

# customer case study

**MWH Global is a leader in the wet infrastructure industry, which develops water-related projects involving water supply, treatment and storage, dams, coastal restoration and other programs. The company has designed, built, financed and managed many of the largest and most technologically advanced water projects in the world.**

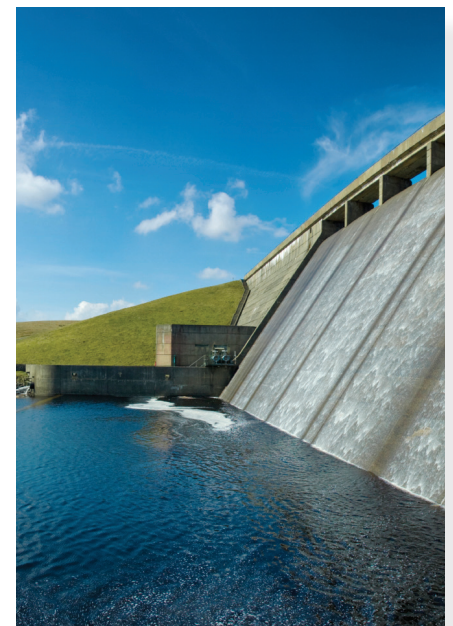
Its services range from large-scale construction to engineering and technical services to program management and management consulting. Yet at the core of all these diverse services is information turned into knowledge by experience and expertise. “Sharing knowledge effectively is the key to our success,” says Carl D. Lowman, director of financial planning for MWH Global. The company’s global knowledge network, KnowledgeNet, stores and documents its accomplishments and lessons learned and makes them available for new assignments. “It allows innovations and ideas to be shared and applied to comparable projects in other parts of the world,” Lowman explains.

This example didn’t carry over to MWH’s internal finance operations. Some 300 people in corporate finance and 200 business units in 36 countries used Excel for budgeting and planning. But the many spreadsheets in various locations contained data that was inconsistent with that of others and often was out of date when corporate users tried to consolidate it all. Rationalizing the data was a time-consuming manual process that forced finance analysts to spend more time collecting the budget data and verifying its accuracy than analyzing it. That limited their ability to forecast and curtailed strategic planning by executives. It also left almost no time for budget managers in the business units to revise their projections and saddled many of them with budgets that didn’t fit their business conditions.

## Better tool, easy access

Such data-driven inefficiency and limitations became intolerable to this knowledge-centric enterprise. With the CFO’s approval, Lowman and others began to look for a tool dedicated to budgeting and planning. After evaluating several vendors in this category, MWH selected the Budget module of the Host Analytics Corporate Performance Management (CPM) suite. “We made the choice based on the total cost of ownership, ease of implementation and user-friendly handling,” says Lowman. “Host Analytics was the best in all of these.”

A key component of the decision was the vendor’s hosted solution business model. Deployment through Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) requires no investment in new hardware or licenses. It also speeds implementation and makes the application available to any permitted user through a web browser. This is particularly valuable to a company like MWH that is dispersed around the world in offices that have a range of technical capabilities in both employees and information systems.



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**—Carl D. Lowman, Director of Financial Planning, MWH Global**



Business unit budget managers are required to provide inputs on gross revenue, net revenue and earnings before interest and taxes. The Host Analytics software and database ensure that everyone can enter the latest data in a consistent format. Corporate finance users can consolidate all the data rapidly without manually verifying its accuracy. And decision-makers receive the high-level numbers in plenty of time to review them, call for adjustments and maintain global visibility of the business. "Host Analytics improved our budgeting and strategic planning process by enabling us to quickly consolidate our plans and budgets across 200 business units in 36 countries," says Lowman.

## A global budget

In Host Analytics Budget, MWH Global has a strategic business tool it can use to track progress toward meeting its global business objectives. It is being used by almost 300 employees across the organization, from finance to operations and from headquarters to offices on six continents. "Host Analytics was essential for us in creating a consistent budgeting model across global operations," Lowman says.

On average, he adds, each person involved in the process saves 50 percent of the time they used to spend in budgeting and planning while having more confidence in the information they produce and use. With the extra time, managers are able to analyze their information and receive feedback before they send it for final approval. At headquarters, budget consolidations are completed in times that weren't possible before.

MWH's finance professionals can do more as well, easily creating quarterly forecasts and other dynamic plans and modifying them whenever necessary. Finally, the company's financial information and budgeting and planning processes are worthy of an organization that defines itself by its ability to share knowledge.



## challenges

- Budget data from 200 global business units was hard to collect and inconsistent
- Consolidating budget data in Excel was a time-consuming manual process
- Disconnected from strategic plans, budgets limited visibility for decision-makers

## solution

- Replace spreadsheets with Host Analytics Budget
- Provide all users globally with web-based access to a single source of data
- Speed data collection, verification and consolidation to clear more time for analysis

## results

- All 300 users spend an average of 50 percent less time in planning and budgeting
- Having more time for analysis, finance users create quarterly forecasts and other forward-looking plans
- Executives and managers have global visibility into the business

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