TIMBER COMPANY, PLUM CREEK, CUTS

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Plum Creek Timber Company, Inc. is one of the largest private timberland owners in the United States. They manufacture and distribute raw logs, specialty lumber, proprietary plywood and medium density fiberboard to retail and industrial markets. Plum Creek runs DI-Atlantis on the AS/400 server, and users access data Models from Windows NT clients using DI-Diver.

Recently, David Morris' understanding of implementing a business intelligence solution changed. "Expectations were different from reality once we became familiar with Dimensional Insight," says Morris, Senior Systems Analyst. "We were led to believe that the price of data modeling tools was too high, that the implementation process would take too long, and we would need to train our staff to become knowledgeable in the specialized area of data warehousing. That wasn't true with DI-Atlantis and DI-Diver; we pulled useful numbers the first day we tried it."

Previously, Plum Creek compiled reports by traditional programming and by a report tool developed in-house. Reports were in a standard format. Salespeople were getting buried in data because they had limited ability to be selective. It was not possible, for example, to see which customers bought a specific product without seeing all of the products. DI-Diver has reduced reliance on traditional reports, and salespeople now have reporting flexibility. "Salespeople use DI-Diver to do their reporting and ad hoc analysis on their own," explains Morris, who builds Models for sales analysis. "We update most of the Models weekly, and we update one daily. From an IS perspective, it's easy for us to extract the data from our databases and set up the Models. [DI-Atlantis] is reliable, administrative costs are low, and it's efficient in using our resources regarding storage and run time."

Dimensional
INSIGHT

DATA→INFORMATION→ACTION

"DI-Diver allows us to sort through customers and products, accurately measuring how sales returns compare between customers across varied market conditions."

Russ Hobbs
Plum Creek, Director - National Timber Sales

DI-Diver allows users to sort through the many attributes of their products. In the lumber division, for example, users select a group such as boards, studs, dimension products, or edge glued products. Within the groups are different species and grades, and within the grades are different thicknesses and widths. Once a user pinpoints a product, it's easy to see where it was shipped to, what mill it was shipped from, Plum Creek's selling price, footages, etc.

Russ Hobbs, Director of National Lumber Sales, explains why it is important to quickly and easily be able sort through an abundance of data. "Our sales prices may vary depending on how much of a product a customer needs, how much we have, and how much the industry has. We index our sales prices against the average published price of a product, and DI-Diver allows us to sort through customers and products and accurately measure how sales returns compare between customers across varied market conditions. Given the commodity nature of our products, analyzing data with DI-Diver allows salespeople to evaluate opportunities. If we have an opportunity to sell a scarce product to a new customer, we have to decide whom we won't sell to in the future. DI-Diver helps us determine how a sale relates to the rest of the customer base," says Hobbs.

Hobbs also uses DI-Diver in presentations to show customers their own buying trends, and often finds that the data he has gathered is better than the customer's data. "DI-Diver allows us to analyze customers on average, over time. We can also sort through the data by month, or by invoice. We are able to view the same time period with multiple customers and determine which customers see the value in our product," says Hobbs.

When asked about a return on investment, Morris replied, "We were planning on a three to four month project to re-write our Sales Analysis system. With DI-Diver, most of that work is no longer necessary, so the cost is justified." In the future, Plum Creek plans to use DI-Atlantis in other areas of the business, including resource management, time, and request systems.

ABOUT DIMENSIONAL INSIGHT: Dimensional Insight offers business intelligence solutions that put you in command of your business. Companies worldwide use our technology to target opportunities, track performance, and increase profits. Our flagship product, DI-Atlantis, offers powerful reporting and multidimensional analysis. Navigating through data with DI-Diver is simple for non-technical users, enabling decision-makers across all functional areas of a corporation to access data quickly and intuitively. The solution provides flexible, scalable architecture, secure report distribution, and quick implementation. We also offer specialized solutions for wholesale/distribution, healthcare, manufacturing, and publishing.