ANALYTICS

LEAFIO delivers retail success

Using Qlik to optimize inventory analysis, visualization and management

Qlik Q®

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Helen Kom, Product Director, LEAFIO

Unlocking efficiencies and optimizing operations

Retail can be a complex and challenging environment, where even the finest details can make the difference between success and failure. Many retail giants have the scale and resources to build and manage critical in-house platforms to optimize operations; smaller companies don't have such opportunities. Notably, LEAFIO is suitable for both the first and second. The solution has accumulated the experience of hundreds of retail companies, which the development department of even the largest holding cannot afford.

LEAFIO AI Retail Solutions develops and distributes business software designed to boost retailers' performance. With users in 17 countries, its growing portfolio features software-as-a-service (SaaS) solutions designed to help users manage the retail supply chain, gain insights to unlock efficiencies and optimize operations.

The LEAFIO Inventory Optimization solution helps users to manage inventories accurately and effectively, while its Promotion Management solution helps retailers to predict, forecast, plan and execute promotional activities and the Shelf Efficiency solution creates optimized floor plans and planograms (schematic merchandise display plans) for retail locations.

Currently, about 20,000 stores are connected to the LEAFIO system throughout the world.

Solution Overview

Customer Name
LEAFIO

Industry
Retail and Services

Geography
Europe, USA, Canada, LATAM

Function
IT, Sales, Supply Chain Management

Business Value Driver
Reimagined Processes

Challenges
- Build effective analytics and visualization capabilities
- Seamlessly integrate with other solution components
- Save development time and costs while accelerating production

Solution
LEAFIO integrated Qlik Sense® into its products and development to enable analysis and visualization while keeping to critical timelines.

Results
- Qlik Analytics play a crucial role in enabling retailers to track sales trends
- Unique requests for calculations and data models can now be met
- LEAFIO uses Qlik internally to optimize customer management

A critical decision at a critical time

Building a platform such as LEAFIO Inventory Optimization involves a range of skills and multiple areas of expertise. LEAFIO's developers had identified a need for a solution to allow retailers to accurately track key performance indicators (KPIs) in inventory management processes. The team had also developed many of the necessary front-end systems internally but realized more was needed.

A year into development, LEAFIO recognized that the Inventory Optimization solution's analytics capabilities would need to be expanded to match evolving demands. Specifically, LEAFIO saw that a flexible analytics platform capable of handling incoming and outgoing data would help customers to make timely decisions and enhance their overall performance. However, to build this, it needed a tool that would enable it to gather and analyze millions of data strings and handle gigantic data volumes on a daily basis.

The question was whether to develop the solution in-house or look outside the business. LEAFIO considered existing platforms – both open source and commercial – as a visualization tool to connect to existing data sources and integrate with the broader system. However, it doubted their ability to deliver an acceptable analytics quality while ensuring uninterrupted operations. It saw that developing the component from scratch would involve new personnel and increased costs.

"Inventory Management was the first solution we created. It is based on a complex technology stack," explains Helen Kom, Product Director at LEAFIO. "We knew that creating our own business intelligence (BI) module to investigate the KPIs would be a long and expensive process, so we decided to use an external partner."

Constant improvements and support

LEAFIO explored options such as Power BI and Tableau but was impressed by Qlik Sense and its ability to handle large data arrays and incremental data uploads – a critical factor given that the databases it manages typically record hundreds of thousands of lines daily.

Qlik's visual engine was another key selling point, as was the fact that the development and integration of Qlik Analytics into LEAFIO products could be realistically accomplished in-house. From the point of Qlik's adoption, development work continued at pace.

The project continued with a study of end users' target needs. Simultaneously, it continued to configure and integrate dashboards into the product and adjust visualizations in line with feedback.

"We reworked the data model at least once, as the experience we acquired through Qlik enabled us to optimize our data uploads," says Maxim Khupovets, Senior Business Analyst at LEAFIO. "Constant improvements and support from the local Qlik office also helped us to maintain our product development speeds at a high level."

Drilling down with embedded reports

In a fruitful partnership with Qlik, LEAFIO Inventory Optimization launched successfully and is now the business' flagship product for inventory management.

One of its key objectives is to enable retailers to keep stock levels as low as possible without compromising the availability of goods, thereby driving profitability by reducing sales lost through lack of product availability while minimizing inventory costs.

The analytics module plays a crucial role, enabling retailers to track sales trends, lost sale opportunities, inventories and surpluses across their business by warehouse, store and supplier. Perhaps more importantly, retailers can then identify the factors affecting these trends and act on them accordingly.

The insights are delivered through two main dashboard views: an operational dashboard handles inventory management, ordering, lost sales and overstocks, while a strategic dashboard displays average stocks and sales, inventory turnover rates and a series of other KPIs, with filtering and multiple views to enable the most relevant analysis.

"We currently have a list of 42 reports embedded in our solution – they're a critical feature of the system," says Kom. "They help our customers drill down into particular issues and understand where things are going wrong."

Ongoing success stories

LEAFIO integrated Qlik Analytics in three other products: Loyalty, which handles retailer loyalty programs; Rinkai, a transport management system that specializes in route planning; and Shelf, which allows retailers to optimize the management of shelf space.

And such is LEAFIO's commitment to Qlik; it also uses Qlik Sense to analyze deployments across its own product portfolio.

"Qlik's role is much bigger than the elements our customers see," explains Kom. "We are a SaaS company, so we are responsible both for our customers' inventory management and also the system's productivity. It's very important for us to have Qlik dashboards tracking all the internal processes taking place in our business."

LEAFIO operates internal dashboards for each of its customers to track each one's deployment, highlight potential problem areas and keep LEAFIO's customer success teams up to speed on KPIs.

Qlik dashboards also monitor data exchanges and track database management metrics.

"Some customers also ask us for unique calculations or data models, and that just wouldn't be possible for us without Qlik," Kom notes. "We're so grateful that we can embed Qlik technologies seamlessly into our solutions. It means we can continue building success stories both for our customers and us."

The keys to success

42 reports embedded into customer-facing solutions

17 countries now use the solution

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Helen Kom, Product Director, LEAFIO

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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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