QueBIT ®

Improve Data Collection and Analysis for Enhanced Financial Decision Making

One of the world's largest distributors of automotive parts and accessories, QueBIT's client has a global footprint spanning three continents, offering a wide range of quality products, from replacement systems and components to parts and accessories that are trusted by millions of customers worldwide.

The Challenge:
Legacy FP&A system was slow, labor intensive, and error-prone. The output did not enable management to make proactive, data-driven decisions in a highly compeitive environment.

The Solution:
Based on a comprehensive review of all aspects of the process, QueBIT implemented IBM Planning Analytics. The solution is inherently scalable and automated.

The Benefit:
The resulting processes are faster, require less manual intervention, and empower management to make informed decisions much earlier in the process. The system also provides insights that did not even exist previously, and includes new features such as front-end reporting.

About the Client

QueBIT's client is one of the world's largest distributors of automotive parts and accessories, and has a global footprint spanning three continents. They offer a wide range of quality products, including replacement systems and components, to parts and accessories that are trusted by millions of customers worldwide.

Their global operations and rapid growth strained the Financial Planning and Analysis (FP&A) function. The FP&A group is responsible for the budgeting, planning, and forecasting processes of the company. In addition to managing the annual budget and monthly forecast processes, they are responsible for setting targets for all divisions of the company. With many diverse business verticals, each with their own set of market conditions, it was critical to incorporate a more flexible and efficient planning system that could be scaled with ease. The legacy planning system was not only manually intensive but also very slow, leaving little time for data analysis and improvement. This is where QueBIT's expertise was invaluable.

The Challenge

Running a thriving multinational corporation against cut-throat competition requires meticulous planning, efficient budgeting, and accurate forecasting. This puts a heavy burden on the FP&A department. Saddled with an old, legacy planning system, the department's work process was fraught with unnecessary dependence on manual effort, often leading to delays and unwanted errors. Here is a rundown of the challenges faced by the client prior to working with QueBIT:

Scalability - The legacy system was not scalable, compelling each department's plans to be created separately. These plans then had to be consolidated manually in Excel spreadsheets to understand the full picture. The data consolidation process was time-consuming and error prone. Moreover, if there were any unforeseen changes made to the plan, the entire process had to be repeated.

Speed - Before the implementation of the IBM Planning Analytics (PA) based system, they had to wait over two minutes just to load up each module of the legacy application before any work could be done.

Labor Intensive - The legacy planning system lacked a very basic feature - front-end reporting. This meant all data collected was manually combined and aggregated into extensive spreadsheets to make them presentable. If last-minute changes were needed, the entire spreadsheet had to be overhauled.

Data Analysis - The primary function of data collection and analysis is to provide actionable insights that can improve business processes. With this client's legacy system, they barely had enough time to collect and collate the data, let alone draw insights from it.

The Solution

Deploying and customizing the latest IBM Planning Analytics solution.

After a comprehensive review of the FP&A department and their internal processes, QueBIT recommended deploying the IBM Planning Analytics system to make the client's financial planning more efficient and streamlined while adding detail to support better analysis. Furthermore the client benefited from QueBIT's knowledge transfer and learned how to extend the system on their own.

One of the projects the client was able to undertake independently was a new compensation planning module that calculates individual bonuses and produces bonus accruals automatically. Adding new applications in this way, without having to invest in additional software, validates the value of the IBM Planning Analytics platform, as well as the partnership with QueBIT.

"Working with QueBIT has been a definite plus. Really appreciate how generous they are with knowledge transfer, and always super helpful."

- Director of FP&A

Quantitative Benefits

1. Consolidated data can now be sent directly to the GL and be loaded within 20 minutes at the press of a button. Previously, this step took more than a day of manual effort.

2. Before IBM PA, the the FP&A team spent much time responding to individual requests from various departments for data and reports. Now, the end-users generate real-time reports on their own using the intuitive PAW user interface.

3. The need for manpower to run the process has been reduced considerably. Initially, at least 6 to 7 people were required to run the entire process. With the new system, 2 people can get the job done. This frees up the remaining members of the team to devote their energy towards more productive tasks and high-value analysis.

4. The IBM PA system can store detailed data at scale which yields rich, reliable insights. The legacy system lacked this ability, leaving managers with limited information when making decisions.

> *"With IBM PA we have more time for analysis; for example Working Capital gets a much closer look."*
>
> *- Director of FP&A*

Qualitative Benefits

1. Before the new system was implemented, most of the time was wasted on collecting, ratifying, and entering the data. With the new IBM PA system, the client's FP&A department can now spend quality time analyzing data to drive better decision making.

2. Scalability was a major issue with the legacy system. IBM PA's flexibility allows the FP&A team to rapidly create scalable modules for individual models. Additionally, these modules can be integrated with ease for more structured reporting. This benefit comes in handy, especially during acquisitions when data from newly acquired companies are easily incorporated into the IBM PA system for consolidated reporting.

3. Another primary benefit of the new system is agility. With 2020 bringing unprecedented challenges, most companies were stuck trying to keep up using spreadsheets. This client's IBM PA system shone through and allowed them to develop plans, budgets, and reports in record time, enabling them to adjust plans quickly in response to the changes brought forth by the pandemic.

4. QueBIT did not just implement the system and disappear. QueBIT ensured that the FP&A group was trained to become self-sufficient to a point where the client could undertake new development projects despite having no coding background.

About QueBIT

QueBIT enables organizations to achieve a business-focused integration of Financial and Operational Planning and Analysis, extended with Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning (ML). This area of expertise is known as Extended Planning and Analysis (xP&A). QueBIT's collaborative, incremental and business-driven approach is driven by over twenty years of experience in delivering successful xP&A solutions to hundreds of mid-market and large companies across all industry sectors and lines of business. For more information on how your organization can Analyze, Plan and Achieve your own xP&A journey, please check us out at www.quebit.com.

QueBIT®