THE SWEETNESS OF ANALYTICS

Abstract

Liam Fischer, the Head of Finance at the world's leading manufacturer of high-quality chocolate and cocoa products, was spearheading a company-wide digitalisation project when challenges with the chocolate manufacturer's analytics function hindered progress. In collaboration with Infosys BPM, Liam built a robust analytics solution and streamlined processes with an automation strategy, leading to ~10% cost savings.

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A dilemma with limited insights

The Swiss-based world's leading manufacturer of high-quality chocolate and cocoa products, has for good reason, long captivated chocolatiers and pastry chefs globally. This grand legacy motivates Liam Fischer, the Head of Finance at the company, to seek greater efficiencies across business functions.

In a strategic move, Liam launched an ambitious program to simplify processes and accelerate digitalisation across the company comprehensively. His goal was four-fold:

- Eliminate non-value-adding complexities

- Reset manufacturing networks to create best-in-class service and quality

- Establish a digital platform to boost speed-to-market and facilitate seamless partnerships

- Streamline and centralise essential support functions for global business services

However, as the program advanced, issues with existing processes and infrastructure threatened to stall progress. Through in-depth analysis, Liam and his senior managers uncovered some critical insights.

Liam's team relied on various reports to track operations, most of which were unstructured. Although it required considerable manual effort to create them, the reports were of low quality. The absence of a standardised framework and a centralised storage platform accentuated the challenge and hindered the team's ability to access and analyse business metrics, specifically cost and productivity.

An ongoing company-wide restructuring program further complicated the situation.

Existing metrics and key performance indicators (KPIs) became outdated, impacting data custodians and process owners. Given the critical role of these metrics in analysing operations, re-evaluating them demanded careful consideration and expertise.
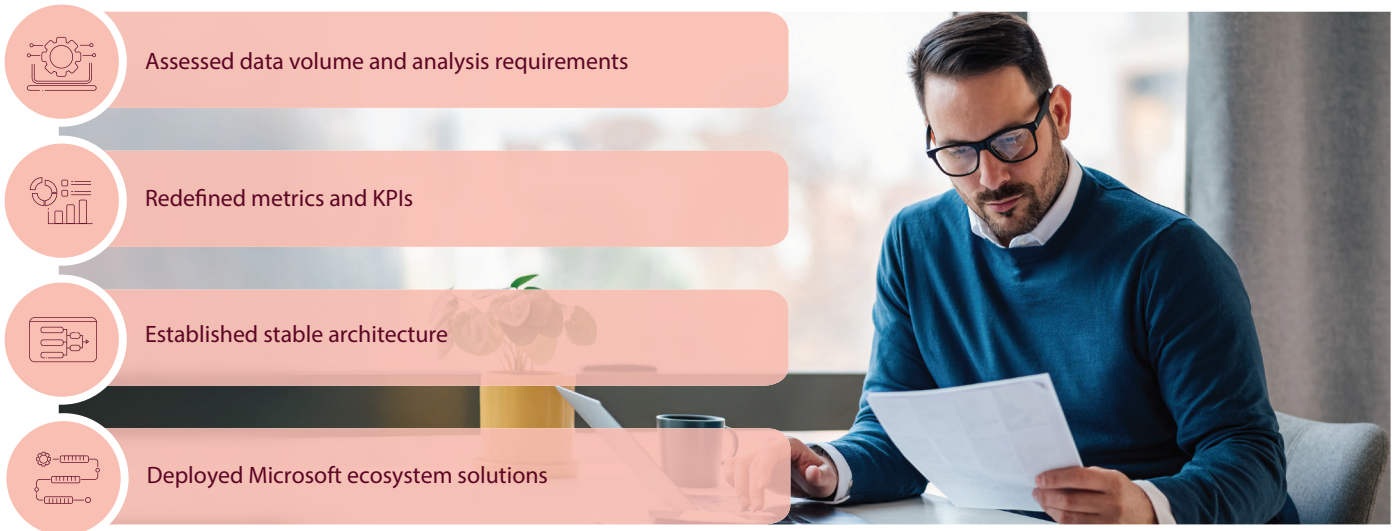
Additionally, the restructuring team required appropriate infrastructure to support their efforts – whether for automating processes and workflows or implementing a robust analytics solution.

Liam and the team concluded that it was time to bring in experts who could provide an analytics solution along with the surrounding infrastructure. After several internal consultations and evaluations of potential service providers, the chocolate manufacturer struck up a partnership with Infosys BPM.

A structure arises amidst the chaos

Robert Nowak, a Business Partner from Infosys BPM, led the consultations with Liam, accompanied by a talented team of developers and architects.

Approach summary

- Assessed data volume and analysis requirements
- Redefined metrics and KPIs
- Established stable architecture
- Deployed Microsoft ecosystem solutions

The team began by assessing data volumes and analysis requirements, while simultaneously redefining business metrics and KPIs to reflect new strategic imperatives. Recognising the importance of a solid infrastructure, the team then turned their attention to building a stable foundation. This meant striking a balance between the needs of the team and the priorities of the IT team. After meticulous planning, Robert's team developed an approach to build a robust infrastructure while staying within budget.

Once the necessary infrastructure was set up, the team used Microsoft tools to address the project's specific needs. This helped automate data processes, and create consistent reports, while seamlessly integrating with the existing technology environment.

The company also needed a storage solution to process, integrate, and handle its data efficiently. A combination of Microsoft products created a scalable and flexible solution that addressed this need while laying the foundation for sustainable growth.

Once the solutions were operational, the team created a pilot report in Power BI and delivered it in just four weeks. After the pilot was approved, the team worked through ~30 projects in collaboration with Liam. Throughout this, Robert and his team provided exceptional support to help the company become self-sufficient.

Harnessing the power of insight

Liam noted with relief that the days of unstructured reports were behind them, as the new system brought standardisation while enhancing efficiency and compliance. The data quality also greatly improved with thorough data validation, which boosted the reliability of the analytics solution.

The company quickly adapted to the solution, as Robert's team had ensured that the dashboards and reports were consistent and simplified navigation for a positive user experience. Additionally, owing to its scalable architecture, the solution's productivity was maximised and gave the manufacturer better visibility into data lineage and governance.

Key benefits

- Standardised reports and dashboards
- Ensured positive user experience
- Maximised productivity of solution
- Attained ~10% potential cost savings

The Infosys BPM team also advanced one of Liam's strategic program's themes of streamlining the transition of business processes to global business services using an automation strategy. The strategy proved successful, leading to projected savings of up to 10%.

Apart from all the outcomes, Liam was greatly impressed by the team's attention to detail, collaborative spirit, adherence to timelines, and deep technical prowess, which allowed them to tackle even the most complex implementation challenges effortlessly.

But the work is far from over, with plans already underway to seamlessly connect the database with the company's existing system. Robert also hopes to enhance the technology solution, including extending the capabilities and seamless data sharing.

In the meantime, Liam is all set to make data-driven decisions across business functions and is confidently working with Robert and his team towards driving further digitalisation across the company.

Names have been altered to preserve the identities of the people involved.

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