

Vital Distribution Solutions saves on fuel and geotracks drivers with Qlik

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Overview

Vital Distribution Solutions (Pty) Ltd (Vital) was established in 1999 and is a reputable warehousing and transport logistics service provider, operating within the transport sector in Southern Africa.

The Group’s vision is to deliver cost effective and reliable services to clients so that they can focus on their core businesses. Vital aims to be one of the top five distribution and warehousing companies operating in Southern Africa.

Employing the core values of transparency, discipline, integrity, self-respect and respect for others, Vital fulfils its commitment to its clients and

strives to differentiate itself through quality of service. This service quality is carefully constructed around people, processes and systems.

Vital currently provides the following services at a national and regional level:

- 3PL – Transportation Services
- Dedicated Bulk Warehousing Facilities
- Multi Principal Bulk Warehousing
- Trans-shipment Warehousing and Distribution
- Refrigeration Vehicles and Storage

Challenge

From a Business Intelligence (BI) perspective, Vital operated from various different data sources; from ERP systems to Excel administration, Legacy systems, and tracking and tracing.

“The challenge was to integrate these varying sources and manage the business as a whole,” confirms Mark Uren, Director at Vital.

The Vital Group comprises a complex organogram, made up of fleet services, staffing (HR) and logistics divisions. This leads to a complicated financial management and operational protocol.

Solution overview

Customer Name: Vital Distribution Solutions

Industry: Logistics

Function: 30 users using four apps with various functions across; Finance (Vital, Staffing, Fleet), Labour & Operations. Vital is currently building a Staffing KPI application

Geography: Johannesburg, South Africa (operating countrywide)

Challenges: Integrating varying sources of data to be able to manage the business with real BI at hand.

Solution: Vital implemented Qlik

Benefits:

- Higher data visibility
- Greater efficiency and productivity
- More accurate tracking and billing
- Reliable data regarding the activity or inactivity of drivers
- Geotracking drivers
- Effectively managing fuel consumption
- Better planning and strategic decision making

Data Source Systems Database:

IFS, Excel, Tracking system - Pulsit, Sage VIP and Home-grown systems

Solution Overview

3 months

to develop four applications

One Month

To implement the solution across the organisation, onboarding 30 users

“As each site uses different data sources (ERP, Excel Admin, Legacy systems) tracking, tracing, integrating and managing the Group as a whole is essential; yet it seemed impossible,” he adds.

Solution

Searching for a solution to its challenges, Vital began discussions with SA Qlik partner, B2IT, in 2017. The appointment was made, and the project kicked off in August 2017.

“Although we considered QlikView a decade ago, we eventually went with another solution. However, this solution proved insufficient,” confirms Uren.

The Qlik Sense implementation process ran smoothly and was completed quickly. “The B2IT team projected a certain number of hours and stuck to their hours quoted, meaning that they strictly adhered to the agreed turnaround times of it,” says Uren.

Vital describes the development process as pain free. To ensure the implementation ran smoothly, B2IT worked closely with the Vital team daily. “They sat in our offices and worked with us, so by the time implementation was done we were already fully trained on the system.”

With this user-friendly system, staff have been encouraged to think about analysing their data. Within a month the business phased in 30 users, allowing for testing and smooth implementation.

Although some change management and training were required, staff have embraced the solution and enjoy discovering its full benefits.

Benefits

As this is a relatively new implementation, Vital is still calibrating the benefits experienced from Qlik Sense.

“We have, however, used it for financial reporting to shareholders, with great success,” states Uren.

The 30 Qlik users confirm that the more they use the tool, the more benefits they discover. “The more they use it the more excited they get. The dashboards, data and analytics are right there, easy to see,” says Uren.

“We’ve experienced benefits in tracking fuel consumption, driver behaviour and staffing,” he adds. “With companies like Staffing, the biggest question is tracking billing and determining which accounts are non-revenue earners. Qlik makes this evaluation an easy one.”

Uren is enjoying being able to make the types of data relations Qlik delivers, comparing the labour supply with KPIs, and so forth. “While we could do this with the previous system, we had to run through three or four systems to find the data – and then manually analyse it,” recalls Uren.

