

Pharmaceutical Manufacturer Case Study

One of the world's largest healthcare and pharmaceutical company uses a Data Warehousing solution from Acuma to analyse results from pre-clinical drug tests. The solution has substantially improved both the speed of the process and the range of queries possible. It also provides the increased traceability required to meet the pharmaceutical industry's stringent regulatory requirements.

Business Challenges faced

Historically, data from safety assessment studies was stored in a number of toxicology data collection systems, several of which were in the process of being decommissioned. The systems contained data from over 3,700 studies. Queries on any part of this historical data can be required over many years, either by scientists to support the clinical testing of a new drug, or by regulatory authorities. If an internal client or regulatory authority required further data analysis of this archived data, the scientist had to resort to accessing paper copies of the records; this was inevitably slow and inconvenient.

The company identified that a Data Warehousing solution would allow much faster querying of its business-critical safety assessment data. This also opened up whole new areas of analysis, for example reporting across the results of several studies to identify previously unseen patterns.

Winning Solution

"Since we were going to be working with multiple tools, we had no desire to go to the different vendors directly. Acuma provided us a single point of contact, making our job simpler, and its project management experience was vital to us," said the Senior Project Manager. "We are impressed by Acuma's proven background in Data Warehousing/Data mart applications, and they demonstrated a strong methodology that gives us confidence," he added. "They were also willing to invest the time and resource to ensure they understood the particular requirements of our business." Once the concept was proven, development of Data Warehouse solution began.

An Oracle Data Warehouse has been built to hold the data from this global pharmaceutical company's legacy system. Oracle is a defacto standard within the pharmaceuticals industry, and provides a resilient platform for their data. Acuma moved the data from a variety of sources into the Data Warehouse using ETL (Extract Transform and Load) tool. Once the data was loaded, the Data Warehouse's query reporting and analysis was developed using the Cognos toolset. Acuma also delivered a training package, to ensure end-users can work with the system as effectively as possible.

"Acuma had an excellent project management methodology that gave us confidence that they could help us work to high standards," commented the Senior Project Manager. "Working to regulatory standards added substantially to Acuma's learning curve, but they responded positively to the extra requirements." The system has been designed to ensure that a high degree of data validation was maintained throughout the development phase.

Business Solution Benefit

"Acuma's solution gives us the benefit of faster queries and better insights on our safety assessment data," commented the Senior Project Manager. The new system allows scientists to perform queries across different studies, domains, original source and legacy systems, which means they may obtain insights and identify patterns that would otherwise be invisible. This was not previously possible, and is a valuable added benefit of the Acuma solution. Querying is also easier, which reduces the time that staff have to spend analysing data.

The Senior Project Manager concluded: "Acuma always tries to understand our problems fully before suggesting a possible solution, rather than just leaping in. Its solution also gives us good value for money." Acuma's partnership with other major vendors has come into their own and has brought benefits to its clients. Many solution providers have partnerships with third parties but not necessarily a deep understanding of those companies or their products. Acuma was able to differentiate itself by demonstrating not only a thorough knowledge of partner's tools and services but also a real working relationship with them. This means that the risk to its clients is greatly reduced.