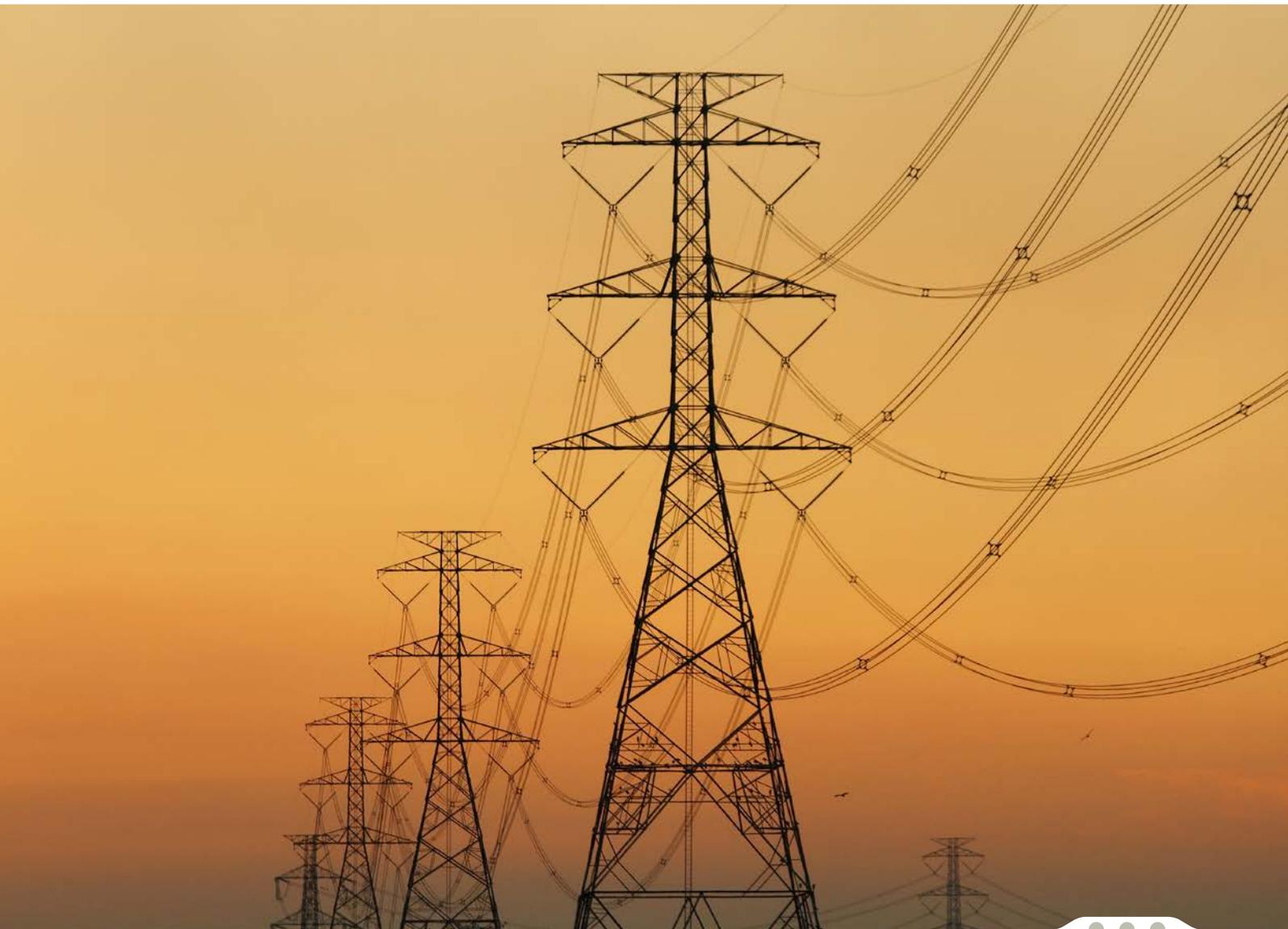

SOLTIUS CASE STUDY:



Finding answers to key business questions: Turning data into actionable insights at WEL Networks



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CASE SUMMARY

As an electricity distribution company, WEL Networks' job is to distribute power from exit points on Transpower's national grid to homes – doing it better, smarter and safer, around the clock. After selecting SAP All-in-One as their new ERP system in 2011, WEL Networks continued to work with Soltius and focused on improving their analytics capabilities with the addition of SAP Business Warehouse (BW) and SAP BusinessObjects. WEL had been experiencing difficulty in turning their wealth of data into valuable business insights and actions. Specifically, a lack of high-level visibility over inventory, purchasing and other elements of procurement had resulted in a range of problems. As a result of their work with Soltius, the procurement team at WEL now have the reporting required to get all the answers they need. The company today enjoys a well-functioning BI solution with a strong foundation for further expansion.

