CUSTOMER STORY

Leveling up the mobile game experience

SEGA enables deep-dive analysis and
slick, responsive game management

Qlik

SEGA®

"Qlik accelerated the automation of standard business tasks, giving analysts more to devote to technical analysis."

Masaki Takeuchi, Section Manager, Business & Data Analysis Section, Business Planning Dept, Game Content & Services HQ, SEGA Holdings Co., Ltd.

Diving deep into target data with Qlik Sense

With a history dating back over 60 years, SEGA is one of the gaming industry's biggest players. Its characters are cultural cornerstones that enjoy global recognition and span media empires, from consoles to the silver screen and beyond. A member of the SEGA Sammy Group, SEGA offers gaming content on a broad range of devices, but demand for smartphone apps in particular has surged in recent years; as a result, SEGA is eager to level up its gaming and digital services.

Assessing SEGA's adoption of Qlik Sense, Kazutaka Yorozu of SEGA's Game Content & Services Division notes: "Qlik Sense is the analysis tool our analysts and data engineers always dreamed of. Any BI tool offers data integration and standardization and can display select indices on a dashboard, but we need to understand user trends to mine data and plan our next moves. I'm confident that Qlik delivers exactly what we need to achieve that."

SEGA's previous platform aggregated and analyzed sales and other crucial data by title, displaying the results on a dashboard. Analysts would provide case-by-case support when deeper research or analysis was required, but as the number of SEGA titles grew, so did the challenges.

Masaki Takeuchi, Head of the Business and Data Analysis Section of SEGA's Business Planning Department, Game Content & Services HQ, explains: "We had entire storehouses of data, but our analysis alone couldn't handle requests for data aggregation or the necessary level of system specialization; our engineers had to help. It was important for our analysts to handle data aggregation, processing and analysis title by title, to bolster our analytical capabilities and accelerate the decision-making process."

SEGA therefore launched a new project to integrate and standardize its data and optimize the analysis processes.

Solution Overview

Customer Name
SEGA Holdings Co., Ltd

Industry
Consumer Products

Geography
Tokyo, Japan

Function
Sales

Business Value Driver
Reimagined Processes

Challenges
- Organize and standardize scattered data, democratizing data
- Reduce analyst workloads generated through increased data aggregation and analysis requests
- Perform cluster analysis of user elements to spur effective action

Solution
Organize and integrate data and automate routine tasks using Qlik Sense.

Results
- Redesigns dashboard to be responsive to business challenges, accelerating decision-making
- Accelerates task automation via Qlik Sense, reducing analyst time spent drafting reports
- Conducts deep data analysis that cross-references terms using detailed user elements

Democratizing data with streamlined, responsive sharing

The first step was to upgrade SEGA's data aggregation and analysis processes. For standard operations such as index monitoring, an automatic update system was created using Qlik, allowing anyone to access the latest data.

Takeuchi explains: "Our own analysts couldn't fully systematize even our standard indices; even adding a single new index was very time-consuming. Qlik enables our analysts to add indices as they please, allowing smooth coordination with game title supervisors. Having indices and dashboards constantly on hand also means we can use the screens to illustrate data to collaborators, showing breakdowns of sales increases, for example. The data updates automatically and can be checked at a glance; it makes the process easier for everyone and has significantly streamlined our operations."

Using its old system, SEGA's weekly or monthly reference reports daily were prepared manually in Excel or PowerPoint. Qlik NPrinting has automated this process; as soon as analysts add their comments, the reports are complete.

"Data is now delivered almost completely without intervention. This allows us to focus on carrying out and delivering more complex analyses faster," Takeuchi states. "There are multiple ways to display our standard data sets, but Qlik Sense handles everything quickly and easily."

The new process means Qlik Sense now generates around 450 reports automatically, saving around a month in man-hours per title.

