The Netherlands Association of Universities of Applied Sciences (HBO-raad in Dutch) is the interests and employers’ association for the Dutch universities in this sector funded by the government. The association acts to strengthen the position of these institutes, maintaining a wide network to this end. Among the most important duties of the association is acting as spokesman and maintaining the lobby for the government, as well as initiating and carrying out projects involving quality and supporting its members. As an employers’ association the Netherlands Association of Universities of Applied Sciences also represents all 40,000 employees in the sector.

Public information provision
Part of the HBO-raad’s service brief is to collect and provide benchmarking information. This information is public and is used principally by its members, the education ministry and the press. This is information from internal and external sources concerning intake, enrolment, results, study duration, staffing and progress. Prior to the introduction of QlikView, this information was placed on the HBO-raad website in brief static summaries. “Providing information is a vital part of the HBO-raad’s duties,” explains Henk Bönhke, functional analyst with the HBO-raad. “The solution we used to have for this, importing running Excel tables, appeared to be too complicated. To improve this we started working with Microsoft Office Web Components, and tried to publish the data using an ASP application. But we kept hitting issues such as software compatibility. In 2009 we reached the conclusion that we needed to seriously consider a Business Intelligence solution.”

Cost-benefit analysis
On the route towards selecting a BI solution, the HBO-raad considered Crystal Reports, Business Objects and SPSS. In evaluating each of these three solutions it kept being apparent that many hours of consultancy would be needed to set them up. Henk Bönhke: “We simply couldn’t make a business case. Not only would the initial investment be extremely high, but the annual costs of keeping the data up-to-date and, where necessary, integrating new data sources, just didn’t work in our cost-benefit analysis. Fortunately at exactly that time we established contact with The Implementation Group (TIG), which proposed a Seeing is Believing event for us.”

Seeing is Believing
In the Seeing is Believing event (SIB), a TIG consultant first conducted an information needs analysis and technical intake inter-

QlikView | Customer Success Story | HBO-raad

Netherlands Association of Universities of Applied Sciences develops cijfers.hbo-raad.nl public indicators portal with QlikView

With QlikView we present around 12 million records in a public indicators portal. The steep learning curve, the dynamic of the dashboards combined with the drill-downs and the speed with which both internal and external data sources can be linked, all make us an extremely satisfied user.

Henk Bönhke, Communications & Administrative Information Officer, The Netherlands Association of Universities of Applied Sciences (‘HBO-raad’)
Within a few days a test configuration was set up on-site. A QlikView dashboard was constructed based on the organisation’s own data and systems. The association opted for a test configuration of three different student dashboards: intake, enrolments and diplomas. “We were ready within three days,” notes Henk Bönkhke, “I’m still astonished at the ease with which the dashboards could be created. The dashboards also turned out to be very quick to publish using a web browser. Once we saw how we ourselves, without any training, could do associative analysis of the available information, could request new statistics and could use drill-downs to make every desired level accessible to interested parties, we came around.”

Data discovery with eight student dashboards
The first dashboards the association published were the Student Dashboards for intake, enrolments, diplomas, drop-outs, results, study duration and progress. With these dashboards the association offered its members, the press, research bodies and the ministry genuine data discovery for a variety of purposes. Thus, for example, universities could compare their progress and results with other universities per programme, per preliminary programme and using demographic characteristics. What are the results per programme? What is the average study duration? Which type of students drop out? Universities could also optimise their marketing policies using the intake dashboard. Which specific preliminary programmes receive applications? What is the background of students who have applied? The Ministry of Education is also a recipient of some of these details. For example for queries concerning staffing and the associated characteristics. “After just a few days of development we had an innovative solution to make a public presentation of all the significant facts and figures of applied sciences universities. With the enormous added value that all the student dashboards are associative, dynamic and interactive. We have presented these on the website http://cijfers.hbo-raad.nl. We achieved this at extremely minimal cost. Thus the annual effort required to process new or updated data sources and further optimisation of the dashboards involved just eight development days,” explains Henk Bönkhke with pride.

Financial data and student satisfaction
After making the student dashboards public, a dashboard with objective staffing details was also developed. Among other things this dashboard provides an insight into the number of employees, subdivided into teaching staff and support personnel, age categories, salary scales, male/female ratios and the number of Full-Time Equivalents. This information is specifically used by the Ministry of Education and by the association itself. The association also has a variety of plans for the year ahead. “For instance, we still want to develop a financial dashboard. In this way the remaining queries we receive, for which answers cannot be found on our indicators website, will be automated. There are also plans for a student satisfaction dashboard,” notes Henk Bönkhke.

Every day 12 million records are being reviewed and analyzed. The association’s indicators portal is currently being used by some 40 users daily, with a peak at the start of the year of more than 100 users a day. Henk Bönkhke: “The time savings we have achieved are clear. In the past a significant percentage of these users would have phoned the HBO-raad for an answer to a specific question. We have now absorbed this with QlikView. Qlikview is an extremely manageable solution which offers genuine added value in a very short time. The steep learning curve, the dynamic of the dashboards combined with the drill-downs and the speed with which both internal and external data sources can be linked, so that we can present around 12 million records via a public portal – all this has made us an extremely satisfied user. We are offering all interested parties transparency, which we as an association believe to be vital. With QlikView the step towards Business Intelligence and data discovery is an extremely small one.”

We offer all interested parties transparency, of which we as an association are extremely proud. With QlikView the step towards Business Intelligence and data discovery is an extremely small one.

Henk Bönkhke, Communications & Administrative Information Officer,
The Netherlands Association of Universities of Applied Sciences (‘HBO-raad’)

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