Erik De Rouck – Cloudshill Consulting bvba

Context

St Jude is using for their financial monthly reporting a highly-developed setup with Excel pivot-table reports running against data stored in Access. Reports are distributed afterwards into the corporate cloud and emails go out to announce their availability.

Project Scope

For efficiency reasons and to avoid human error it was decided to automate the database imports, the report refreshing, the distribution of the reports and the personalised email communication. Another important target of the exercise was to document the setup so the exploitation of the tool would be transferrable to other people within finance.

Solution in Excel

A **central Excel file** was developed using VBA from where all necessary actions could be initiated by the administrator and from where any file needed in the process could be called upon.

Several logical steps were foreseen:

- Refresh reports: opens and refreshes all listed reports against the Access database.
- File Copying: updated reports are copied into the corporate cloud drive. Any existing files from prior reporting period are automatically moved to the archive folder.
- E-mail distribution: a personalised email is sent to the end-user with any relevant link(s) and the

optional possibility to add attachments to the email.

All actions executed from this file are recorded automatically in a text **log file**, so a trace back of username, timings and done actions can be found back and checked if needed.

All steps executed successfully are tagged with a green **background**, errors with red for quick visual validation.

A **help section** is maintained in a single central worksheet but can be consulted from anywhere in the workbook by clicking on the question mark image.
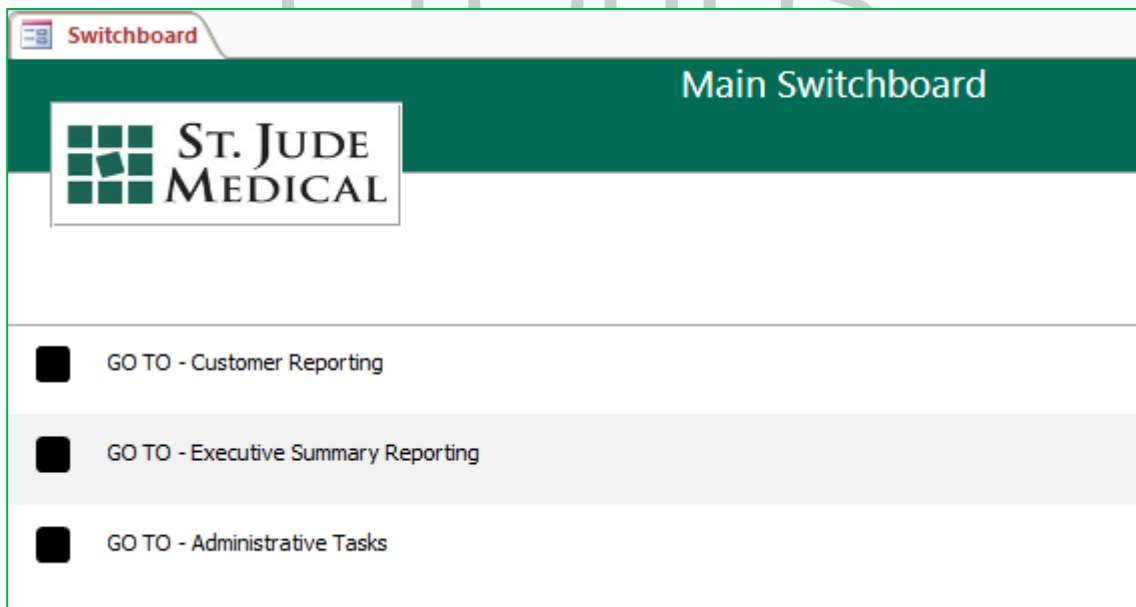
Solution in Access

Knowledge of Access in Finance departments is in general scarce, so for transparency reason a switchboard was created from where all possible administrative actions (in chronological order of the process) can be kicked off.

Examples are:

- Links to Word documents (e.g. explaining the steps to perform in the source system to export the necessary data)
- reloading the data for a certain month into the Access database (clear and reload)
- point and select dialogs to change the location and name for source files used by the Access files, so linked tables are updated accordingly without the need for the end-user to know the concept
- open any Excel files for editing (e.g. files used to translate the local metadata into the corporate reporting structures)

Client

Name: St Jude Medical (now Abbott), Belgium
Department: Finance