Identifying new possibilities through diverse exploration sources

Beyond automation, the simple linking of data sources beyond databases is another important bonus. Qlik uses connectors for quick, API-based linking of data from sources including social media and local, remote and web files.

"We've designed our own indices to monitor and link game data with ad-system data, as well as from Twitter and Facebook. Linking data not stored in databases was not a trivial operation; it needed special programming and involved testing and managing movable servers. Qlik makes linking this data easy, and it's all handled on the same servers so we have more opportunities to try out new ideas," says Yorozu.

Takeuchi adds: "Linking external data allows us to evaluate game titles from more angles, inspiring our teams to challenge themselves and be more daring. We can link data in a no-code manner, incorporating social media and statistical app market data to create and distribute new indices. We used the latest reactions on social media to change the way we tweet; awareness of market trends gives us a more comprehensive outlook. We can now create an environment where collaborators can challenge themselves more proactively."

Greater connection between data sources has also attracted the attention of departments other than marketing, extending the use of Qlik across SEGA's business.

Cluster analysis lights the way

Of all the advantages in data analysis technology that led SEGA to Qlik, the one Yorozu values most is associative technology. A feature unique to Qlik, it automatically creates and maintains associations between records across the entire range of data in play, incorporating numerous sources.

"Associative technology matched what we wanted," says Yorozu. "If a lot of players are dropping a game, we need to know why. Numerous factors are at play, so taking a deep dive isn't that simple."

First, the analysis team determines the exact point at which most players drop out of a game. It then investigates the data to find out how the characteristics of those who drop the game at this point differ from those who continue playing.

"We use massive logs to calculate element data for every user. We take dozens of data items – time played, in-game level, whether they've made in-game purchases and if so, how much they paid – and create clusters. We then combine these to build player models."

Qlik preserves the connections between all these records, making it possible for SEGA to identify insights immediately. "It makes the data-mining process so much smoother," says Yorozu.

This deep-dive analysis yields insights that deliver an actionable, problem-solving approach. Yorozu continues: "Based on analysis for one game, we could conclude that many people stopped playing because they couldn't clear a particular stage. So, we made more items appear on the way to that stage, boosted their effectiveness and adjusted the difficulty level. This reduced the number of players who quit."

Promoting a data-driven corporate culture

Takeuchi notes the importance of presenting the information he has generated effectively. "No matter how fascinating the analysis is, it means nothing if nobody takes notice. Our role is to be inventive and find ways to make sure it gets the attention it deserves. I frequently use the mashup function in Qlik, which can single out chart items and embed them in websites. It gives me visuals that I can show to those less familiar with Qlik Sense's UI."

He continues: "We also tweet selected KPIs every morning via a chatbot, allowing us to share information continuously, even before we get to work. This allows us to generate further interest in BI and data, and demonstrates that we're leveraging our PDCA cycle effectively."

Yorozu hopes to expand SEGA's new data-driven corporate culture. "Previously, we only used Qlik in our mobile games division, but now we use it in the arcade game and customer support divisions too. If the number of users rises, so does the amount of data, giving us access to analysis that wasn't previously available."

Yorozu concludes: "We anticipate yet more synergy. Qlik's strong points go beyond its BI tools: it allows us to create an environment where we can build a comprehensive data and analysis infrastructure. I'm looking forward to the next proposals."

SEGA is always on the lookout for the next big thing in gaming – and Qlik will be ready when it finds it.

The keys to success

450 reports automatically generated daily, reducing man-hours by one month per title

New capacity for data-based factor analysis accelerates problem-solving and decision-making

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"BI tools offer a wealth of advantages that vary depending on the product, but Qlik is capable of data modeling that makes data coordination a snap – even between different sources and deep data mining technology. I'm confident that it's the most suitable BI tool for SEGA."

Kazutaka Yorozu, Software Dev Section #1, 4th Development Division Department #1, Game Content & Services Business HQ, SEGA Co., Ltd.

Qlik Q

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.
qlik.com