



Spotlight On THE DANISH OLYMPIC COMMITTEE



PETER GOTTLIEB

As project manager of the Danish Olympic Committee in Denmark, Peter Gottlieb coordinates a variety of IT projects and integrates his education as an athletic consultant. At the 2011 European Tableau Customer Conference, Peter described how his staff is using Tableau to improve Denmark's athletic programs with business intelligence analytics. "We want to do it based on facts," he explains. "Not just what we thought and what we think."

TABLEAU:

How do you use Tableau at the Danish Olympic Committee?

PETER:

We just started using business intelligence a year ago. We had a lot of reporting and “gatekeepers,” but now we’re focused on bringing business intelligence in to the athletic consultants, so they can easily get access to data. This was very difficult early on.

Athletic consultants work with about 61 different federations for volleyball, basketball—you name it. We have seven consultants working directly with the foundations, and the federations need it working with us.

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TABLEAU:

So how many people in all do you have using Tableau?

PETER:

We have 26 Tableau Desktop users. I think we’re going to change to Tableau Server. We have to spread out the data to all the federations. We’re working on cube data, so we have some problems right now with spreading our data. We have to think about how we do it.

TABLEAU:

How has your use of Tableau grown over the year that you’ve had it?

PETER:

We started with a small group of around eight people working on and testing it. Now it’s exploding through the federations. We have 70 staff members, so 26 is actually a lot. We don’t use it in the financial department, which could be a place to focus on. But, the main goal from the beginning has been to sustain the work between the consultants and the federations.

TABLEAU:

What kind of data are these users looking at, and what kinds of decisions to they need to make with that data?

PETER:

Mostly it’s basic data like membership in the federations, club memberships, how many members do we have in all the organizations. We have like 1.7 million out of 5 million people in Denmark, so it’s a lot of human beings. We’re looking at what kind of sports do they do and where they’re located in Denmark. So, they might say maybe you should focus on this area to improve membership in the hockey foundation.

We also have a lot of activity data, which is how many courses, how many games, how many of whatever they do. And we have data on coaches that are supporting the top athletes in Denmark. How many of those get the medals? Do they have any strategic staff? How do they work to reach the highest levels of the sport?

“Now they can see that this is possible, and they can reach the data very fast.”

TABLEAU:

So basically you're trying to help develop athletes within Denmark.

PETER:

Yes, but it focuses on athletic consultants. We have to help the federations reach their goals, and we have to improve on our own work, but we want to do it based on facts. Not just what we thought and what we think.

We're working on gaining knowledge about the organizations and federations. How do they work? How many staff members? How many employees? We're bringing in a lot of information through questionnaires that the federations have to answer. We'll get that information into Tableau and see what that brings. The rest of it is what we call CRN data, like how many hours do we spend on each federation? What do we do and how many times?

TABLEAU:

Have you had any “aha” moments with Tableau? Discoveries you might not have made otherwise?

PETER:

I think we have a lot of those. We built a map showing all the communities I went to in Denmark, just to bring the members out on a map, and how they have been developing from one year to another. It's amazing to the federations because they don't know. We have about 15,000 members, and we're putting them all on a map.

TABLEAU:

So are there any sports you've become concerned about, or regions that you've started to pay more attention to?

PETER:

I think there will be. We just started on the next phase of it, and the consultants have to be stronger using Tableau in conversations with the federations. We've just financed 12 new projects. One goal is to get more members. How do we do that? We're working with 12 federations about that right now.

TABLEAU:

What have been the major benefits of using Tableau?

PETER:

It's all about time spent on data and on analyses. The members of the staff might have some idea of what they really want to tell people, but I couldn't get the information. Or they had to use Excel for a week or two to analyze information from a website or whatever. Now they can see that this is possible, and they can reach the data very fast.

And, of course, we help them. We're doing a lot of workshops with all the fun stuff. Just two weeks ago, we had 20 workshops with just these 26 members of our staff. I think they're getting into it and understanding.

TABLEAU:

If you were talking to another country looking to implement a similar program, what best practices would you recommend?

PETER:

They have to be aware of what kind of staff members would use it as a project. What we're working on right now is monitoring how they use it, if they use it. We have to be sure that all the members of the staff are actually using the product instead of just saying they do. We've been putting a lot of money into it, and we need them to use it.

“Even though it’s very intuitive, it’s still something that we have to teach people because it’s changing our way of working.”

“Having people in a workshop where we’re just putting things on a screen and having a lot of discussions, a lot of wows and hows—that’s pretty good. We love it.”

We have to help them all the time. Even though it's very intuitive, it's still something that we have to teach people because it's changing our way of working.

TABLEAU:

Can you tell me a bit more about how you're sharing your BI data and how you'd like to begin sharing it?

PETER:

Now we're only sharing the data with Tableau Desktop for the meetings. Or we do PDFs. We hope to change that, so they can get tighter to the data and use the filtering and dashboards or whatever. We have staff members that can use it, but we have to spread it out. We also need to think about user groups. How do we do that?

We have a meeting later about how we could use LinkedIn to get data for users and phone groups because we don't have any active directories now—only within the federations, but not with the rest of the federations. So we're going to take that on before long.

TABLEAU:

Any final thoughts on using Tableau?

PETER:

I have to say I think it's very intuitive. I'm not a software engineer. I'm not an IT consultant. But I think it's very, very easy to work with, and I love working with it. Having people in a workshop where we're just putting things on a screen and having a lot of discussions, a lot of wows and hows—that's pretty good. We love it.

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