ANALYTICS

A no-fuss approach to delivering value

Fair Price uses Qlik to enhance transparency and control

INSIGHT CONSULTING
Active Intelligence

Qlik

FAIR PRICE

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Mohammed Hansa, Support Services General Manager, Fair Price

A commitment to fair deals

Since 1999, Fair Price has been manufacturing stylish and desirable furniture, and marketing it through its own stores at prices that don't overstretch buyers' limited budgets.

The company's products are firm favorites among South Africans setting up their first homes and are increasingly appealing to aspiring middle-income professionals working their way up the ladder.

Fair Price is a business committed to innovation, service and ensuring a fair deal for customers. Its extensive store network is now complemented by a growing online business, while consumers who struggle to access credit can use its 'lay-by' scheme to reserve an item, pay in instalments and receive it when the final payment is made.

It's a philosophy that clearly works. Fair Price now operates 100 stores across the northern regions of South Africa and employs around 1,600 people across the group, including 400 in its manufacturing operation. It's also a business model that depends on competitive pricing without skimping on quality. Delivering this involves effective control and monitoring of critical business areas – from production and inventory to sales, finance and accounting.

Information 'at the speed of light'

Fair Price realized from an early stage that business information and data analytics were essential to its operation. Its initial forays into the field, however, didn't live up to the company's high expectations.

Solution Overview

Customer Name
Fair Price

Industry
Retail and Services

Geography
South Africa

Function
Finance, IT, Sales, Supply Chain Management

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

Challenges
- Improve operational efficiency and customer service
- Identify and improve inefficient practices and processes
- Inform and incentivize Fair Price sales and production staff

Solution
Fair Price and Insight Consulting introduced Qlik Sense® and write-back extension Komment across key operational areas of the business.

Results
- Increased transparency has improved sales and logistics
- Key insights have turned losses into profits
- Critical tasks such as reconciliations are simplified and accelerated

"We had a very archaic process. Our ERP system is internally developed and highly customized," says Mohammed Hansa, Support Services General Manager at Fair Price. "We tried to develop algorithms to forecast sales based on previous results but the numbers were hit and miss in terms of accuracy. This led to inefficiencies in areas like warehousing and logistics. Basics like having stock in the wrong places meant we were unable to service customers as well as we should."

Also causing issues was the spread of data sources across Fair Price's operation and how to accumulate and present it to those who need it most. Fair Price's first BI tool was powerful enough when first acquired but, as the business grew, so did its demands and expectations – a situation that was further complicated by the arrival of Covid-19.

"Users had started to become dependent on the analytics but our front end was based on spreadsheets and it was becoming problematic," Hansa explains. "The problem was getting the data quickly enough and in a format that we could analyze fast enough to make meaningful decisions. During Covid, for example, we needed information at the speed of light; it was a matter of survival for the business."

No frills, no fuss, proper value

Hansa was referred to South African data strategy specialist Insight Consulting – and to Shanna Jardim, Senior Business Intelligence Consultant, in particular. He was immediately impressed.

"Working with a consultant who understood how the business works made life much easier," says Hansa. "With us it is no frills, no fuss and selling goods at a proper value. Shanna understood that, which allowed us to move forward very quickly."

Jardim saw that Qlik could provide the solution that Fair Price was looking for: a scenario-planning tool capable of pulling data from multiple sources, including in-house data warehouse and SQL developers, as well as servers at warehouses, factories, head office and individual stores.

Qlik would also meet Fair Price's need for governance and security, while using the data acquired to power a user-friendly platform that would inform key decision-making processes. Jardim worked with Hansa to build the development, ensure data cleanliness and complete an effective working platform in just a few months.

"The visualizations and what they could achieve were very important," Hansa notes. "Having experienced other tools, I saw immediately how much easier the processes were with Qlik. It was exactly what we required."

With Qlik in place, Hansa set about applying it to some live use cases. It didn't take long before he scored an important early win.

Stepping up transparency

One of Fair Price's main initiatives involves hiring delivery drivers from rural communities to deliver its products. It's a popular scheme that the business wanted to maintain but poor margins threatened its viability.

"I ran it through Qlik to find out whether raising the delivery charge by R20 ZAR (just over $1 USD) would impact customer behavior," Hansa recalls. "The results were surprising. Customers saw the increase as largely immaterial but it turned the delivery program from a major loss to a decent profit."

It was a great start to Fair Price's Qlik journey and led Hansa and Jardim to identify other areas of the business where improvements could be made. Before long, Qlik was providing a range of critical viewpoints across the business. Qlik dashboards were introduced into factories and warehouses to show the numbers of products built and in progress, accompanied by a similar deployment on sales floors.

"We introduced Qlik into every single store to launch a basic sales incentive model for staff," Hansa explains. "Users can see dashboards showing what they've sold and what they're being paid on. It's very transparent and a major step up from the old system."

Working smarter and better

Qlik's influence has also spread to Fair Price's finance department, where it is transforming productivity. Laborious tasks such as payment reconciliations, which could involve multiple staff members and time-consuming manual processes, are now significantly simplified and accelerated.

"That's the level we've taken Qlik to," says Hansa. "It's not just for operational reports to tell the head of procurement what we're selling and whether it's profitable. We're using it in our back-end office. Qlik is resulting in something actionable and allowing people to work smarter and better."

Enhancing both Qlik and Fair Price's capabilities are additional features enabled by Qlik's open API environment. Write-back extension Komment, for example, is being used to add extra depth and breadth to Fair Price's deployment, while Hansa is also excited by the potential to add artificial intelligence to the mix.

"There are all these different tools that we can leverage with Qlik," Hansa notes. "Some might be relevant, some might not work for us, but exploring them opens your mind to those concepts."

The aspect that Hansa values most highly, however, is the transparency that Qlik brings to the wider process of managing a large-scale operation such as Fair Price.

"When you're faced with a problem it's like having a dirty fishpond," he observes. "You don't know whether the fish are healthy or unhealthy until they come to the surface. The clarity of data and information that Qlik provides gives that deeper view of the business."

The keys to success

Simple pricing adjustment turns loss into profit

Benefits delivered in sales, production, logistics and finance

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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. A private company, Qlik offers real-time data integration and analytics solutions, powered by Qlik Cloud, 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 serves more than 38,000 active customers in over 100 countries.

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About Insight Consulting

Formed in 2007, Insight Consulting is a strategic consulting firm that operates across Southern and East Africa. It is a data specialist that finds its enterprise customers' raw data, frees it from vertical business silos, understands its relevance and actions it into business value for them by using intelligent software and analytical expertise.

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