While they may be better known as the Waikato Electricity Network, WEL's mission is also to help build the essential services New Zealand needs today – and for generations to come. As an electricity distribution company, WEL Networks' job is to distribute power from exit points on Transpower's national grid to homes – doing it better, smarter and safer, around the clock. WEL Networks has a 100 year heritage serving Hamilton city, and the towns and farming community of the Waikato. The company itself was formally established in 1989 and has been a part of the Waikato's coming of age as a leading commercial, agricultural and educational hub. WEL connects a vibrant and growing community of more than 160,000 people to reliable and cost effective electricity services through around 85,000 installation connection points. With a team of 239 skilled and committed employees from a wide range of backgrounds, WEL Networks is 100 per cent community owned by the WEL Energy Trust. This community ownership has enabled them to pass on discounts to the value of NZ\$213 million to their customers since 2003.

In 2011, WEL Networks selected SAP All-in-One as their new ERP system. Soltius was engaged to implement the system, which is today running SAP Finance, Sales, Plant Maintenance, Projects, Customer Services, Procurement and Inventory. From there, WEL decided to go with a phased approach to implementing tools to support their analytics strategy. In wave one both SAP Business Warehouse (BW) and SAP BusinessObjects were implemented by Soltius, and a core set of focussed Business Intelligence (BI) reports were delivered to WEL. As part of this phased implementation, Soltius returned to WEL in 2014 to expand on the reporting capability made available in wave one, and further leverage the original implementation. WEL had been experiencing difficulty in turning their wealth of data into valuable business insights and actions, resulting in a lack of knowledge around some of their key processes. WEL needed their BI system to produce reports which would help them answer important business questions. They therefore requested that Soltius work with them to deliver the reporting capabilities they needed, making the most of the systems they already had in place and tailoring them to fit their needs.

Wave two of the BI implementation saw WEL Networks and Soltius take a different approach, focusing initially on the pieces of work they could take through to completion. Whereas, in the first wave, the approach had been to meet with users at the beginning of the project to discuss and outline each of the specific reports they wanted, the new approach required business users to provide all the information necessary at the beginning, before the team began the effort of building reports. This approach saw a reduction in the loss of productive time, with the Soltius resources being concentrated on the tasks that they had correct and complete information for.

“From the project management to the delivery, even down to smaller details like the documentation, Soltius has been great to work with...I know that Soltius will be there to support us in future upgrades and with ongoing work when we need it”

Chris Puddle, Systems Specialist, WEL Networks.

A lack of knowledge around procurement output was one of the main pain points for WEL before wave two of the BI implementation. A lack of high-level visibility over inventory, purchasing and other elements of procurement had resulted in problems like overdue purchase orders. WEL had a DIFOT (Delivered in Full on Time) report in place, but this was largely ineffective as it had been cobbled together from various data sources. As a result of the wave two implementation by Soltius, the procurement team at WEL now have the reporting required to get all the answers they need. “We now have a much clearer picture of vendor performance, price fluctuations and our outbound delivery process”, says Chris Puddle, Systems Specialist at WEL.

In his role, Chris is responsible for managing the large number of consultants and agencies that WEL works with. Throughout the various waves of work over the years, he has enjoyed working with Soltius: “From the project management to the delivery, even down to smaller details like the documentation, Soltius has been great to work with”. The customer-centric approach of the Soltius consultants has impressed Chris: “For example, Soltius provided me with a folder full of BI documentation, which is a great point of reference for me day-to-day. This kind of thing has really made it easy for us, and I know that Soltius will be there to support us in future upgrades and with ongoing work when we need it”. Soltius has also contributed to improving the user-friendliness of various queries within WEL’s systems, which has been greatly appreciated by Chris.

Today, WEL enjoys a well-functioning BI solution with a strong foundation for further expansion. This will enable them to bring non-SAP data into or alongside their SAP data, in order to report on all of it together. In addition, if WEL needs to extend their reporting capability, the underlying reporting infrastructure should accommodate the development of new queries and reports with minimal disruptions or overheads. This will ensure a fast turnaround in providing WEL with the report sets they need to answer any new business questions their people are asking.

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