Beverage company uncorks innovation with Oracle EPM

CUSTOMER
Leading Australasian Beverage Company

LOCATION
Sydney, Australia

INDUSTRY
Manufacturing / Consumer and Retail

Challenge

- Ageing and heavily customised Hyperion solution was becoming difficult to maintain
- Legacy models for planning resulted in time-consuming data aggregation processes
- Data integrity issues

Solution

- Oracle Enterprise Performance Management (EPM) Cloud
- DXC Accelerate Templates providing end-to-end application design underpinned by industry best practice
- DXC ongoing managed services

Results

- Cloud-based solution for continuous improvement with new system features released monthly
- Modern digital functionality with improved user experience and productivity
- Best practice planning approach with the ability to drive better business planning decisions

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This leading Australasian beverage company produces, markets, sells and distributes a number of local and international brands spanning beer, cider, wine, spirits and mixers. In addition to operations in Australia and New Zealand, the company also conducts business in various global locations.

The company has been investing and expanding into new categories for long-term growth, and is rapidly growing with new international brand acquisitions and new distribution agreements.

"Planning is essential to our company, given we operate in markets where things change rapidly. Often, we have new competitors before we realise."

— **Enterprise planning spokesperson, Beverage Company**

Business challenge

As markets rapidly evolve and competition increases, this leading Australasian beverage company must continuously fine-tune its product offerings and business processes to align with business volatility and changing consumer preferences.

This need to remain agile prompted the company's leadership team to embark on a massive transformation project to simplify finance and operations.

While the beverage company's existing Oracle Hyperion solution had been a brilliant solution when first implemented, it had not been upgraded for many years and had become heavily customised and difficult to maintain. This drove a need for the company's enterprise planning team to spend significant time after hours on maintenance and performance tuning. In addition, the computing power of on-premise servers was inadequate, with some data aggregations taking up to an hour for a single cube.

Since continuous process improvement is part of the beverage company's DNA, a simple lift-and-shift from on-premises to the cloud was not an option. Instead, the company wanted to implement a new financial planning and consolidation solution while also taking the opportunity to reinvent underlying processes.

A spokesperson from the enterprise planning team said, "Planning is essential, given we operate in markets where things change rapidly. Often, we have new competitors before we realise. 70-80% of my role is working with the business to align systems and planning strategy to ensure optimum market positioning."

The primary motivations to move were to reduce system maintenance costs, eliminate customisations, and to take advantage of new capabilities as soon as they were released. Also of importance

was the need to ensure financial data was perfectly synchronised with core information from the company's on-premise ERP solution (SAP) to achieve data quality and integrity.

It was paramount that any solution chosen was cloud-based for safety and security reasons, but also that maintenance was taken care of by the service provider allowing the beverage company to focus on innovation and continuous improvement.

Solution

The beverage company selected Oracle's Enterprise Performance Management (EPM) Cloud to migrate from its on-premise Oracle Hyperion solution and establish a next-generation platform for financial performance and data management activities.

As a long-standing and trusted partner, DXC Technology's Practice for Oracle was selected to work closely with the Enterprise Planning team on implementation. DXC's in-depth understanding of the company's business processes and Oracle EPM expertise were critical to that decision.

The spokesperson commented, "Getting the right people on the job was key. We were using DXC for managed services, and the team had the right mindset and proposed a timeframe that suited us. I wanted to stick with DXC to implement the planning solution since I felt the innovation and expertise they could bring was invaluable."

Implementation

The beverage company's enterprise planning team and DXC worked as a single unit, co-developing the solution together with outstanding synergy. Time to market was fast, with the build performed in sprints. Business requirements were divided into chunks, with quick prototypes built and validated, then models and integration aspects completed simultaneously. The spokesperson said, "The prototypes were crucial for our business. Business users are sometimes entrenched with existing processes - but by demonstrating something new, they can visualise the differences and better appreciate the potential for improvement."

Utilising DXC's Oracle Planning Accelerate Templates, the Oracle EPM solution was delivered in just three months. DXC's Accelerate templates, a suite of pre-built templates, leverage DXC's in-depth knowledge, functional and technical IP built up over many years, and trusted partner relationship with Oracle. Designed to help users take an integrated approach to key tasks such as budgeting and forecasting, workforce planning, strategic modelling, activity-based costing and performance improvement, the templates allow organisations to get up and running quicker, while providing best practice industry guidelines.

