



## AEW Capital Management, L.P.

### A Business Intelligence Case Study April, 2010

#### Summary

Founded in 1981, AEW Capital Management, L.P. is a real estate investment advisory firm, providing investment management and related services to institutional investors and other owners of commercial properties and portfolios.

The company has a large volume of financial data pertaining to these investments. To access this data, AEW accounting and IT staff spent valuable time writing and customizing reports written in Visual Basic for Applications (VBA). But, once reports were ready, the staff did not have a distribution method to ensure employees got the data they needed on time.

AEW selected a SAP/BusinessObjects business intelligence solution provided by Corporate Technologies. This web-based solution was designed to pull data straight from the consolidated corporate database and provide on-demand, desktop query and analysis tools for individuals throughout the company. »

#### Customer Results

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Industry	Financial
Customer	AEW Capital Management, L.P.
Problem	Definition of a web-based business intelligence solution that would give investment managers and corporate officers more immediacy to performance-based decision-making
Solution	An SAP/BusinessObjects business intelligence infrastructure with the required speed and flexibility to make relevant information easily accessible.



<b>Benefits</b>	<p>Works directly with the data in AEW’s investment management systems, without requiring a separate database, saving substantial time and money</p> <p>Supports integration of custom mathematical formulas to deliver sophisticated financial analytics to non-technical users</p> <p>Available to employees in different offices throughout the company</p> <p>Provides compact reports small enough to be distributed over the web—unlike earlier reports written in Visual Basic</p> <p>Automates report generation, resulting in development cost savings versus earlier custom-built reports</p> <p>Generates substantial savings on report writing once done by accountants and IT staff—the equivalent of 1.5 full-time employees working three weeks with Excel</p> <p>Provides portfolio managers access to real-time data—yielding improved efficiency and productivity</p> <p>Includes full knowledge transfer to AEW to maintain the solution post-deployment</p>
<b>Products</b>	<p>SAP/BusinessObjects and BusinessObjects Web Intelligence</p>

### Customer Results

*The SAP/BusinessObjects solution generates substantial savings on report writing once done by accountants and IT staff—the equivalent of 1.5 full-time employees working three weeks with Excel.*

### The Challenge

Founded in 1981, AEW Capital Management, L.P. is a real estate investment advisory firm, providing investment management and related services to institutional investors and other owners of commercial properties and portfolios. AEW manages \$19.4 billion in capital, which is invested in more than \$27 billion worth of property and securities in the United States, Canada, and Europe.

AEW has a large volume of financial data pertaining to these investments. For the past several years, the company has worked to standardize, consolidate, and refine its corporate data stores. “We wanted to put our financial data in one place so we could leverage it across our business,” says Red Costello, vice president, information technology, AEW. “However, once we had accomplished that goal, it became obvious that we needed a way for our portfolio managers, asset managers, analysts, and accountants to easily access the information they needed to do their jobs.”

Originally, AEW employees accessed data through Excel spreadsheets prepared and maintained throughout the company by accountants. After the database initiative, members of the IT department began taking the responsibility for providing rudimentary reports written in Visual Basic for Applications (VBA). As a result, AEW accounting and IT staff spent valuable time writing and customizing reports. And, once reports were ready, the staff did not have a distribution method to ensure employees got the data they needed on time.



“Accessing data was difficult enough to discourage analysts from even requesting the reports in the first place,” says Costello. With branch offices in two cities, AEW needed a web-based, business intelligence (BI) solution that would pull data straight from the database and provide on-demand, desktop query and analysis tools for individuals throughout the company.

## The Solution

AEW turned to Corporate Technologies Inc., a BusinessObjects integration and reseller partner to help design, develop, and deploy a self-serve business intelligence (BI) solution. AEW chose Corporate Technologies along with BusinessObjects because the company wanted a partner that would impart the knowledge required to maintain the solution post-deployment.

“We envisioned rolling out the solution as a rigorous, fully functioning process that’s ready to go for all users,” says Costello. “But to get to that point, there were some challenges. We chose BusinessObjects because it was the only vendor that provided the flexibility to integrate with our Microsoft platform, including Active Directory, as well as handle the complex analytics we required. Corporate Technologies had the expertise to help us get there.”

Corporate Technologies deployed BusinessObjects™ and BusinessObjects Web Intelligence™ for AEW’s web-based reporting needs, and created a run book to document the solution’s configuration for a repeat deployment at AEW. The run book also provided a reference for AEW’s IT department for report-building and ongoing maintenance.

Corporate Technologies also developed a way to perform the complex calculations necessary in some of AEW’s fund-performance reports, such as an IRR report, which measures the performance of a specific fund. “AEW gave us great test data and clear specifications as to what the report should contain,” says Kurt Rosenfeld, Corporate Technologies. “Now AEW can run a report from the BusinessObjects solution with several funds, and the IRR performance can be dropped in as a line item for each fund. From the user’s perspective, it’s completely transparent.”

AEW now has a web-enabled, self-serve BI solution available to employees in different offices throughout the company. Individuals can log onto the portal, open a report tailored to their specific decision-making processes or information needs, enter parameters, and begin performing simple to complex financial analysis. The solution is deployed to a pilot group in the accounting department, who now has access to approximately 15 reports. AEW is currently using BusinessObjects to develop another 12 management reports.

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## The Result

With Corporate Technologies and business intelligence from BusinessObjects, AEW has saved time and money on report development and solution deployment. “Corporate Technologies recreated a report we had written in VBA that was too large to be distributed over the web, and they created another one that we previously had to build by hand,” says Jon Martin, principal, AEW. “With BusinessObjects, these reports are now available anytime and we are saving on those development costs.”

In addition, with Business Objects, AEW is now able to relieve its accountants and IT staff of report-writing duties—and save money on the equivalent of 1.5 full-time employees spending three weeks pulling central management reports together in Excel.

“BusinessObjects gives portfolio managers a much improved platform to generate more timely snapshots of their portfolios, with access to more real-time data,” says Martin. “In the past, if a portfolio manager had a question on a specific investment, they would have to wait to get an answer from their accountant. Now, that information is at their fingertips. Ultimately, we expect to see increased efficiency and productivity, which is a significant benefit for a growing firm.”

## Business Intelligence Expertise

Corporate Technologies Business Intelligence Group architects, implements, and manages production-quality BI solutions encompassing dashboards, reporting/analytics, BI web portals, data warehouses, data quality enhancements, and custom integration.

We’ve done this for clients in many industries—including finance/insurance, manufacturing, retail, and hospitality—across many functions, including financial, sales, marketing, HR, and operations.

We’re experts at understanding the data in your systems, its quality and security issues, and how to integrate it with BI platform and database technologies from market-leading providers including SAP/BusinessObjects, and many others.

## About Corporate Technologies, Inc.

Founded in 1994, Corporate Technologies, Inc. is one of the largest providers of complete IT solutions and services to enterprises in the Northeast. We provide clients with professional services expertise in the areas of IT Strategy, Business Intelligence, and Data Centers, supported by a selective product line, support contracts and services, IT staffing solutions, and financing options.

The company is a top partner with many technology leaders including Sun Microsystems, NetApp, SAP/BusinessObjects, Symantec, VMware, Juniper,

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and F5 Networks. Its annual investment in R&D and the company's market-leading Technology Lab allow Corporate Technologies to continually evaluate and recommend the best current and emerging technologies.