

timeXtender®



De Lindeboom Apotheek

CUSTOMER STORY

## De Lindeboom Gains Unprecedented Insights Into Its Business

De Lindeboom needed a data warehousing solution that could easily access its transaction database and provide trustworthy data for reporting and analyses.

### Background

The Belgian De Lindeboom Apotheek group of pharmacies was established in 1953, and has since grown significantly as the result of mergers and acquisitions so that today the group consists of 61 pharmacies.

De Lindeboom purchases its products through the cooperative distributor Escapo, and all De Lindeboom's transaction data are stored in a central database at Escapo.

### Challenges

Managing a group of 61 pharmacies requires careful commercial, logistical, and financial monitoring. The more the De Lindeboom organization has expanded, the more difficult it has become to produce accurate detailed analyses from the huge volume of transaction data in Escapo's database.

"We knew what our turnover and margins were, of course, but when things got really busy, it was difficult to keep track of the whys and wherefores," says Raf Vermeiren, Accounting & Finance Manager at De Lindeboom. "We needed to understand the causes of sharp fluctuations in margins, the stock rotation situation, and any irregularities with the use of loyalty cards. But we didn't have that day-to-day overview of the business."

The management at De Lindeboom realized that they needed more than just the raw data from Escapo's database. Therefore, they decided to investigate whether a data warehouse solution was the right way to go.

De Lindeboom worked with an independent consultant during the product screening phase, and the result was a shortlist of three providers. Given the size and complexity of the transaction database at Escapo's, De Lindeboom decided against a solution that talked directly to the central database, and went for a data warehouse solution based on timeXtender. De Lindeboom chose timeXtender because it enabled them to build both a data warehouse as well as OLAP cubes, and because it provided easy access to Escapo's database through its ODBC driver.

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Dirk Van der Straeten, owner B-eye, timeXtender partner.

### Solution

De Lindeboom's data warehouse now provides the basis for the entire reporting system. The data warehouse contains data recorded over the past 3 years, which amounts to a total of around 230 million transactions. And each day an additional 150000 transactions are recorded. With the timeXtender based solution, De Lindeboom's reports and analytics are updated daily from the data warehouse, and the business user can view the information in Targit.

The data warehouse itself can easily be updated with more data from Escapo's database on an as-needed basis, and new OLAP cubes can be created when required. "When the BI application highlights certain anomalies, we have to be able to carry out more analyses

– if necessary, on the database as a whole, and timeXtender gives us a very flexible way of creating new OLAP cubes,” says Raf Vermeiren.

## Results

De Lindeboom has built four OLAP cubes in timeXtender, and these cubes are designed to support management in its day-to-day business operations. “Previously, we didn’t know what our sales figure were until 20 days after the end of the month. Now, we know what happened yesterday and what action we need to take tomorrow,” says Raf Vermeiren.

In terms of staffing, management can now make informed decisions and conduct detailed analyses of profitability and staffing at the individual pharmacies. “50% of our staff hold university degrees and so salary costs are a major part our cost structure, and we are now able to make decisions on extra staffing based on cold, hard numbers,” says Raf Vermeiren.

De Lindeboom has also experienced a vast improvement in its stock handling and goods flow. Raf Vermeiren says, “The stocks cube that we have built with timeXtender enables us to achieve many quick wins, and make the best possible use of our pharmacy stock. Our stocks at De Lindeboom represent around 6 million EUR – and that’s a huge chunk of capital to have standing still.”

In addition to being able to analyze stock levels and rotations for individual products in the pharmacies, De Lindeboom can now also detect abnormal stock movements in good time. Likewise, De Lindeboom can identify irregular transactions such as product returns or manual returns on loyalty card balances.

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## About timeXtender

timeXtender is a Microsoft SQL Server based software tool that simplifies the implementation of the ETL and data warehousing process. timeXtender enables agile dimensional modeling and supports the Kimball data warehousing methodology.

The timeXtender is used by more than 1500 customers worldwide.

timeXtender Headquarters:

Klamsagervej 35, DK-8230 Åbyhøj, Denmark  
+45 8620 5700

[sales@timextender.com](mailto:sales@timextender.com)