

Bidvest Waltons Finds One Version of the Truth with Qlik

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– Michael Glass, *Special Projects Manager, Bidvest Waltons*



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Overview

Bidvest Waltons delivers office supplies and automation, operating with a firm belief in the opportunity and power of education. It continuously seeks to play a valuable role in the South African economy, and that of the continent.

The company proudly supply the tools that facilitate the efficiency required for business success today as well as the items required for all learning environments.

Bidvest Waltons stocks a wide range of products that support all needs in these environments such as: stationery, office catering and hygiene, technology, office consumables, office furniture and Optiplan filing solutions.

Delivering a diverse range of quality offerings at competitive prices, Bidvest Waltons excels with exceptional service delivery.

With a vision to become its customers' partner in success, it commits to

delivering on its promises and providing the best solutions with focus, speed and efficiency.

Challenge

Waltons experienced difficulty in ensuring that the information at hand was standard, concrete, and valuable.

According to Michael Glass, Special Projects Manager at Bidvest Waltons; “People were looking at two different sets of data. There wasn't one version of the truth.”

As a result, data analysis took long, and it comprised a difficult process. “There's a lot of data to be analysed, yet we weren't always looking at the same set of data. This came to the fore in reviews, when one set of outlines were presented, but this data differed from what the managers were looking at.”

This disparate data made informed decision making extremely difficult.

Solution

In 2015, Waltons began looking into data solutions. “By 2016 we had made a concrete decision to implement QlikView through SA Qlik,” advises Glass. “We then began the process of investigating and scoping. The Qlik developer started working on the implementation in March/April 2017.”

Although Waltons initially planned to manage the Qlik implementation in house, it made the decision to bring in a Qlik consultant to manage the process.

Solution overview

Customer Name: Bidvest Waltons

Industry: Office Supplies and Automation

Function: Sales, Inventory, Debtors, Finance

Geography: Johannesburg, South Africa (operating countrywide)

Challenges: Disparate data, leading to reporting inconsistencies and analysis frustration. With inconsistent data, employees were unsure of which data to trust and what to disregard.

Solution: After considering a variety of options, Waltons selected Qlik and implemented QlikView.

Benefits:

- One version of the truth
- Reliable, consistent reporting that can be generated at the click of a button rather than taking days to deliver
- Faster turn-around time on reporting
- More strategic financial decision making
- Increased efficiency
- Improved operational performance
- Increased sales visibility and trackability
- Better planning and strategic direction

Data Source Systems Database:

Sequel server, Excel spreadsheets

Solution Overview

3 months

to implement QlikView

Across the organisation, improving efficiency and productivity.

Sales Barometer Implemented

Updates every 15 minutes

Supporting sales growth

Ensuring targets are constantly monitored and met in a proactive way.

“There were some snags along the way but, considering the size of the project, it went fairly smoothly,” recalls Glass.

The business now has five active QlikView Applications:

- Sales (updates once a day, very more detailed)
- Daily sales barometer (updates every 15 minutes)
- Inventory
- Debtors
- Finance

When the solution was first implemented, 90% of the staff immediately jumped on-board and began using it. “There was no change management required,” confirms Glass. “It is easy to use and clearly beneficial.”

Benefits

Glass confirms that the business now enjoys the benefits of viewing one version of the truth across the board. The platform also provided a solution to the inefficient data analysis process previously managed on Seqel and Excel.

“Everyone is looking at the same QlikView application and pages – there’s no debate on data,” he adds.

With ease of use and a user-friendly interface, Waltons has found the tool to be quick, easy, and intuitive.

Waltons’ financial decision making is now based on one, reliable set of data. “It’s also easier, faster and we can analyse huge mountains of data at speed. This allows us to make better decisions, and to perform better operationally.

As such, QlikView has helped Waltons achieve faster, more accurate decision making. “Qlik has ensured we experience greater efficiency, more productivity and a faster turn-around time on report development,” states Glass.

While some reporting functions were taking three or four days to do, these are now automated on QlikView, giving the staff more time to focus on other critical tasks.

Implementation Advice

Glass offers the following advice to businesses considering implementing Qlik solutions:

- Scope it properly - know what you want; every page in QlikView must give you value
- Have an idea of the things you want to achieve through Qlik
- Go for it

Future

Waltons is currently evaluating Qlik Sense, which could be implemented in the future as a hybrid model, maintaining the current QlikView applications.

“We’re also considering expanding the use of Qlik into further operational areas, like Warehouse & Logistics. We’re also interested in establishing an inventory application that measures KPIs within the warehouse,” concludes Glass.

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.

These solutions bridge 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.