

Use Case

Trade Promotion Planning

Challenge

- Complex retail execution workflow traverses four departments worldwide
- Need for customized interaction with the data in each function
- All ad-hoc analysis or deep diving driven by spreadsheets

Solution

- Cloud-based system provides a single data source
- More stable, consistent, and transparent workflow across the organization
- Groundwork laid for complete integration of trade management and financial databases

Results at a Glance

- Estimated 50% productivity gain two weeks after go-live
- Replaced spreadsheets with Anaplan ad-hoc analysis
- 100% confidence in the data when making decisions on retail spend



Activision implements transparent global retail execution application with Anaplan in the cloud

Introduction

Santa Monica-based Activision is the world's largest videogame publisher, turning over 4.5 billion dollars in annual revenue through its top-selling portfolio of console, handheld, and PC-based games. In July of 2013 Activision announced plans to split from its parent company, Vivendi, in order to more nimbly exploit opportunities in the fast-paced electronic entertainment industry. Today, Activision operates globally with 7,000 employees worldwide.

As a global retail organization, one of the most critical functions at Activision is cross-departmental trade management, more formally known as "retail execution." This is the workflow process of tracking and approving the company's retail spend, i.e. the dollars supporting sales, such as promotional price discounts or shelving space for merchandise. Historically, Activision managed retail spend with a workflow point



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solution; that is, until Q1 of 2012, when the tool failed to transmit crucial data at quarter close. This left Patrick O'Brien, senior manager of finance, without a complete picture of financials when he needed it most. It also left him in need of a new solution—something that would enhance retail execution and set Activision on the path toward more integrated trade marketing and financial systems.

The Business Challenge

Patrick had never been happy with Activision's retail execution tool. "It didn't work with certain updated web browsers, it was slow to work with, and if something was wrong on the back end – as it often was – there wasn't great support," he summarized. Most problematic of all, the tool was limited in its ability to deep dive or view data from new perspectives. For that kind of analysis a user had to export to Excel, a dangerous step that risked exposing the workflow process to the corruption associated with manual spreadsheet manipulation.

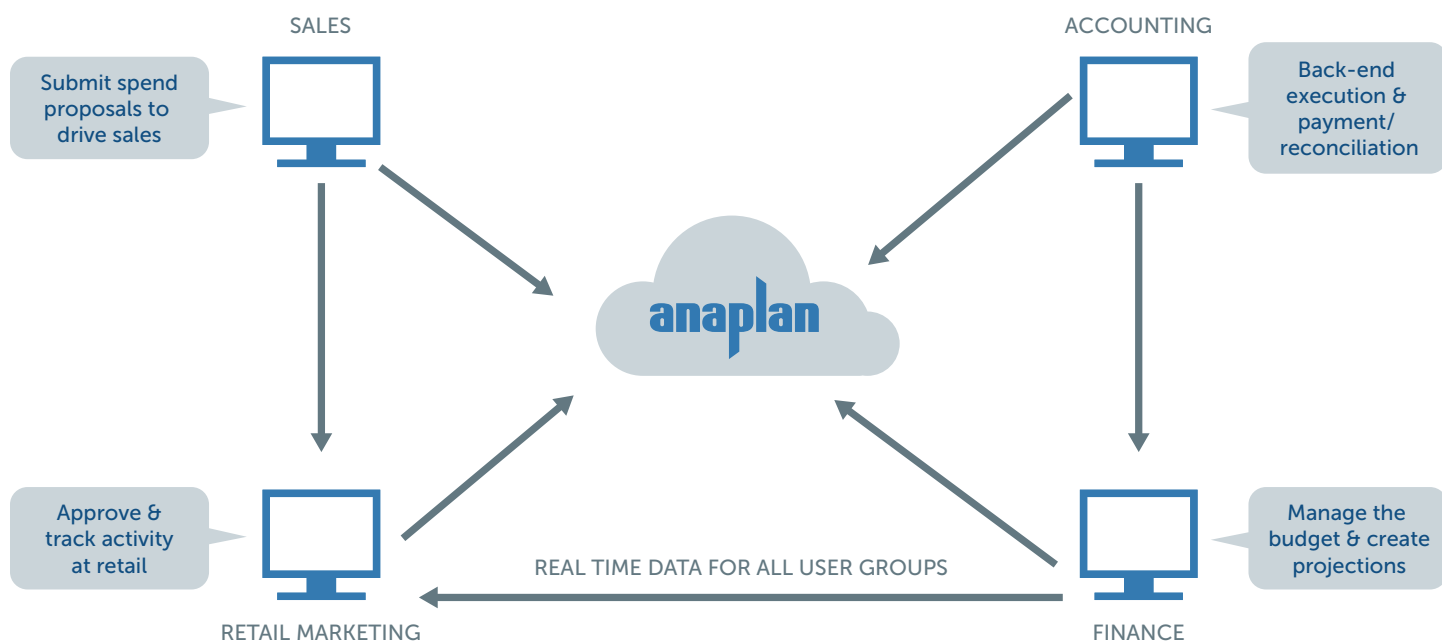
The risk of human error and miscommunication is high in trade management, and at Activision, it is a process that snakes its way through 40 users across four departments worldwide. The process begins with Field Sales, where data is entered and customer activity tracked; then to Retail Marketing, where the spend is approved or rejected for the budget; then to Finance, where all financials are captured and verified; and finally, into Accounting, where deals are closed out through back-end invoicing. It's easy to see how managing this process while shuffling data back and forth from Excel was undermining Activision's productivity and confidence in their data. More often than not, Patrick was left waiting for the information he needed to make key decisions. "In our industry, you pay for those kinds of delays."

