



Alliant Techsystems Inc. (ATK) is a premier aerospace and defense company that supplies aerospace and defense products to the U.S. government agencies, and its prime contractors and subcontractors. The company's products are some of the most sophisticated in the world, including engineering marvels such as reusable solid rocket motors that are a component of the space shuttle propulsion system, and advanced military and space technologies ranging from small-caliber ammunition to satellite components. The company also serves law enforcement agencies and commercial customers.

//WE LISTEN

ATK Aerospace Systems Group is a leader in low-cost, quick to market launch solutions. ATK is the world's top producer of solid rocket propulsion systems and a leading provider of small and micro-satellites, satellite components and subsystems, missile defense and strategic missile propulsion, and lightweight space deployables and solar arrays.

ATK is engaged in hundreds of complex projects at any given time, many of which can take years to complete. The complexity of ATK's products necessitates strong program management discipline, and ATK's focus on execution excellence has been a key driver of the company's success. As part of its focus on improving program management, ATK engaged JCB Partners to assist with tracking the progress of its science and engineering projects. ATK does not have a central data warehouse for reporting on project status, so assembling data across projects in a timely manner was extremely difficult. As a result, executives had to wait to get a complete view of performance across the science and engineering group with respect to engineering performance relative to plan and release schedules.

The scope of the challenge quickly expanded from there. Not only did ATK executives have challenges with engineering release management, but they also needed improved visibility into the financial performance of science and engineering projects. It was vital for ATK to understand the financial implications of engineering decisions both at the project level and across the entire science and engineering group. Similar to the challenge with program management, executives needed to get a consolidated view of financial performance across hundreds of projects in a timely, accurate manner. ATK was wasting considerable time and money with the manual process it employed to gather information for ad hoc executive reporting, resulting in a costly process that failed to provide adequate management information.

//WE SOLVE

ATK Launch Systems engaged JCB Partners to help with a solution to the program management and financial performance reporting problem, based on their experience with JCB and JCB's strong partnership with IBM. Utilizing IBM software – Cognos 8 Business Intelligence – JCB provided both deep expertise in performance management and strong technical and project management skills for the implementation and development of the software.

//WE SOLVE Cont...

Throughout the engagement, JCB also provided hands-on mentoring and insight into best practices for the information technology and reporting team. From that foundation, the organization continues to provide substantial continuous improvement in business reporting to managers throughout ATK.

JCB created a solution that provided a single source of data and extensive reporting capabilities across the two types of information that ATK wanted to understand – financial performance information, and engineering release information. To achieve this, JCB sourced data from ATK's existing relational data sources and consolidated it into a single data store that allowed for information to be sliced and analyzed in a wide variety of ways, and reporting results to be delivered quickly. A Dashboard Portal provides Manager -level and above users access to the information and delivers a one-stop location to view the 5 key metrics for the Departmental and Line of Business hierarchies within the science and engineering division. The metrics are displayed in any of the following formats: list report, charts, crosstab reports, as well as the capability to drill through and down on the hierarchies to access more detailed views of the metrics.

With this solution, ATK has addressed each of its key program management challenges:

- ATK provided users with the ability to report on and analyze key financial and engineering data, including its five key metrics: Cost Performance, Schedule Performance, Budget Variance (financial); Document Cycle Time, and Days to Document Release. ATK gave users a consolidated view of financial performance, allowing them to review key metrics in an extremely timely manner.
- ATK provided end users a single point of entry to view and analyze engineering timeline and release information across the science and engineering group, and at the individual project level.

//BENEFITS

As a result of this project, ATK is enjoying benefits that accrue from access to fast, consistent cross-departmental information. Reports on these key metrics are available immediately, and don't require managers to get an analyst involved in development. ATK now has the opportunity to reallocate the time previously spent manually compiling data across hundreds of projects to more productive endeavors, and has provided its executives with a self-service model that vastly improves their timely access to information.

ATK can now understand better the financial performance of science and engineering departments that are performing program-level work. This permits management to coordinate the resources and effort between projects more effectively to improve project schedule and cost performance. In addition, a common report set is changing the management culture to become more integrated.

Meanwhile, the report analysis and creation methods that JCB helped to develop with the information technology team for ATK are being used for the next iteration of reports.

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