



DETROIT CHASSIS LLC

Strategic Speeds Phocas Analytics Implementation for Class A Motorhome and Commercial Step-van Chassis Assembler

Detroit Chassis, based in Detroit, Michigan, is a US assembler of niche vehicles and RV and commercial truck chassis for Ford Motor Company. A certified minority-owned business, Detroit Chassis manufactures products to OEM standards and incorporates the latest lean manufacturing strategies with flexible manufacturing systems.



Challenge

Like any lean manufacturer, Detroit Chassis is always seeking new ways to improve operational efficiencies. Monitoring operational efficiencies means having a robust reporting system. Although Detroit Chassis has relied on its QAD 2007 SE ERP system for many years, its standard reporting capabilities were coming up short. To satisfy management's reporting needs at month-end, the company found itself running QAD's standard reports, then entering the data into Excel to enable a workable reporting format. "We were spending a lot of time every month on the spreadsheets, and every month the executive team would ask for changes, so we ended up re-doing them quite often," said Helena Parker, IT Manager, Detroit Chassis.

It became clear that Detroit Chassis needed a better way to provide a regular cadence of visibility into the business. The company investigated upgrading its QAD ERP to the Enterprise Edition, or integrating to third-party tools, but ultimately both options were ruled out for various reasons. Upgrading was assumed to be too much disruption to the business and other tools provided no reporting flexibility beyond financials.

Plan of Action

In searching for a solution to meet the needs of timely, flexible reporting, Parker turned to the Strategic Information Group team and learned about Phocas data analytics and reporting solutions. Phocas delivers multiple layers of reporting, KPI tracking, ad hoc business intelligence, and do it yourself administration, enabling business end users to run reports without making a formal request to IT.

McKinsey and Company found that finance and operations teams spend more than 50% of their time gathering data from spreadsheets, ERP systems, and third-party solutions, a statistic that resonated with Parker. "I immediately saw the value in Phocas and set up a demo for our vice president of finance and controller," she said.



Solutions

The executive team at Detroit Chassis agreed with Parker's assessment of the Phocas solution and gave the green light to proceed. "It was very clear to all of us that the Phocas solution met our need for flexible, shareable reporting that did not require a long, expensive undertaking to implement." The two key benefits that Parker was most excited about included the capability to deliver different types of reporting to varied key stakeholders—and deliver those advanced reports in a timely manner. Detroit Chassis partnered with Strategic Information Group to assist in the implementation. Strategic is a value-added reseller for Phocas and offers the Strategic-Phocas Adaptor to provide connectivity between QAD to the Phocas reporting solution. Developed by Strategic's QAD Integration Experts, the Strategic Phocas Adaptor provides robust data extraction with flexible scheduling options to ensure timely data updates from QAD to Phocas. And Strategic Content Packs are available with the Adaptor that provide specific profiles for financials, inventory, sales, and purchasing. Once the profiles are installed they can be readily fine-tuned to meet the specific needs of each organization.

Results

The partnership reaped significant benefits for Detroit Chassis. First was the implementation time. Strategic only needed a few weeks to complete the implementation, and after a few hours of training time, the Detroit Chassis team was off and running with the solution. Complete with testing, the entire process was finished in less than two months. Additionally, the effects on operational efficiency became immediately apparent. Parker reported that the new solution resulted in a 60 hour per month time savings—720 hours over the course of a year—saving the company about \$40,000 in labor costs annually. Not to mention the increased satisfaction of stakeholders across the organization. The benefits for Detroit Chassis include flexible reporting and analytics, a web-based solution that works on any device, and drill down capabilities that deliver a new level of detail to stakeholders. As Parker said, "The time and money savings are tremendous and we traded in a potentially big development project for a fast and smooth experience, and a product that met all our needs."

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**HELENA PARKER, IT MANAGER,
DETROIT CHASSIS**

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Call Strategic Information Group today at (803) 327-4636.