Selection Process

Activision hired a consultant to research new solutions that would replace their current processes. Anaplan was one of five solutions that were brought in to mock up a proof of concept. Days later, Anaplan's platform emerged the clear winner.

"What we loved about Anaplan," said Patrick, "was that we could so easily customize it to meet the specific needs of each department. Each of the four groups involved in Activision's trade management process – Sales, Marketing, Finance, and Accounting – engage with the data differently and Anaplan made it very easy to tailor to their individual perspectives."

ACTIVISION / ANAPLAN SCHEME



Benefits

Just two weeks after Activision went live with the retail execution application, Patrick estimated 50% gains in productivity. "Almost overnight we've vastly improved communication," he said. "Anaplan is saving people time and emails, making information easier to understand, and allowing people to act more quickly." He also underscores the role the UI's aesthetics have played in such rapid improvements. "People really like the look and feel of the system. We're no longer dealing with force-fed, canned reporting; we're manipulating data on-demand to show it in whatever way is most relevant to our questions."

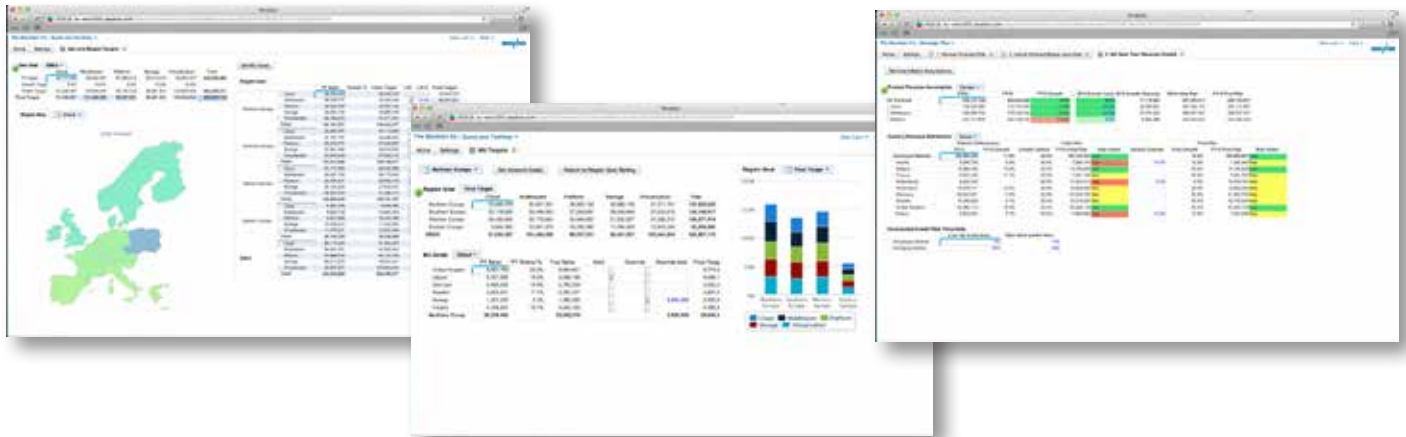
Patrick cites his experience using Anaplan in the Finance department by way of example: "The clean interface gives us an immediate view of all the deals that have been approved by the retail team. From there it's easy to organize that data by customer, product, or spend type, review it, and quickly compare to what we're expecting in the forecast. In terms of day-to-day execution we're getting things done more quickly and with the complete confidence that we're tracking all the data."

Going Forward

Anaplan provided immediate value in meeting Activision's need for a more reliable retail execution tool, but Patrick is well aware that they've found a platform, not just a point solution. "We're very excited to start taking more advantage of the product," he said. The first target for expansion is planning and forecasting. Today, Activision manages its bi-quarterly forecasting rounds through Excel. But once the forecast is finished, the data must be manually transferred and uploaded to Hyperion. "With Anaplan, we're going to eliminate that step altogether," said Patrick, "and unite our data in a single global system for all our trade marketing and financial database needs."



Activision has already begun work on stage two, and plans to be rolled out across the globe by the end of this year. "Anaplan's SaaS business model makes rapid global rollout possible," said Patrick. "An agile methodology is well suited for Activision's future growth as an independent company; we can react, plan, and scale at the speed the market demands." Patrick is looking forward to working with an integrated system in 2014: "With one global platform there will be huge synergies and time savings. Who knows what kinds of new analysis we're going to run – Anaplan changes our idea of what's possible."



About Anaplan

Anaplan is disrupting the world of business planning and execution. We built our in-memory platform from the ground up to empower companies to plan, collaborate, and act—in real-time. Stay ahead of critical business events, rapidly model potential impacts and course correct on the fly. With Anaplan's cloud-based platform and planning applications, you can continuously align your people, plans and spend to your market opportunities. Anaplan is a privately held company, headquartered in San Francisco, CA with global offices on four continents. To learn more, visit anaplan.com. Join us on twitter: @anaplan