CUSTOMER STORY

Qlik helps boost store operational performance

Leading retailer Urban Outfitters uses real-time data to support 'in the moment' decisions

Qlik

URBAN OUTFITTERS

> "Through one central Qlik location, every employee in each store can now get up to the minute data on all aspects of the individual store's KPIs and act on those insights immediately."

Paul Reigel, Technology Director, Urban Outfitters

Siloed data required consolidation

Founded in 1970 and headquartered in Philadelphia, Urban Outfitters is a lifestyle retailer selling women's and men's clothing and accessories, a range of items for interior furnishing and décor and a music and technology collection.

With 550 stores in the USA and 100 across Europe and the UK, gaining daily visibility of actionable data was a problem, made more complicated by different time zones and the various operating styles of the three business brands. When Covid-19 hit, the company also had to manage store closures and differing pandemic strategies.

"Previously, we were dealing with many different systems and technologies so we could not easily explore the information to get the learning we needed," says Director of Workforce Management, Joanna Matthy. "As our biggest roadblock, it meant that reports had to be cobbled together which took a lot of administrative time."

Greater visibility in the cloud

Consolidation and a migration to the cloud were the way forward along with the increased use of real-time data to support 'in the moment' decision making and rapid action when business challenges arose. It has created an Active Intelligence environment with a connected end-to-end data pipeline that enables users to find data then understand it and quickly act on it.

Urban Outfitters migrated to a Snowflake cloud fed by Qlik Data Integration, which streams 50 GB of data per day, mainly from on premise data sources.

Solution Overview

Customer Name
Urban Outfitters

Industry
Retail

Geography
Philadelphia, USA

Function
IT, Operations, Sales, Supply Chain Management

Business Value Driver
Customer Intelligence, New Business Opportunities, Reimagined Processes

Challenges
- Data was siloed with many different systems and technologies across 650 stores
- Store reporting was time-consuming and often based on old data
- Reports were complex documents that were non-motivational and difficult to understand

Solution
Implemented Qlik Data Integration to stream data into a Snowflake cloud and Qlik Sense SaaS for data analysis.

Results
- Data now resides in one cloud-based repository where it is easily accessible to all
- Highly visual dashboards are quick to create and easy to understand
- Rapid real-time data access boosts store performance by giving staff the information they need when they need it

Qlik Data Analytics is now the company standard for in-store reporting and data analysis and these two Qlik solutions are working together to drive more informed action.

As the use of Qlik expands through the company, highly visual dashboards have replaced complex multi-column reports. More than 240 Qlik apps are in production, providing insights over not only store performance but also e-commerce sales, operations, distribution centers and supply chain logistics.

With Qlik cloud analytics, Urban Outfitters can easily scale access to near real-time analytics. "The more data we have in the cloud, the easier it is for us to set up new stores and connect them from anywhere around the globe," explains Technology Director, Paul Reigel. "This level of access means that the same people can see the same data no matter what management level they are."

Near real-time data enables quick decisions by everyone

Using Qlik Data Integration enables small packets of data to be constantly streamed to the cloud rather than a big-bang approach that could take hours. Previously, data could only be manipulated once the ETL (extract, transform, load) process had started and that would mean hours of delay. Now, this is down to less than five minutes for distribution centers and tops out at 15 minutes for the order management system (OMS).

Report generation is also quicker and easier to understand. Global Director of Retail Solutions & Customer Experience, Tracey Strober, explains: "People previously had to go to many sources to plug in information but with Qlik we have been able to automate all of that. One routine report that used to take a store manager two hours a week is now instantly available."

Qlik has had the most impact in stores. The democratization of data creates a more inclusive environment for store staff who can make quick decisions, see current challenges, plan for the future and appreciate the impact their work has on the wider picture. They can also view the performance of other stores. Language around KPIs and reporting is unified across all brands, resulting in less confusion and error while enabling managers to spend more time out on the sales floor rather than in the back office.

The ease with which Qlik dashboards can be created was of great benefit during the pandemic. As stores became pack-and-ship fulfillment centers for direct business during Covid-19 lockdowns, a Qlik dashboard was quickly created to give management a measure of store and brand performance.

Matthy concludes: "Qlik has provided a longer runway and a more sustainable way to operate with fewer inhibitors than we had before. Using it to obtain a holistic snapshot of a store's performance throughout the day is our ultimate aim."

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Joanna Matthy, Director of Workforce Management, Urban Outfitters

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About Qlik

Qlik's vision is a data-literate world, where everyone can use data and analytics to improve decision-making and solve their most challenging problems. Our cloud-based Qlik Active Intelligence Platform delivers end-to-end, real-time data integration and analytics cloud solutions to close the gaps between data, insights and action. By transforming data into Active Intelligence, businesses can drive better decisions, improve revenue and profitability, and optimize customer relationships. Qlik does business in more than 100 countries and serves over 38,000 active customers around the world.

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