



## EMPIRE MERCHANTS NORTH CONTINUES

### GROWTH WITH ENTERPRISE BI TOOL

#### SOLUTION SPOTLIGHT:

##### DATA INTEGRATOR:

DI's Extract, Transform, and Load tool featuring powerful data manipulation capabilities

##### NETDIVER™:

Java-based zero-footprint interface that resides on a Web Application Server

##### DIVEPORT™:

Portal interface that delivers a single point of entry to reports, charts, and analytical applications

**PROFILE:** Empire Merchants North LLC, a member of the Charmer Sunbelt Group of wine and liquor distributors, was formed through the 2007 merger of Colony Liquor and Service-Universal Distributors. Empire Merchants North services over 15,000 retail accounts, offering a portfolio of 10,000 products sourced by 100 suppliers. Empire Merchants North is now the largest liquor distributor in New York State, outside of the New York City metro area. Both Colony and Service-Universal were existing Dimensional Insight customers, having used The Diver Solution™ as their business intelligence application for several years prior to the merger.

**CHALLENGES:** Striving to achieve scale and lower operating costs, wine and liquor distributors have consolidated at a rapid pace, leaving 60% fewer distributors than a decade ago. This dynamic drove the formation of Empire Merchants North. With a 'Go Live' date just seven months away, a transition team was formed to ensure a smooth consolidation of the two existing Diver Solution environments.

The team was tasked with delivering the following three mandates:

1. The two product portfolios had to be accurately merged. This included historical data from both companies. With 10,000 products, numerous ambiguities had to be resolved.
2. The Diver Solution's reporting and analytics functionality, relied on by both internal users and suppliers, had to transition seamlessly. Sales team members also required training on NetDiver, DI's zero-footprint ad hoc analytics interface.
3. The post-merger expansion in the user base required a significant scale up of Diver's hardware platform.



DATA → INFORMATION → ACTION



“At month end, for our suppliers to be able to go online with Diver that very morning and see where things stand in relation to their own brands is very important to them. That way, if they’re trying to make numbers they can get that information in the most up to date fashion.”

Peter Coliukos  
Chief Information Officer  
Empire Merchants North, LLC

**ORGANIZATION:**

Empire Merchants North LLC, Kingston, NY

**USER SINCE:**

1996

**EMPLOYEES:**

365

**CRITICAL ISSUES:**

Merge two existing Diver Solution environments within seven months

Provide web-based reporting and analytics to suppliers and an expanded internal user community

Satisfy demand for new reporting and analytics applications

**RESULTS:**

Launch a seamless BI platform in time for date of merger ‘Go Live’

Integrate Diver Solution portal components with Websphere

New applications deployed without external consultants thus minimizing cost of ownership

**ANSWERS:** Using DI’s ETL (Extract, Transform, and Load) tool, Data Integrator, the transition team was able to automate the process of matching common accounts and product items between the two merger partners. Merging historic data from six new and existing sources also relied heavily on the Data Integrator’s sophisticated data manipulation capabilities.

Empire’s expanded sales force needed to be trained on the use of the NetDiver interface. For its suppliers, Empire granted access to a wealth of information via its Websphere portal. According to Peter Coliukos, Empire’s Chief Information Officer, “We allow suppliers into NetDiver to do their own ad hoc data analysis but in addition to that, we have the DivePort portlets running within the WebSphere Portal – because they are JSR 168 compliant we can run the portlets on our own portal environment. Our suppliers get their own dashboards and can perform drill-downs on the information. Suppliers also have full access to NetDiver to perform any other analytics. We deliver their depletions reporting, different types of on-premise reports plus any non-proprietary, sharable data points about a customer such as demographic information from AC Nielsen’s TDLinx.”

Coliukos stresses the importance of putting data analysis in the hands of the user: “In IT, we strive to capture the data, present it, and give our users a basic set of templates. The users can easily extend the templates, which allow the users to be very self-sufficient while serving the customer. A sales rep can only meet the target if they know where they stand in relation to it.”

Kevin Tucker, Executive Vice President of Sales, uses Diver to analyze Empire’s sales and inventory. Tucker relies on Diver for making promotional decisions and comparison reporting. Diver supports virtually any combination of metrics for comparing previous year sales to current year sales. For Tucker, these range from cases, dollars, and channels, to off-premise vs. on-premise, distribution and un-sold accounts data, and spirits

vs. wines. Most importantly, Tucker appreciates Diver’s robust and user-friendly reporting capabilities. “As far as reports are concerned, everything a user needs is in Diver. When somebody wants information we teach them how to obtain it themselves” says Tucker.

Due to The Diver Solution’s inherent scalability, Empire Merchants North was able to transition to a dual-server configuration, one external and one internal. Two terabytes of storage hold the Diver models and associated data. The transition team pre-loaded the servers one month prior to the ‘Go Live’ date and performed rigorous testing of The Diver Solution environment.

**RESULTS:** Empire Merchants North successfully consummated their merger on September 1st, 2007. The combined Diver environments were operational that day.

DI’s Data Integrator component proved to be indispensable in the data merge and transition activities. In account matching, Integrator was so effective that only 100 accounts had to undergo manual matching.

Empire Merchants North sales force, outfitted with broadband WIFI-equipped laptops running NetDiver, access the WebSphere portal running DivePort portlets from anywhere in New York State. Suppliers access the new externally-facing Diver Solution server to assist with their queries on inventory, depletions, and month-end targets.

Since the merger, Empire Merchants database administrators Julie Syracuse and George Seror and their team have implemented several new Diver applications including forecasting, inventory aging, and monthly warehouse activity. Thanks to Diver’s streamlined development environment, Empire was able to build the applications entirely in-house, without having to hire external consultants, thus effectively lowering total cost of ownership.