

Case Study: Unified Brands

“Business Intelligence gave us so many unanticipated opportunities of understanding our business and turning data into action.”

Market

Manufacture and assemble foodservice equipment for the institutional food industry

Annual Revenues
\$250 Million

Problem

The new President had just joined the company. His mission was to grow the business through organic growth and acquisition. Early on in his review of the company, he recognized the weaknesses in the existing information system. The system was an older legacy system called PRMS that had been acquired in the late 80's. It was based on technology that was outdated. The result was inefficient business processes, and limited access to information. He knew he could not achieve the growth objectives with the current system.

Solution

The President formed an ERP committee to begin investigating new ERP systems. Shortly after forming the project, the CEO and CFO retained Ultra Consultants. Immediately Ultra began its assessment of the existing system. The result of the assessment was clear: the company needed more efficient processes and improved access to information quickly. Ultra and the management team formed two parallel projects: (1) development of a new business intelligence system that could improve access to information off the current system, and (2) identification and evaluation of a new ERP system.

For the first project, Ultra created a Data Warehouse and Sales Reporting system to support cross-functional analysis and reporting. The new Sales reporting system was completed in 90 days and was launched using the existing legacy system PRMS from Infor. Ultra employed Microsoft tools to extract information and load it into a Microsoft database. Ultra used Cognos to setup access to reports and data cubes for the sales organization.

For the second project, Ultra assisted with the identification, evaluation, and selection of a new ERP product. After the selection Ultra assisted with the management of the ERP implementation. During the implementation, Ultra worked with the ERP implementation team to add the new system data to the Sales Data Warehouse so that upon cutover to the new system, sales history data from the old and new systems was available for seamless analysis and reporting.

Later the client acquired another manufacturer company running BPCS from Infor. Ultra worked with the new IT staff to map the BPCS data into the Sales Data Warehouse for continued seamless reporting.

Ultra continues to be the client's trusted business partner for supporting and expanding its BI reporting initiatives. Over the years, the client has acquired additional businesses, and its business processes have continued to evolve. Ultra has supported the client's expanding needs to provide visibility across its evolving business environment.

Benefits

The management team quickly achieved their goal to improve access to information. The new reporting system provided management and the sales organization immediate access to information they had not had before. The benefit was better decision making and better customer service for their customers.

The new Business Intelligence system has provided management easy access to information that has helped them:

- Improve margins. With the information, sales management can be much more precise in the award of discounts which has helped the company improve margins. The new information tools aid with analyzing costs and margins by product, customer, and sales rep.
- Improve revenue per sales headcount. With the new system the sales management team is able to “slice and dice” information about markets, customers, and products. This analysis capability helps management spot trends much more easily. The tools have improved the management of the sales organization resulting in an increase in revenue per sales headcount.
- Reduce costs. The new reporting system eliminates manual effort to maintain rebate information. The rebate information is available faster, with less effort, and is accurate.
- Reduce manufacturing costs. Controlling and reducing manufacturing costs whenever possible is something Unified Brands is always evaluating. Business Intelligence has given management the ability to do in-depth analysis across multiple data files so they can track material, manufacturing, and inventory costs and take corrective action quickly. Making timely decisions based on data that accurately reflects the true status of the entire manufacturing operation is a key to their success.

When asked about the new Business Intelligence system, Beth Hammer, Director of Sales Administration at Unified Brands said:

“Business Intelligence gave us so many unanticipated opportunities of understanding our business and turning data into action.”