Bidvest Procurement Consolidates Disparate Data and Benefits from Visibility with Qlik

"Qlik has changed everything. Our entire focus has been changed by the way the Qlik product integrates our information and gives us a global and local view."

– Werner Brink**, *Data and Information Science, Bidvest Procurement***

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Overview

Bidvest Procurement Value Proposition:

To deliver value, service and competitive deals using the Group's buying power.

To increase savings while minimising potential supplier risk, thereby allowing the customer to concentrate on core business while improving the bottom line.

To provide statistical insights on core focuses including Utilities, Motor Vehicles, IT Telecoms and BUY Bidvest. This is done by aggregating external and internal data extracts.

By making use of business intelligence (BI) to identify Group needs from General Ledger extracts and negotiate special deals with prospective suppliers.

Responding to trends with current service providers.

Challenges

Prior to deploying Qlik Sense, Bidvest Procurement faced various pain points and challenges in terms of its data management and analytics.

"The autonomous nature of the Bidvest business and the data Bidvest Procurement collects were the biggest issues. This was due to the sheer majority and variety of data sources and types," confirms Werner Brink, Data and Information Science, Bidvest Procurement.

With data streaming in from both external suppliers and internal departments, all running on different Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) and sales systems, the business was under immense pressure to stay on top of its (manual) data management.

At the time, most information was created and captured manually with very little information being system generated. "We had to manipulate all of this information into a single view. This task was almost impossible," adds Brink.

Solutions

Originally, Bidvest Procurement's analytics were managed on Excel and Piviots. This method was extremely limiting.

Solution overview

Customer Name: Bidvest Procurement

Industry: Procurement Solutions for the Bidvest Group

Function: Mandated to save the group money on all non-cost of sales operational expenditure.

Specific applications include: Budget; General Ledger; Telecoms; Travel; Motor vehicles and Utilities

Generally: Executive; Finance; Supply Chain; Logistics

Geography: Johannesburg, South Africa

Challenges: Bidvest Procurement's data management was constantly hampered by the sheer majority and variety of data sources and types at hand. Manually generated information required laborious collation and manipulation. This was time consuming and ineffective.

Solution: Bidvest Procurement evaluated a host of business intelligence partners. Upon careful consideration, Qlik Sense was chosen to become its core reporting tool in 2017.

Benefits:

- Bidvest Procurement can now see a consolidated view of operations across the Group

- The business is empowered to identify trends and exceptions as well as structure commercial agreements

- More strategic decision-making fed by real-time, reliable data

- Disparate data now effectively consolidated for a single-view

Data Source Systems Database: A variety of unstructured, Excel documents. Piviots.

In 2009, the company implemented a data management system, which it utilised until 2016.

"We realised that the programme did not have the capabilities required to fulfil Bidvest Procurement's needs or match the strategic direction that the company was moving in," confirms Brink. "A host of BI) partners were evaluated, leading to Qlik Sense being implemented in 2017. At this point, and going forward, Qlik became our core reporting tool."

The Qlik platform was chosen to meet two distinct needs: the ability to gain project visibility; and the ability to gain group visibility.

The implementation process was collaborative and entailed intensive planning sessions and the development of clear goals and objectives. These goals included specific time-frames, detailing milestones to be reached by particular dates.

In consultation with SA Qlik Master Reseller, Bidvest Procurement developed an Evaluation and Key Performance Indicator (KPI) Scorecard to ensure a smooth implementation process. "We also implemented a fixed cost project, which aided in the process."

Qlik Sense has delivered on its promise for greater visibility. "The product has provided the ability to see a consolidated view of Group operations. This allows me to conduct analyses in real-time, from any location," states Brink. "The dynamic nature of the tool provides a variety of views and excellent visibility into the Group trends."

In less than a year, Bidvest Procurement has developed five applications which help the organisation to manage its Budget, General Ledger, Telecoms, Travel and Motor Vehicles more effectively. "With Qlik Sense we have one, consolidated global view of this data," says Brink.

Benefits

Qlik Sense has made a marked impact on Bidvest Procurement's decision making, management and operations. According to Brink; "Everything we now do is focused around data-lytics, including the identification of trends and exceptions. All the strategies that we have set are now data driven."

Brink further confirms that Bidvest Procurement has experienced many benefits from utilising the Qlik platform, largely due to the single, dynamic view that it provides.

"The tool has taken the disparate data that we use to have and consolidated it into one, reliable format. We are now able to focus on both the macro- and micro-level of the Group, its divisions and its companies," believes Brink.

These benefits are most effectively illustrated with a visual comparison between the old, archaic data system, and the new, intuitive and aesthetically pleasing platform. In addition to looking better, being more productive, and allowing for proactivity, cost savings have also been experienced.

In the Telecoms department, for example, stats were leveraged to bring the cost per minute down by an average of 24 percent. "This was made possible through superior monitoring capabilities, and the visibility needed to align all costs for Bidvest companies within the Group. For some customers, this meant up to 57 percent in savings."

Brink believes that other businesses can benefit from implementing Qlik. "Follow our strategy for implementing Qlik. It is 90 percent planning and 10 percent action," he advises.

Future

With a view to moving forward, expanding the predictive analysis, and applying machine learning, Bidvest Procurement is evaluating new Qlik Sense licencing fees and models.

"The ultimate goal is to move from being reactive to being proactive," concludes Brink.