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Manage Corporate Resources

MEGA Helps GeoEye Manage Corporate Resources More Efficiently

GeoEye (Nasdaq: GEOY), the largest commercial satellite remote sensing company in the world, needed to develop an infrastructure to help managers use company resources (people, money, time, equipment) more efficiently. At the same time, Sarbanes-Oxley compliance deadlines were looming in the near future, and GeoEye needed the means to document the company processes and produce the records necessary to meet the government directive. To accomplish both goals, GeoEye turned to MEGA International for its expertise – business process analysis and enterprise architecture – that helps executives discover, understand, and control information at the enterprise level.



Complex High-Technology Company Requires Enterprise Architecture Modeling

GeoEye specializes in advanced geospatial imagery processing capabilities, and maintains a robust image archive covering some 160 million square miles, and an international network of regional ground stations. With three earth imaging satellites, it gathers map-accurate imagery for national security, mapping, local government planning, and natural resources and environmental monitoring. Customers include the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency (NGA), foreign governments who use imagery for their own national and economic security, resellers, and even Microsoft, and Yahoo!, who purchase satellite imagery for online mapping services.

The acquisition of Colorado-based Space Imaging in early 2006, coupled with the new compliance regulations of Sarbanes-Oxley, made it increasingly important to document company processes and how people, functions, and departments interact. GeoEye did not want to rely on manual means and recollections of employees, or duplicate records and processes. While some functions were being performed at GeoEye, none were documented and there was no formal internal auditing. However, the acquisition of another company, with duplicate roles and responsibilities, and the evidence required by Sarbanes-Oxley, made it necessary to quickly develop a structure to support these efforts.

This became an opportunity to develop a corporate-wide enterprise architecture (EA), tailored to meet the needs of Sarbanes-Oxley and ISO compliance, and create a foundation to document other, future processes to increase the efficiency of company operations.



“We needed a solution that would allow us to represent roles and responsibilities, document operations, and portray risks, policy and operational controls, and control objectives,” explained Hugh Klipp, director of business process management. “We wanted to relate all of these together in a way that would address the unique portions of each and every process.”

MEGA Identified as Market Leader

Klipp began the search for assistance with information from Gartner, which evaluates the EA and business process analysis (BPA) market. From the Gartner research, GeoEye identified the leading suppliers of EA and BPA products and services, and developed a needs assessment outlining the key features GeoEye sought. Then, the company reviewed proposals and demonstrations from three major companies. After this thorough review, GeoEye selected MEGA International because of MEGA's recognition in the market for quality EA/BPA software, the company's respected industry expertise, and the unique flexibility MEGA offered to customize to GeoEye's specific needs.

“MEGA did not restrict us to a preconceived area like most EA tools,” Klipp noted. “And, most vendors were focused on the narrow area of supply chain, while MEGA offered a modeling tool that was flexible enough to use in many different situations. It was the most complete solution, with software, training, and consulting. We were quite satisfied that MEGA was the right choice after testing the software in our company environment.”

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GeoEye Documents and Shares Information

In addition to individuals who use the MEGA software to do modeling, there are about 300 business users across GeoEye, who use the output of the data repository in HTML or Word. For example, the project team that led the Sarbanes-Oxley and ISO compliance efforts were frequent users as they shaped those programs. The MEGA software allowed them to select the integration point between business processes, applications, and business structure that supported the applications, giving them a better idea of how the business was aligned to meet their specific goals.

Today, the repository is a common, shared infrastructure, containing about 200 control diagrams, each with narrative associated with risks and control objectives. It includes more than 400 defined operations. GeoEye has approximately 75 servers and 40 business applications mapped. This will expand soon as the company launches a new satellite in 2007, which will have a new suite of software to add.

MEGA has helped GeoEye standardize how resources are represented. When the company was smaller and in a single location, it was less important. But as company operations and locations grew, it became vital to understand how processes flow from person-to-person, and from department-to-department, such as with a customer order moving through the entire company to delivery and invoicing.



MEGA Helps GeoEye Meet Compliance Requirements

One of the most immediate measures of success for the project was GeoEye's ability to produce the required Sarbanes-Oxley reports on time. Subsequent years of Sarbanes-Oxley compliance preparation required an effort that only took about 10 percent of the time required the first year, reflecting huge savings in staff time.

"If we had attempted this effort in Word or Visio, it would have been an impossible task," Klipp observed. "By using the MEGA software, it was easy to add the new roles and functions of the acquired company and quickly assess all of the company's assets. Our time investment for annual compliance reporting is greatly reduced. In addition, accurate information is available at any time."

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With the MEGA repository, GeoEye can make massive changes quickly and easily. It doesn't require multiple people to update information, so the company is able to use this time in more productive ways. And, with information standardized, it is now possible to identify and eliminate redundancies and bottlenecks, and create situations where departments can work together to determine how best to manage processes between them. The documentation of a visible enterprise architecture has created an important communications tool.

GeoEye Gains a Competitive Edge with MEGA

MEGA has helped GeoEye create business agility; by helping the company better manage its resources. In addition, it helps managers avoid problems, and save time and money by identifying the impact of organizational change through modeling, before actual changes are made. This has sharpened organizational performance through optimal allocation of resources. It also contributes to improved management of risk, by helping to prevent potential dangers through the unified view of risk types and locations. GeoEye is now looking at ways to integrate its disaster recovery efforts into the program.

Klipp believes the progress GeoEye has made would not have been feasible without MEGA. The company has been so successful at managing the information, it is transparent to employees. MEGA's tools and process have helped without disturbing the environment, which is important to the smooth operation of the company.

"We've been very pleased with MEGA's tools and consulting support, which is top notch," Klipp concluded. "MEGA has been an overwhelming success for GeoEye."