

Home Box Office
A division of Time Warner

www.hbo.com

Industry
Entertainment

Excel4apps products and services:



“GL Wand has proven extremely valuable in accessing our Oracle data with Excel in an easy and proficient manner. The way it is linked to the system makes reporting, pulling balances, and accessing detail much easier. We’re anticipating saving lots of time every month because the software allows us to drill down to the sources of the numbers in one convenient place.”

Michael Hinck,
Finance Systems
Project Manager,
HBO



Background

Home Box Office, or HBO, is the premium television division of Time Warner, Inc. HBO provides two 24-hour pay television services to over 40 million U.S. subscribers under the brand names of HBO and Cinemax. In June 2007, HBO selected Oracle Financials and Oracle Projects, part of the Oracle E Business Suite, to keep pace with the expanding distribution of its cutting edge programming services. They needed a technology foundation that addressed their diverse financial reporting needs both now and in the future. Like hundreds of corporate finance organizations, HBO also relied on Microsoft Excel for management reporting. A consultant working with HBO on the Oracle integration suggested they investigate the benefits of GL Wand, a tool designed to extend Excel functionality into the Oracle General Ledger to boost reporting flexibility.

Challenges

- HBO wanted a more efficient way to report out of their General Ledger.
- IT needed assurance of ease of installation and ease of use, which would allow users to get up and running fast, without requiring extensive training.
- Business users wanted assurance that they could continue to use MS Excel to format final report presentations and ad hoc reports for management.
- Multiple reporting systems for domestic and international operations made flexibility a key factor.
- Finance and accounting business users wanted a tool that could help them do their jobs faster and focus more time on critical financial analyses of changing business landscapes.

Solution

- GL Wand’s ease of use for financial users and business analysts made it possible to link to the General Ledger system to pull balances and detail quickly.
- Installing GL Wand took less than a day, seamlessly incorporating all existing permissions and security levels, and users are able to incorporate their knowledge of Excel to run the tool without the need for detailed training.
- GL Wand makes it easier to update month to month reporting with a simple date change.
- Modifications to the software were incorporated specifically for HBO’s use, allowing users the flexibility to work with the company’s various domestic and international reporting requirements.
- Finance and accounting professionals at HBO are enjoying the added benefits of using GL Wand with their Oracle Financial Suite applications.
- GL Wand has simplified ad-hoc reporting requirements and monthly closes.
- Recommendations by HBO users are being incorporated into the latest release of the product to benefit other users.

Benefits

- Ad-hoc reporting and analysis is quick and easy.
- Time to develop, test and roll-out more robust reports, schedules, or scorecards can be quantified in minutes or hours.
- IT is no longer involved in one-off report queries for obscure summary or detail data for the General Ledger.
- Flexible and efficient report distribution methods.
- Business analysts now concentrate on actual business and data analysis.
- Finance users can now be more creative and innovative with business performance metrics.
- The ability to use all functionality within Oracle and Excel.