Controlled sales of underwear is no simple task. Particularly if the volume of products sold reaches almost 19 million pieces per year, and the list of customers includes consumers from Poland, Russia, Ukraine or Germany. For the last several months, the Comarch Business Intelligence platform implemented at Atlantic has been assisting in supervising the processes which occur in the company.

Almost everyone knows the Atlantic company, yet not everybody knows that it is a leader among underwear companies in Poland, and its products are very popular in numerous markets of the Central and Eastern Europe.

Atlantic offers underwear for ladies, gentlemen, a collection for teenagers, children, as well as swimming costumes and socks. Also, Atlantic is the owner of the Arcado brand, sold mostly in hypermarkets.

Every day, transaction companies owned by almost every company collect hundreds of thousands, or even millions of information pieces. The main ERP system used by Atlantic is „IMPULS“, made by Chorzow-based BPSC. Apart from that, the company operates other systems as well, such as UPOS (company stores service) or IMK (import service).
Before the company decided to implement a business intelligence-class solution, the analysis department was making an extensive use of the popular Microsoft Excel. Yet with such a great amount of data and sources from which they must be acquired, the decision to purchase a solution based on the Comarch Business Intelligence platform was fully justified.

**BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE**

To put it simply, business intelligence systems select data included in transaction systems of a company and then allow them to be analysed, so that the final image of the company operation was as close to reality as possible, while at the same time being a clear and transparent basis for making decisions – both those of strategic importance, and those which are an element of the daily market struggle. Yet, in order to be able to determine which information are actually needed and which can be discarded in the selection process, a thorough analysis of the company structure and the customer needs is required.

**WHAT? WHAT FOR? WHY?**

Analysis of the customer needs is the first step, which determines the shape of all the future actions intended to create an effective business intelligence tool. The works carried out at this stage of implementation can be divided into technical and functional. The goal of the technical part is to assess the current state of affairs and, at its first stage, it is fundamentally similar to an analysis carried out during implementation of ERP systems. It involves assessment of the document circulation throughout the company, assessment of the company structure in all the functional areas which later are to be taken into account in the designed solution. The second stage of the technical part is a thorough analysis of the source system database, resulting in knowledge of where the interesting data are stored and, equally important, how they are correlated.

At the same time, the functional analysis is to clarify and to finally establish the shape of the reports which are to be generated in the system. For a distribution and production company, such as Atlantic, the most important reports turned out to be those dedicated to sales structure, days stock level, logistics control, or bookkeeping.

Multitude and diversity of customers with which Atlantic maintains trade contacts were reflected in the questions answered by the Comarch Business Intelligence platform implemented at this company. Below are only several examples:

- who is our best customer in the given region, taking into account the sales volume, and which one gives us most income?
- what are the sales of the latest collection compared to the year?
- which colours of ladies’ panties are the most popular among customers?
• for how many days will the stock in the warehouse last us?
• what is the structure of liabilities and receivables; which will be mature soon, and which are already past-due?

WHO?
During the functional analysis, a great emphasis is put also on the circulation of documents in the company, called for by the customer. Enormous analytical capabilities of Comarch Business Intelligence are an invaluable source of practical information, yet, obviously, not everyone should have access to them. Thus, it is very important to specify the profile of the system end users. The generated profile contains information on what data should be available to its user, and to what extent – if at all – can the user manipulate the data.

HOW?
The unique combination of capabilities provided by Comarch Business Intelligence and the Microsoft database platform confirmed us in our belief that the solution provided will satisfy all the needs of the customer, both in terms of simplicity of use, safety, and analytical capabilities.

The Atlantic source system uses Oracle 8i database server. The data warehouse, which is an integral element of Comarch Business Intelligence, was based on Microsoft SQL Server 2000. Through the layer of ETL (Extraction Transform Load) solutions provided together with Microsoft SQL Server, we created a staging area, in which data from various systems are collected and standardized, to enable their comparison. Usually, this stage of constructing the data warehouse is when the problems detected in the earlier analysis, such as incomplete or missing data, manifest themselves. So it was this time.

