



### SOLUTION

Data Analysis for Teams  
Consulting Services  
Training

### INDUSTRY

Manufacturing

### REGION

North America

### KEY BENEFITS

**20 Days**

of extraction time saved.

Enhanced regulatory and  
taxation compliance

Secure collaboration and  
significant cost savings

Automated data extracts from  
disparate systems

# LAFARGE NORTH AMERICA

## LAFARGE STREAMLINES COMPLEX DATA EXTRACTION AND ANALYSIS WITH ACL™ ANALYTICS EXCHANGE

Lafarge North America is the largest diversified supplier of construction materials in the U.S. and Canada. The company produces and sells cement, ready-mix concrete, gypsum wallboard, aggregates, asphalt, and related products and services. The products are used in residential, commercial and public works construction projects across the continent. Lafarge operates from 3,500 locations throughout North America with annual revenues of more than US\$4 billion.

"ACL ANALYTICS EXCHANGE DELIVERS SECURE DATA ACCESS WITH TOP-NOTCH QUALITY ASSURANCE. IT'S HELPING US TO IMPROVE EFFICIENCY AND CUT COSTS."

- GERRIT BUITENDAG, DIRECTOR OF ACCOUNTING (CEMENT)

### Objectives

Lafarge's processing environment generates over 120 million General Ledger transactions per year. It represents a complex, mission-critical piece of the business. The company recently implemented a unified ERP system, but still needed a solution that could access disparate legacy systems (including archived data, tools and processes) in order to satisfy audit, government reporting and regulatory requirements.

To safely deliver data to off-site auditors, unions, and tax authorities, Lafarge accountants had to encrypt extract files and physically ship them in courier boxes. It was an expensive, time-consuming process that left the company vulnerable to financial penalties, non-compliance fines and security breaches. In addition, the data was often difficult to manage once it arrived.

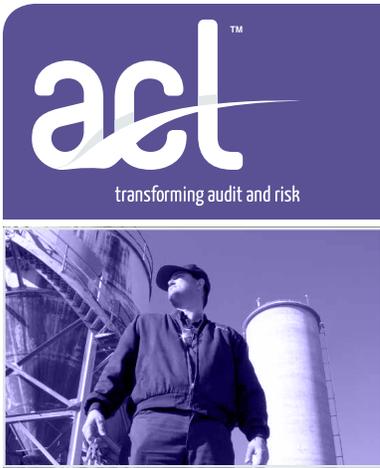
After considering several options, Lafarge chose to implement ACL™ Analytics Exchange (AX), a powerful, scalable solution that seamlessly extracts disparate data files and creates consistent formats for multiple end users.

### Implementation and Planning

Lafarge IT specialists began by working with ACL's Professional Services Group to establish an effective technical infrastructure for the AX rollout. Ongoing communication between IT and the ACL consultants ensured a smooth implementation tailored specifically to fit the company's needs. ACL consultants also provided hands-on user training – demonstrating the logic behind data tests and ensuring staff were prepared for diverse analytic scenarios.

The Lafarge AX solution provides a platform to extract and manipulate large data volumes and deliver complete, valid files to third-party users. Ad-hoc reporting requests (for investigative purposes) are quickly translated into ACL analytics and housed in AX for future use in a secure-access repository that can also be accessed by internal teams working in different locations.

The robust AX extraction and scheduling function regularly pulls data from disparate systems to anticipate future needs. It's a pro-active approach that has cut extraction times from as much as 20 days down to several hours – without IT intervention. Once analyzed, ACL ensures the validity of data sent to outside bodies, such as auditors and tax authorities, and provides tighter control over sensitive information.



Lafarge's auditors were already using ACL so the Analytics Exchange platform implementation has established a common language between audit, accounting, IT and finance teams. Now, Lafarge accountants can also use AX to compare category codes against reporting rules and track transaction processing trends and characteristics. Analytics also pinpoint accounting issues and reconcile control accounts.

## Results

Lafarge has used Analytics Exchange to:

- Cut extraction times from as much as 20 days down to several hours.
- Prevent and minimize major non-compliance penalties.
- Share data securely with internal teams and appropriate third parties.
- Enhance collaboration without travel costs.
- Access and analyze data from disparate legacy systems.

Despite a growing physical distance between the accounting and audit teams, AX provides secure data access for virtual collaboration. There's no need to ship data files, which minimizes business risks and saves hours of unnecessary labor. The controlled virtual collaboration has also reduced travel costs.

For Lafarge, anything less than total compliance with tax and legal regulations can lead to severe financial penalties. When management compared the total costs from previous years with the potential cost savings of a managed analytics program, they quickly determined that AX provided a significant return on investment.

Internal business units are also using AX to minimize their reliance on IT resources. Before, extracting data from the ERP and multiple legacy systems was costly and took a long time to complete. Now, standard extractions can be turned around in less than 24 hours and stored in the AX repository to meet the needs of multiple users. The extracts are also scheduled at off-peak hours to prevent system disruptions.

Users quickly fulfill data requests from scheduled extractions, while expert ACL users working in the Lafarge service center tackle ad-hoc or more specialized demands.

## Next Steps

Now that Lafarge can access, analyze and distribute data from multiple systems, the company is considering developing increasingly sophisticated analysis and compliance applications. The Internal Control department, for example, has extensive testing cycles. With the ACL solution, available data can now generate samples for this important business function. The flexible solution supports ongoing challenges such as pricing agreements for cross-border negotiations and measuring data processing volumes for internal billing documentation.

Lafarge teams also plan to expand the use of ACL to deliver even greater benefits back to the entire organization. The solution continues to meet and exceed its original expectations.

Learn more about what  
your organization can  
accomplish with ACL.

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or email [info@acl.com](mailto:info@acl.com)

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