



# Athena Health CDM Case Study

## *Deriving Greater Business Value from True Integration between IBM Cognos TM1 and IBM Cognos Disclosure Management (CDM)*

### **The Challenge:**

It was a huge manual effort to produce board packages with narrative commentary based on MS Word and Excel. Only one person could edit reporting packages at a time, and keeping data tables and commentary in synch was error prone and challenging.

### **The Solution:**

athenahealth worked with QueBIT first to implement an IBM TM1 based financial reporting and planning system, and then to use TM1 as a data source to their IBM CDM solution so that all data and narrative content for producing board reports in Microsoft Office format (including Word and PowerPoint) is managed in one secure place accessible by multiple contributors

### **The Benefits:**

With CDM, production of board reports became much more automated, quick and error free. The secure workflow feature allows multiple people to collaborate on different parts of a document simultaneously. The direct connection to TM1 removes the risk of data errors and inconsistencies.

The ability to “roll over” reports from period to period (with automated data updates) saves time.



## Case Study:

**athenahealth, Inc.** is a publicly traded company that provides cloud-based services for health care and point-of-care mobile apps. Founded in 1997, the company today has grown to over 4,000 employees, connecting more than 85,000 providers and health systems nationwide, on a mission to help deliver better care for all.



## Aggressive Growth

**athenahealth** has grown aggressively since its founding, with average year-over-year revenue growth of about 28% since 2011. To effectively manage this growth, athenahealth became a metrics-driven organization, with senior executives (including the CEO) paying close attention to metrics for every part of the business.

Accurate and frequent tracking & reporting of these metrics is critical to keeping a pulse on performance across the company. This monitoring is especially important, given all the changes that accompany high growth rates.

“With all this growth, change is constant. Our metrics are the only way in which our managers can understand what is going on in the business, and make the right decisions in a timely manner,” explains Jim Hanifin, the Senior Manager of Financial Systems whose team administers the IBM Cognos TM1 and CDM systems that underpin athenahealth’s financial reporting, planning and metrics infrastructure.

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## Choosing the Right Reporting Platforms

Before IBM Cognos TM1 and CDM were deployed, athenahealth faced challenges with performance measurement, metrics and reporting:

- Reporting from multiple source systems was difficult to manage in Excel and the existing system, along with concerns about data quality and governance.
- Data management included the need to manually aggregate consolidated “Total Company” reporting, and metrics calculation formulas varied by metric.
- The legacy planning system could not handle the volume or calculation of data efficiently, and did not have built in reporting capabilities.
- An increasing amount of time was needed to produce board reporting packages with dynamic narrative commentary.
- Only one person could edit reporting packages at a time, causing a bottleneck in productivity.
- The need for last minute changes, synchronizing tables and commentary, and managing data created a stressful environment that led to human error.
- The process of generating annual reports, along with quarterly and monthly reports, contained inherent inefficiencies and duplicate efforts.



**QueBIT was engaged to integrate the IBM CDM solution, and expand the system capabilities.**

By replacing the legacy planning solution with an integrated IBM Cognos TM1-based planning & reporting solution, the business immediately realized several benefits. One of the key benefits was improved speed & flexibility for more robust modeling capabilities – this is critical for modeling within the plan and calculation of metrics. Additionally, the TM1-based solution inherently centralizes data repositories, providing easier and more effective administration and governance of information. The enhanced speed and structure of data processing in a TM1 environment also provides faster aggregation of data for real time reporting, including the ability to create multiple hierarchies in a single dimension, allowing you to view the data in different ways.

During the integration of the IBM CDM solution, QueBIT further expanded the system capabilities in several key areas. With a focus on ease-of-use and connectivity, the solution has the potential to connect with other external data sources. Improved security enables users to collaborate productively, using CDM workflow capabilities, and provides control over board report production. Additionally, board-quality presentation reports can be produced in Word and Powerpoint from within the system. All data and narrative content is in one place, and the solution provides the ability to “rollover” monthly and quarterly reports each period.

## A System to Support Continued Growth

**athenahealth** embraced the IBM Analytics software portfolio by adding IBM Cognos TM1 and IBM CDM to its existing investment in IBM Cognos Business Intelligence. QueBIT, an IBM Premier Business Partner and repeat winner of worldwide IBM Analytics Partner of the Year awards, assisted with the implementation.

“I could not be more satisfied with our partnership with QueBIT. They have a deep understanding of both the technology and our business objectives, and worked with us collaboratively to deploy a system that can grow and evolve with us,” states Jim Hanifin.

“We began the CDM implementation soon after the first phase of the TM1 implementation was complete, and were able to complete installation, training and deployment in about 3 weeks. It has been a huge value add!” adds Jim.

As a result of this combined TM1 and CDM implementation success, there has been significant qualitative and quantitative improvements to athenahealth’s reporting capabilities:

- Qualitatively, much more information can be reported than before in aggregated or in detail form. Total Company metrics are easily available, and can be drilled down on.
- Quantitatively, the preparation time for board reports has been cut from weeks to a few days, with a much reduced chance of errors.

The final mark of success is that athenahealth has continued to expand its use of the IBM Cognos TM1 platform to other financial analytical applications, and to manage these systems independently while reaching out to QueBIT for advice and support when needed.



### About QueBIT

Trusted experts in analytics, QueBIT is dedicated to helping organizations leverage their data to make more intelligent decisions, that result in significantly improved business value. QueBIT has delivered analytics solutions for more than 450 organizations, including some of the largest and most successful companies in the world. QueBIT solutions span the entire spectrum of analytics, from data management, including Big Data strategy and implementation, Business Intelligence, Business Planning, Predictive Analytics and IoT Analytics. QueBIT’s unique CARE methodology coaches customers to achieve independence in solution ownership, while delivering rapid time to value. QueBIT has been recognized by many industry awards. [www.quebit.com](http://www.quebit.com)