Although Vital faces some challenges in sourcing the data from various sources to input into Qlik, some benefits are already becoming apparent.

“Our data comes from so many varying sources... For example, all the departments report on the DMR Excel spreadsheets which come from monitoring drivers’ In/Out times, vehicle utilisation, and so on. Once all of this information is in Qlik, we’ll easily identify profit/loss statements per trip, etc. With this information, we’ll be able to make better decisions.”

Managers have confirmed that, from a management point of view, asking for outstanding Proof of Deliveries (PODs) used to be a challenge. Now the report can be drawn at the click of a button, and the user can choose where to run it from.

“This means that there’s nowhere to hide. Data cannot be manipulated, and everyone has the same view,” confirms Uren.

Overall, the company has enjoyed better access to its data. The various operating

sites also have a better overview of what is happening throughout their departments.

Examples of the areas that have benefited from Qlik include:

- Implementing geotracking for the first time in the Group's history
- Gaining knowledge of drivers stopping outside of geozones (which is a major industry issue)
- Analysing the use or disuse of greenband driving (where disuse is discovered, drivers can be sent for training)

From a financial perspective, the business has already experienced the benefits of real-time reporting. "If we only receive June's financials on the 15th of July, how can we act on that information in time to make a marked difference?" asks Uren. "Qlik empowers us to manage the business proactively, and not reactively."

Simply by the mere knowledge that Qlik is in place, and staff know about it, performance has improved. In an industry where clients are not amenable to price increases, wastage must be avoided at all costs. With staff being more aware of their own productivity, efficiencies are increased, and wastage avoided.

"Qlik has truly surprised us with what we can do. If we were to have this discussion again in a year's time, most of our business will be on Qlik. Then the real, statistical benefits will be evident."



Implementation Advice

Uren confirms that businesses considering implementing Qlik must ensure that they know ahead of implementation what they want out of the system.

"They must understand the benefits they are seeking, why and how to get those benefits," he says. "For this reason KPI sessions are incredibly important."

He also confirms that management buy-in is critical to project success. If the staff feel that management is behind the use of the tool, they are more likely to embrace it with an open mind.

Future

Phase one of the Qlik implementation is now complete. Phase two has already kicked off, and will involve KPIs for Staffing Logistics, HR and Payroll. Phase three will cover KPIs for Fleet.

"Once that's done we can look at operations KPIs for the other businesses, evaluating what other benefits we can achieve," concludes Uren. "We'll also be looking at NPrinting in the future."



B2IT is a highly experienced company in the IT applications field and focuses on Business Intelligence since 2007. Its track record of no failed implementations speaks to an ability to work with customers to accurately define their needs and deliver results on time and within budget. It is one of the most mature Qlik Partners in South Africa, through its relationship with South Africa Qlik Master Reseller, and consistently rates amongst the top performing Qlik partners in Africa. Its world-class business intelligence skills, combined with South African Rand based rates, have made possible numerous successful implementations in Europe, Australia and Southern Africa – most of which delivered without leaving South African shores.

South Africa Qlik Master Reseller (previously known as QlikView SA) has been a member of the EOH group of companies since 1 July 2014, facilitating a great partnership that aims to accelerate growth for Qlik in Southern Africa directly or through its specialized Partner channel. SA Qlik MR's portfolio of products meets customers' growing needs from reporting and self-service visual analysis to guided, embedded and custom analytics. Over 1800 customers rely on Qlik solutions to gain meaning out of information from varied sources, exploring the hidden relationships within data that lead to insights that ignite good ideas.

Qlik bridges the gap between traditional BI solutions and inadequate spreadsheet applications. The in-memory associative search technology that Qlik pioneered, pioneered the self-service BI category, allowing users to explore information freely rather than being confined to a predefined path of questions. Appropriate from SMB to the largest global enterprise, Qlik's self-service analysis can be deployed with data governance in days or weeks. The platform's app-driven model works with existing BI solutions, offering an immersive mobile and social, collaborative experience. Headquartered in Radnor, Pennsylvania, Qlik does business in more than 100 countries with over 40,000 customers globally. For more information, please visit www.saqlik.com.