ANALYTICS

Kanden powers up operations with data

Qlik Sense unifies analysis to promote
efficiency and boost productivity

Qlik

"Qlik Sense instills the concept of improved efficiency and productivity in a quality-first business climate. Qlik is the navigator to get us there."

Masahisa Samoto, General Manager, Corporate Planning Department, and Director, Kanden Services Co., Inc.

Transforming a company by embracing change

Part of the Kansai Electric Power Group, Kanden Services Co., Inc. specializes in electrical services, including reading meters, billing, and equipment inspections. Its B2B operations include event planning and producing display advertising on utility poles.

Japan's electricity retail sector was fully deregulated in April 2016, and the resulting intensification in competition led Kansai Electric to step up efforts to boost its efficiency.

"The energy industry is going through drastic changes, and staying competitive means improving safety and maintaining quality," says Masahisa Samoto, General Manager of the Corporate Planning Department and Director at Kanden Services. "Being part of Kansai Electric is no guarantee that we will continue to receive orders. We have to increase productivity to ensure that we remain our clients' provider of choice."

According to Mr Samoto, embracing productivity and efficiency represents a cultural shift for staff who have previously prioritized quality. In order to achieve this, Kanden Services launched a project to map out a new way of doing business.

"We needed to change our culture," he explains. "It was important to emphasize the need for efficiency and a system that increases productivity."

Connecting departments and building networks

Kanden Services' siloed systems were operated and controlled independently by each department. The project's primary task was, therefore, to aggregate the scattered data, analyze it, and improve its visualization.

Solution Overview

Customer Name
Kanden Services Co., Inc.

Industry
Energy and Utilities

Geography
Osaka, Japan

Function
IT, Marketing

Business Value Driver
Reimagined Processes

Challenges
- Visualize data, improve productivity, and become more competitive
- Introduce mechanisms to integrate and analyze data scattered across multiple divisions
- Develop tools to share information at site level at multiple locations

Solution
Kanden Services established Qlik Sense as a company-wide system, facilitating data integration and real-time sharing of information across the business.

Results
- Enables the acquisition and integration of disparate departmental data to deliver company-wide analysis
- Eliminates reporting times and allows real-time sharing of information
- Improves visualization of advertising sites and company car performance

"We wanted to eliminate barriers and enable analysis across the company," says Naohide Tamura at Kanden Services' Corporate Planning Department. "Developing a system to achieve this was critical."

With the help of KPMG Consulting and Japan-based consultancy Business Brain Showa Ohta (BBS), it quickly became clear that Qlik Sense was the solution.

"BI tools were already used in parts of the business, but their use was limited," explains Mr Tamura. "They're an effective way to analyze data and build insights, but they're not always easy to master."

He continues: "Kanden Services operates around 90 locations throughout the Kansai region, so the seamless integration of data sources and flexible analysis offered by Qlik Sense was an important consideration. Its simple operability also makes it accessible to everyone; this was a key reason why we chose it."

Improved productivity by leveraging Qlik

Having loaded data from various sources into Qlik Sense, Kanden Services set up productivity working groups for each department.

"The groups develop strategies to improve productivity, and present the results with Qlik Sense," explains Mr Samoto. "The briefings are attended by the president and other executives. It is important to create a corporate culture in which productivity and streamlining are natural day-to-day operations."

He continues: "Some people struggled to find their way at first, but Qlik simplified the process. As tasks such as compiling daily reports to determine work hours became easier and overall awareness grew, it became possible to build more complex process chains."

Enabling real-time horizontal collaboration

While the drive to improve productivity is now the norm at Kanden Services, each department has its own indicators; however, Qlik enables cross-departmental comparisons.

"The ability to share data has delivered numerous benefits, and feedback at productivity working group presentations has generated major improvements," says Mr Tamura. "The comparisons enabled by Qlik have created a healthy environment of competition and innovation. We can now share knowledge and analyze data from all 90 locations, giving us insights into why some departments can achieve things that others can't."

According to Mr Tamura, Qlik has now become Kanden Services' default platform, replacing Excel and PowerPoint files and enabling other major changes in how Kanden Services operates.

"Some departments were still using the old core system, but when it was time to update, they switched to Qlik," he notes. "Replacing core systems with Qlik also reduced maintenance costs."

He continues: "The Qlik storytelling function now allows us to view the same charts at the same time. We can also align analysis perspectives and investigate data in real time. Even for monthly reports, we can check data on submission deadline dates without having to send emails back and forth. It's a significant step toward efficiency."

Qlik Sense accelerates decisions

Kanden Services' use of Qlik has changed considerably since its introduction. Masatoshi Noguchi of BBS's Osaka branch sales department explains that establishing the initial framework quickly was critical to its success.

"Creating a base enabled collaboration between different departments and divisions," he adds. "This led to further improvements in efficiency, and Qlik played a key role in that."

Mr Samoto notes that Qlik now delivers benefits across the business. "Monthly meetings between management and department heads now use Qlik Sense viewed on two 100-inch monitors instead of paper-based reports," he explains. "The ability to view data and update charts and analysis in real time also accelerates the decision-making process."

Qlik Sense has also produced unexpected results in Mr Tamura's daily work, in particular when planning, producing and installing utility pole display advertising and signboards.

"We have to assess sites where advertising will be posted," he says. "We previously used paper maps, and if we couldn't make a clear decision based on those, we would visit the site. Now, by loading the map data into Qlik and analyzing it there, we can develop plans without leaving the office."

Mr Tamura adds: "We also use Qlik Sense to manage our company car fleet. Qlik visualizes actual operating results and reduces the number of redundant cars."

The road to data-driven business

Use of Qlik has now spread throughout the company, but Mr Samoto insists that the quest to improve productivity has only just begun.

"We unified our data and increased staff awareness, but there is still a long way to go," he says. "We also adopted business process re-engineering and introduced robotic process automation (RPA) with the switch to Qlik; this is an exciting period of change."

Mr Samoto adds that documents that were once created manually have been aggregated in Qlik Sense and automated with RPA, leading to significant improvements in efficiency. Tasks that previously took one staff member an entire month to complete can now be carried out in just three days.

Mr Tamura points out that the productivity working groups' presentation formats are also changing. "We gradually linked our business plans to the productivity working groups' work, and all departments now meet every six months to hold briefing sessions. We hope this will inspire everyone even more."

Looking to the future, Mr Samoto says Kanden Services is now well on the way to becoming a fully data-driven company.

"There are still many things we want to try out with Qlik. I would like to build more advanced functions such as statistical and predictive analysis by linking Qlik Sense and Python," he concludes. "Qlik will continue to support us as we take on these new challenges and pursue yet more improvements in productivity."

The keys to success

6 months to introduce Qlik Sense and build a network

Instant report -creation time using, the storytelling function

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"Qlik Sense has made it easier to analyze data, and has made me aware of things I hadn't previously considered. My thinking process has changed significantly."

Naohide Tamura, Corporate Planning Department, Kanden Services Co., Inc.

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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 Business Ota Showa Co., Ltd. (BBS)

Founded in 1967, BBS has been supporting Japanese companies and their customers in business management and accounting. BBS provides consulting, system integration, and management services in regard to corporate data utilization, and defines the axis of these three services as their DBX (Digital Business Transformation) Promotion Support Service.

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