chosen to do this is by establishing an integrated business intelligence competency center (BICC) within its information services department. The Competency Center includes 50 employees, half of whom are fully focused on SAS applications, and ensures continuity of expertise.

With its international hub at Schiphol airport in The Netherlands, KLM Group carried 22 million passengers and 620,000 tons of cargo in 2005 and provided engineering and maintenance services to more than 100 airlines.

For many years KLM has used SAS to extract and report on data in its operational systems.

Frank van den Berg, Competency Center Manager at KLM, says, “Our SAS end-user community is extensive and diverse; SAS is used to run many detailed aspects of our business. Just a couple of examples: We use SAS to evaluate pricing of seats to maximize revenues and profitability. We also use SAS to ensure that customers get their newspaper of choice on flights. Getting details like that right can make a big difference.”

In van den Berg's opinion, a competency center is a great asset to any organization

that runs on intelligence. “It minimizes continuity problems. People come and go, but we retain the expertise.”

In 2004 KLM merged two of the development departments. “With the merger of the Management Information Competency Center and the SAS Competency Center,” says van den Berg, “we were keen to ensure maximum cross-fertilization of ideas.”

Also, skilled SAS software developers migrated from business units to the enlarged central department. They brought with them their own ways of working, which were typically focused on getting quick results rather than generating sustainable benefit. The challenge was to fit them into the department.

“The competency center approach ensures that talented people use their time more effectively, for example by developing reusable software modules and adhering to standards,” says Wim de Bruijn, Team Manager at KLM Information Services. “We strive to ensure that we have a motivating environment for our employees. Several members of the team have gained SAS Certification, and they receive a lot of recognition.”

Precious resources can be more sensibly allocated now. If a business unit wants to use the competency center resources, it must make a business case in terms of KLM's

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corporate mission. The competency center is also assisting with the migration to SAS^{®9}, which will bring productivity benefits, for example through drag-and-drop functionality and the Web interface.

“With a competency center set up, we can offer continuity,” says van den Berg. “If someone leaves or the business requirements change after the project has been concluded, we are there to get things back on track.”



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