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Nettpartner on Effectplan

Nettpartner budgeted in an advanced Excel-based solution and needed a system that was more secure, time-effective and could open the door for future rolling forecasting. Effectplan was chosen after comparing different systems.

Nettpartner constructs, operates and maintains power supply, broadband and railway infrastructure. Nettpartner was established in 2006, and, including subsidiaries, has about 560 employees and just over NOK 1 billion in annual sales.

Nettpartner is mainly a project-driven organization where the project scope can vary from small projects to projects spanning several months or even years. A solution was needed that could handle this variety in scope. Some departments work on only a small number of projects per year, others on substantially more. As a result, a system was required that could be adapted regardless of project size.

Nettpartner’s challenge

The greatest challenge Nettpartner had in its organization was that it had six group companies and 25 business units, and it budgeted per business unit. They worked in an Excel model that was updated a couple times a year and then consolidated to the group level. The budgeters were unsure whether they were working in the correct version and saving in the right place in the file structure. There were often questions about whether each business unit was working in the current version of the budget template prior to consolidation, given that it was an advanced Excel sheet with several levels.

The uncertainty surrounding the templates was another major problem. Checks were performed to ensure that the current template was the one being used. It was also time-consuming to save models per business unit.

“If you were to consolidate straight up, it was very time-consuming to compile and compare apples with apples, business units with business units, companies with companies etc. Business units sometimes ended up working in their own versions,” says Marius Borsheim, Business Controller and Head of the Effectplan Project at Nettpartner. “It took a lot of time because you could only do the report and analysis at the end of the budget process. We essentially had to have everything done before we could get an overall view of the budget outcome.”

There was a certain degree of uncertainty in the organization about whether all of the budget managers were done, so we had to go through two to three rounds to check that everything was done and that everything was done correctly in relation to the budget template.

“We had two-day project meetings in the final phase of the budget process where the budgeters sat down and worked together the whole day. Then we were up until late at night compiling the material so it was ready for the presentation the next day. That was not very efficient,” says Marius.

Nettpartner’s solution

“We mainly needed to get away from the Excel model and the working method we had. We needed to eliminate risks and the ability to make mistakes,” says Marius.



“Using Effectplan in combination with our QlikView Business Intelligence solution ensures an effective and rational budget process. Automatic consolidation and analysis in real time enable rapid iterations and convergence toward a final budget,” says Åsgeir Nord, CFO of Nettpartner.

Nettpartner was already working with bWise on the QlikView Business Intelligence solution. They needed a flexible system that was easy to administer and integrate with QlikView. They needed a tool that enabled self-service. It was extremely important to find a user-friendly system that was easy for the budgeters to understand.

“We had a good, well-designed model in Excel that we could build on in Effectplan, but with improvements,” says Marius.

The Effectplan Project

The discussion about Effectplan began as a dialogue in the summer of 2014, and the decision to use the system was then made in August that same summer. The goal was to have the system ready for budgeting by early December 2014.

“It was explained to us that being done in such a short time was unrealistic,” says Marius. However, a workshop was conducted with an Effectplan consultant to ensure delivery on the basis of the requirements specified.

“We worked very well with Effectplan,” says Marius satisfied. “We took a look at our existing solution in Excel and identified some areas for improvement. We had a short deadline and the challenge of it being a completely new system where we would build everything from the ground up. But we did it, thanks to the flexibility of Effectplan and the expertise of the consultant! And we didn’t have any problems in terms of time. As mentioned, things went very well between us and the application consultant.”

He continues and underlines the importance to have set aside time. It is good to have an introductory workshop to get the project off to a good start. Nettpartner was also in the middle of switching accounting information systems, which left many of the accounting department resources unavailable.

Marius therefore had sole responsibility for introducing Effectplan.

Internal launch at Nettpartner

The launch within the organization was planned carefully and gradually. Instructions were posted on the Effectplan start page, which serves as a focal point for information about the planning process. This was followed by a one-hour introduction over Skype. After that, no more than thirty minutes were needed for the project meeting. One of the managers at Nettpartner mentioned satisfied that they can completely skip having a project meeting where everyone is gathered for the budget next year thanks to the time saved. The meeting can instead concentrate on forecasting and analysis.

The system received positive feedback and there were no major problems that got in the way of the launch. There were never any lead times or system errors. Effectplan is now essentially a fixture of the organization.

“We have had a limited number of changes since launch, and have had very little need for support. We received the assistance we needed via a lot of support from bWise. We have also discussed getting a new model and the possibility of 12-month rolling forecasting.”

Effectplan in the organization

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The integration with QlikView has made the biggest difference and was the area in which Nettpartner has found the most value. Being able to compare with the outcomes of previous years and get forecasts in real time is a big advantage for

Nettpartner. “The comparative numbers have made it easier and faster for the budgeters to see what numbers they are supposed to enter in the budget. Consolidation reached the group level quickly, enabling us to see whether the budget was in line with expectations and avoid unpleasant surprises 10 hours before the budget is supposed to be done,” says Marius.

Effectplan in the future at Nettpartner

“There are a lot of Effectplan features that we are not using yet, but which are in the pipeline,” Marius concludes. “We are going to work more with rolling periods, rolling forecasts and we see the potential to be prepared for the future with Effectplan. We already have a multi-year budget in Excel and we want to see what options we have for moving it into Effectplan.

“We have major potential for improvement in the future with functions such as Workflow. We see substantial opportunities for improvement in greater use of Effectplan in our organization.”

Advice from Nettpartner:

“We already know in August that the salary project can be entered early, and therefore enter data in the system for what we already know. We can enter calculations for the number of employees and other figures we know. We don’t need to wait until the final version of the data to enter it into the year’s projects.”

“Thanks to the structure of the system, you can start the process earlier and move forward in steps. For example, enter the data in advance that you know is already available and save automatic calculations to simplify and shorten the process.”

“First, lay the groundwork for good user behavior and spend time on writing a user manual for the process.”