

Transforming a multinational sports brand’s account-based forecasting and product planning



To support their work for a large multinational sportswear brand, we recently partnered with The World Programming System / WPS Analytics. Their client was experiencing misalignment across cross-functional teams when it came to forecasting and product planning. Working closely with all teams we created a single and centralised planning approach – a single reference point which harmonised all activity. It reduced overall planning time by 50%.

The situation

The organisation’s current planning approach involved three functions within the business. Each function had up to 200 people who had to agree on a centralised budget and plan.

Over time each team had developed their own approach and assumptions to forecasting and product planning. These often conflicted which led to problems in forecasting stock development and production overall for the business.

We were called in to create a single planning/forecasting process which would in turn create a master plan. The aim was to reduce the time the teams spent on planning by 50%.

Our solution – harmonising various planning systems to create a centralised, efficient and effective solution

The solution we created was developed over 4 distinct phases.

Phase 1 – Scoping

Here, it was important to understand the internal forecasting process of each team and understand which components were the strongest and best of breed. We conducted an audit of current approaches and held fact-finding discussions with the teams.

Phase 2 – Initial Solution Design

Drawing on our scoping, we then mapped out a proposed solution and gave each team a chance to review. We then

included their input into the overall solution design and worked with them to agree which parts of the new system they would take ownership of.

Phase 3: Prototyping

We then moved on to creating a prototype of the new system. Here engineering data inputs were moved into more adaptable formats so the teams could see initial working examples in familiar tools such as excel.

Phase 4 Solution Build

Finally, the code base for the underlying data, and design specifications (including complex formulas) were provided alongside the working prototype to integrate into the organisation’s existing front-end solution. This helped to maintain familiarity and facilitate easy adoption, whilst also ensuring the system behind was more robust and consistent.

A successful outcome

All teams felt very involved in the project’s development and, as a result, ‘bought in’ to the system and supported it. By giving each team the chance to input into the final result there was a positive adoption of the new centralised approach. This was supported by training, which was tailored to match the different skill levels within the teams.

Data extracts were prepared and standardised to run regularly as BAU. In all, the new system ensured 3 months’ worth of planning could be consolidated into 1 day. This reduced the overall time for planning by these teams by 50%. Objective accomplished!

“ Fusion were a flexible and dynamic partner working alongside our team to provide a best of breed solution for our clients. I would happily recommend them again and look forward to working with them in the future.

Oli Plaistowe, Head of Solutions, WPS

“It was great to work with a team who had a working knowledge of our tools and approaches. It meant our requests could be managed within a wider process enabling us to focus on our core work load”

Data Scientist, WPS