The best practices in Oracle Cloud EPM enabled the company to immediately automate manual processes that had been established over time, with universal adapters enabling integration with SAP ERP. In addition, users' existing familiarity and comfort with Oracle Hyperion accelerated adoption and facilitated much simpler change management.

"Getting the right people on the job was key. We were using DXC for managed services, and the team had the right mindset. Plus, the timeframe proposed by DXC was one-third of what any other vendor proposed. I wanted to stick with DXC to implement the planning solution since I felt the innovation and expertise they could bring was invaluable."

— Enterprise planning spokesperson, Beverage Company

"In the first month after go-live, my key stakeholders told me that they have absolute trust in the numbers we are providing. They're not fighting over whether the data is right or not. It was really heartening and very satisfying to get that kind of feedback."

— Enterprise planning spokesperson, Beverage Company

The spokesperson commented, "What I like most about the DXC consultants is their 'out of the box' thinking. I also really appreciate the effort they put into understanding our users' needs, and their response times were super fast. They were brave and bold in pointing out things that wouldn't work in the long term. The advice provided is proving accurate, and I really appreciate their thinking."

Results and benefits

The new solution has revolutionised the way the beverage company plans, with Oracle's in-memory database a gamechanger in delivering microsecond response and extremely high throughput performance. For example, one aggregation that previously took around 60 minutes now happens in five. This is particularly beneficial for complex analytics – where users will be able to answer business questions immediately that may have previously taken hours.

The spokesperson sees Oracle EPM as being able to provide the predictive planning aspect that will really help the company, particularly from a group finance perspective. It will offer connected visibility from strategic planning down to operational planning. The spokesperson said, "That's what will make our forecasting much swifter ... and create a long-lasting impact."

By moving to the cloud, system calculation time was reduced by an astonishing 93%. The costs of purchasing and maintaining servers were eliminated, along with the time and expense associated with maintaining the hundreds of customisations that had accumulated over the years within the Hyperion solution.

The data enrichment and integrity capabilities established unity between the Oracle and SAP solutions, resulting in immediate trust in the data by users. The spokesperson confirmed, "In the first month after go-live, my key stakeholders told me that they have absolute trust in the numbers we are providing. They're not fighting over whether the data is right or not. It was really heartening and very satisfying to get that kind of feedback."

Shifting to the cloud has also freed up time spent administering the on-premise Hyperion platform with the previous maintenance and performance tuning issues eliminated. Where Hyperion's aging user interface didn't offer an ideal experience, the Oracle EPM UX is outstanding.

The aggregate impact of all these results is that staff can now spend more time on data analysis to identify trends and ensure improved planning for the future.

"The support we receive to continuously simplify our processes and free up time to think about how we can help our business users improve our customers' experience is a highlight. I haven' seen this kind of service with any other partner before. It truly is a brilliant team."

— **Enterprise planning spokesperson, Beverage Company**

As part of its ongoing managed services commitment, DXC keeps the beverage company, informed of continuous improvements and new functionality in the platform each month. Plotting that against potential use cases helps the enterprise planning team better leverage functionality to meet business needs.

With this innovation delivered in monthly updates, finance and IT have not broken their stride in their commitment to continuous process improvement. "The company's biggest asset is its people. That people-centric approach reflects how I interact with my business users – always in a consultative way as a trusted advisor. With this new solution, I can focus on business partnering, engaging with them to develop relevant new capabilities. I help them understand the art of possible." said the spokesperson.

The spokesperson concluded, "The move from Hyperion to Oracle Cloud EPM was so smooth that we were able to immediately close our month-end and quarterly books in just a day and a half, as fast as we had before, with no disruption or loss of data integrity and quality. The depth and breadth of expertise and technical skillset that DXC consultants have is outstanding. The support we receive to continuously simplify our processes and free up time to think about how we can help our business users improve our customers' experience is a highlight. I haven't seen this kind of service with any other partner before. It truly is a brilliant team."

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