



CASE STUDY

# OBA Deploys Business Intelligence using Infobright to Help JCDecaux UK Cuts Costs and Reporting Time by 50%

## Background

JCDecaux is Europe’s largest out-of-home advertising company; more than 300,000 people in 3,500 of the world’s largest cities see its advertising structures every day. With an exclusive focus on out-of-home advertising, JCDecaux is the market leader in street furniture, billboards, transport and digital advertising. The company has more than 1 million advertising panels in 55 countries, including 163 airports and almost 300 transport contracts in metros, buses, trains and trams.

Founded in France in 1964 by Jean-Claude Decaux, the company has revenues of almost €2.6 billion and offices in Europe, North and South America, the Far East and China. Established in 1983, JCDecaux UK has more than 650 employees and now accounts for more than 25% of the UK’s out-of-home market.

## The Challenge

As part of its IT roadmap to support the expanding and increasingly complex UK operation, JCDecaux UK decided to develop a company-wide Business Intelligence (BI) solution. Its aim was to ensure that the UK management team had the information they needed to make better informed decisions – at a strategic and operational level. Essential to its success was producing detailed, accurate weekly reports on the UK’s activities: as well as being able to provide detailed, up-to-date information to JCDecaux’s head office in France. This information would enable the UK and French management teams to predict sales, plan ahead and maximise opportunities more effectively.

JCDecaux UK stored its assets and sales data on three separate databases – one for each large format advertising, street furniture and airports - its three key business areas. “All the management and operational information had to be extracted using Business Objects or produced in Excel and Access” according to Raj Rajkumar, JCDecaux’s Financial Systems & BI Manager. “As we had no common information bank to draw on, we had to spend hours gathering information from scattered data sources. Reports were often produced in different formats using different data sources, processes and methods. Over time, we’d seen our users developing their own complex reporting options to provide the data they needed. Reporting had become very inefficient, it took too long and didn’t meet our business needs.”

## JCDecaux

### COMPANY

JCDecaux UK

### SOLUTION

Company-wide business intelligence to support JCDecaux UK’s growing business

### RESULTS

The new system provides essential information for JCDecaux UK management to make better informed decisions.

*“I’m delighted with the outcome: data loads that used to take two hours are now happening in 20 minutes. We can now produce the essential reports in less than three minutes, when originally we couldn’t produce them at all. Our users are very happy, because they have the information they need within the timescales and can meet their deadlines.”*

**Stephan Lavallee**  
IT Manager  
JCDecaux UK

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“We recognised that we needed to integrate all our corporate data into the one solution” recalled Stephan Lavollee, IT Manager at JCDecaux UK.

“But given the complexity of our business and the sheer volume of data, it was obvious that our existing solutions just weren’t a viable option. We had millions and millions of lines of data, so making any changes was difficult, time-consuming and took too long.”

As an existing Oracle customer, JC Decaux’s IT team considered this option for developing the new solution, but discounted it: “It would have been a logical, but expensive choice” continued Stephan. “We were already using all our Oracle licenses, so we needed to buy new ones adding considerably to the project’s cost”.

Early in 2009, Stephan and his team started developing the new BI solution using Open Source (O/S) solutions, having identified MySQL and Pentaho’s Kettle as the most suitable database and ETL tools. As well as offering a 50% saving over Oracle, the team were familiar with these solutions, having used them on previous projects.

“Initially, we only loaded new sales data from our new booking system into the solution”, commented Stephan. “During the first weeks, it performed very well, but as we added more data, the load times increased from 20 minutes to an hour and then two hours. At the outset, the reports were excellent; they contained all the information the business needed, but they began taking longer to produce and started to time out. When we then tried to add two years’ legacy data for one business unit, it took 36 hours to load. It simply couldn’t handle the volume of data and produce reports inside an acceptable time frame”.

## The Solution

Stephan and his team considered reverting to Oracle, but the cost encouraged him to explore other O/S options, identifying Infobright as a possible solution. Designed specifically for BI, its column-oriented database, powerful data compression and optimized load capabilities were particularly suitable for JCDecaux’s high data volume needs.

Keen to find out whether it was as fast and effective as he hoped, Stephan contacted Infobright who introduced their partner, Open Business Associates (OBA), the management consultancy for Open Source. After an initial discussion, OBA recommended a short pilot project using JCDecaux’s own data. “Several colleagues were not convinced that Open Source would deliver given how much data we were using”, said Stephan. “So we deliberately gave OBA only three days to do the pilot project. We wanted to see just how quickly they could load so much data and how rapidly they could produce a useful report.”

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During the proof of concept, OBA's team reviewed all the data which had taken 36 hours to load, identified and addressed a number of issues concerning the data's layout. They then loaded the 4 million records into Infobright® Enterprise Edition in less than two minutes from MySQL tables, without applying any business rules. "I was amazed with the results" commented Raj. "Queries which had taken more than 15 minutes using MySQL only took a couple of seconds using Infobright. It handled all our data, we could generate reports easily and it was very obvious, even from this short trial, that it was the solution we needed".

Based on the results of the pilot, OBA began implementing Infobright's solution. During this phase, OBA recommended that JCDecaux UK use Talend as its ETL tool; partly due to its ability to handle complex data transformation logic and also because the product already had a data connector for Infobright.

"OBA really understood our issues and the problems we were facing. They brought the technical knowledge and flexibility to the project and from day one, explained what they could offer – and then delivered it", said Stephan. "I'm delighted with the outcome: data loads that used to take two hours are now happening in 20 minutes. We can now produce the essential reports in less than three minutes, when originally we couldn't produce them at all. Our users are very happy, because they have the information they need within the timescales and can meet their deadlines."

## The Future

This is the first phase of JCDecaux UK's three year plan to implement a complete BI solution throughout its operation. In the coming months, JCDecaux UK aims to integrate all its historical data into the solution and then plans for a further three data warehouses. Within the next two years, all the UK operation's departments will benefit from a dedicated BI solution, with the eventual goal of producing company-wide information through a single reporting tool.

## Benefits to JCDecaux UK

- UK business activities can be managed more effectively due to up-to-date, on time reports
- Users have access to relevant, updated information quickly and easily
- Customer data can be changed/updated quickly and easily
- IT team's resources freed to focus on more strategic tasks
- UK operation has BI road-map for next 2-3 years

## About Open Business Associates

Open Business Associates (OBA) is the management consultancy for open source. The company provides business consulting and systems integration services to develop, design, deploy, implement and support enterprise open source solutions. In addition to business solutions for BI, BPM, CRM and ERP, the company also offers infrastructure solutions such as analytical databases and enterprise systems management. Technical expertise, proven methodologies and fast, effective project deployment are central to OBA's approach. The company operates in many different market sectors and global customer base includes KPMG, Toyota, GeoPost UK, JC Decaux UK and America's Automobile Association.

## About Infobright

Infobright, the open source analytic database company, delivers a high performance database that is the preferred choice for analytic applications and data marts. Fast and easy to implement, with operational simplicity and low cost, Infobright is being used by enterprises, SaaS and software companies in online businesses, telecommunications, financial services and other industries to provide rapid access to critical business data.

**For more information, please visit [www.infobright.com](http://www.infobright.com) or join our open source community at [www.infobright.org](http://www.infobright.org).**

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