The BPSC system was implemented in Atlantic over 3 years ago. From the system’s perspective, the company has undergone numerous transformations since then, and its needs have expanded substantially. This involved numerous modifications of the system, so that it could perform new tasks in the ever-changing reality of the company. The frequent transformations of the database structure resulted, among other issues, in finding over 1000 product colours during project implementation. Obviously, such a large number effec-
tively prevents any sort of analysis with respect to the dimensions built on that basis. Ultimately, we managed to eliminate most problems of this type, and currently the aforesaid glossary of colour dimensions has less than 80 entries.

The target area of the data warehouse was created from selected, sorted thematically and aggregated data. Individual analytical areas which were to enable answers for the aforementioned questions, were reflected in OLAP cubes which collected data concerning sales, bookkeeping, finances, days stock, storehouses and order analysis.

AS, AKR, KR, IKR...

The customer is most interested in the final effect, which, in the case of business intelligence projects, is the analytical application which the customer will work with on a daily basis. The aforementioned division into active and passive users is true for all those who are to use pre-set reports, or, to a small extent, generate their own ones. Apart from these two groups, there is also the circle of persons employed in the company’s controlling department, who, for obvious reasons, have access to all the information collected in the data warehouse and who are tasked with generating reports and proper distribution thereof among other users of the system.

This is the only group of employees who, apart from using tools available to other users, also works with the Reporting Book Administrator – a tool allowing control over users’ entitlements. The capabilities of this application provide full control over safety of information provided by the data warehouse. On one hand, using the advanced administration options, we can very precisely decide who can use individual OLAP cubes, or even which specific measures and dimensions will be available to them; on the other, AKR makes it possible to create highly useful distribution groups for comple-

te reports, to specify the scope of potential modifications, or to redistribute these reports.

Active users gained access to the Reporting Book – an application the core of which is a window in a pivot table. This solutions enables easy completion of multidimensional OLAP analyses in a user-friendly graphical environment, and visualization of the same in the form of charts. Most active users are branch managers, for whom simplicity of use and intuitiveness of the GUI are the fundamental criterion of system’s usefulness - equ-

Customer’s perspective

Before implementation of Comarch Business Intelligence, the company’s controlling department was where reports concerning the operations of both the entire company and its individual departments were generated. Taking into account the size of the company, this was no easy task. Compilation of analyses and generation of budget was usually based on a single program – MS Excel. Yet, high comfort of use and being accustomed to the program could in no way change the fact that entering data into a sheet was very time-consuming.

The implemented system is a convenient tool which extensively automates processes that hitherto had to be performed manually. Thanks to simplicity of use, a good deal of reports can now be made by the interested parties. Another important aspect is that once generated report definition is only a template, which is always filled out with up-to-date data, therefore the work once put into its preparation does not go to waste after several days or weeks, when new data appear.

The applied analytical areas help streamline control in the fields they concern. For instance, the Storehouses cube allows to not only check the prices in individual storehouses, but also to analyse the structure of the turnover period, which, from our perspective, is important. We are satisfied with our choice and we believe that the system will substantially help us to streamline our company's functioning in the key aspects of its operation.
al to its analytical performance. Thus, interactive OLAP analyses carried out in the environment of a pivot table are the perfect solution. Apart from its analytical capabilities, the Reporting Book also allows to sort reports, to generate private group folders in which the former are stored, or to quickly send a complete report via e-mail.

According to Atlantic’s assumptions, passive users are persons who should not be able to create new reports or modify the existing ones in any manner, while being able to view them. This is exactly the user profile provided for by the Reporting Book. It makes available statistical bitmaps of complete reports through WEB server and http protocol, via web browser.

6 MONTHS

Preparation and implementation of the entire project in the Atlantic company took less than 6 months, and the team working on it used the Comarch Business Intelligence platform to create a customized solution which fully satisfied the customer’s needs. What is important for such a dynamically developing company, Comarch Business Intelligence is a living system, easily adaptable both in the case of changing the IT environment, and in the face of new business needs.