

Booking.com

CUSTOMER STORY

Booking.com advances FP&A capabilities in lockstep with hyper-growth

Booking.com, part of The Priceline Group, has quickly grown from its humble beginnings as a small Dutch start-up to one of the world's largest travel e-commerce companies—employing more than 15,000 employees throughout 70 countries. With over 1.5 million rooms reserved through its platform every day, it connects travelers with the largest selection of accommodations across the world.

The Anaplan logo, featuring a stylized 'A' icon followed by the word 'anaplan' in a lowercase, sans-serif font.

In partnership with



Use cases

- Planning, budgeting, and forecasting
- Financial aggregation

Challenge

- Spreadsheet processes hindered optimal financial planning in the midst of hyper-growth
- Forecasting and consolidation processes became overwhelming, time-consuming, and unsustainable

Solution

- Anaplan's cloud-based platform helped scale and centralize financial planning processes

Results

- More flexible, agile planning environment
- Quicker and more accurate forecasting and consolidation processes
- Increased time for value-added business analysis

Why Anaplan

- Scalable, adaptable, and cloud-based platform
- Real-time calculations and enriched data integrity
- Flexible, robust, and unconstrained planning capabilities

Global travel company Booking.com averages over one million bookings within every 24-hour period. Coupled with climbing digital travel sales, its hyper-growth over the past three years has caused the company to increase its number of employees and properties available on its website two-fold. However, in addition to rising headcounts and inventory, the company had to tackle another substantial opportunity: determining how it could better evolve its financial planning process in lockstep with its growth.

Volumes of data growing bigger and bigger

Booking.com had been previously managing and operating its financial planning and analysis (FP&A) process through a manual, spreadsheet-driven environment. But after its substantial growth began to affect different areas of the business—and resulted in exponential growth of available accommodations, sales, headcounts, and data sources—the company found that its forecasting and other FP&A approaches had become overwhelming, inefficient, and unsustainable. To evolve its planning process—and fully capitalize on the opportunities unearthed with its growth—the company began searching for a tool that could help it achieve its short- and long-term business needs.

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Chiara Guglielmetti, FP&A Manager at Booking.com, explained, “Our company continues to grow quickly—and we needed to improve how we could forecast and streamline our FP&A processes. We needed a solution that could help us better align with the levels of growth we were experiencing.”

After carefully evaluating a variety of solutions, Booking.com ultimately selected Anaplan’s cloud-based platform for its flexibility, speed, and ability to help scale and centralize its entire financial planning process. The platform also provided the ability to dynamically analyze and refine financial plans in real time across all business levels to align different functions of the organization.

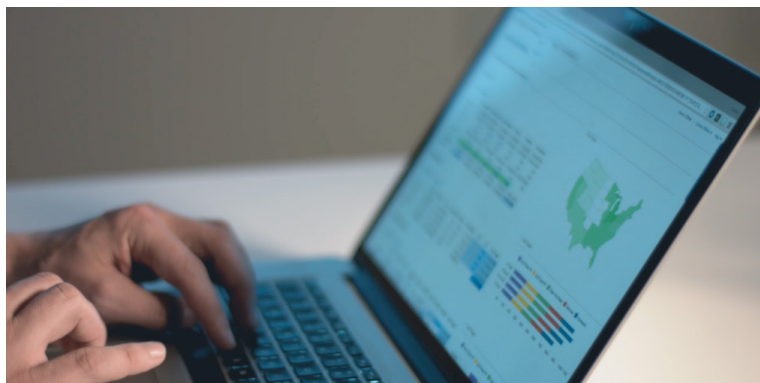
The platform also complemented the company’s open-natured culture, which was a decision criterion that had been top-of-mind throughout the selection process. “We have an informal, open culture where we put focus on fostering creative work environments. We don’t like constraints—if we see a better way to do something, we want to be able to change it. That’s one of the reasons why the flexibility of the Anaplan platform stuck out for us,” Chiara added.

Connecting finance by connecting planning

As it embarked on its connected planning journey, Booking.com implemented the Anaplan platform in its operational expenses throughout 2017. As different forecast methods went live, the company began refining process efficiencies.

In the second half of the year, Booking.com expanded usage of the Anaplan platform to support its marketing, human resources, and remaining finance and budget planning functions. Upon completion of the entire implementation, the Booking.com team has begun discussions around expansion plans for different use cases within the organization.

Booking.com also works closely with Finext, a firm helping to make operations transparent and simple, during the project implementation. Stef Jansen in de Wal, part of the Finext team,



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noted, “Due to its rapidly changing environment, Booking.com was able to realize the full potential of flexibility that Anaplan offers.”

Throughout the implementation period, the platform quickly provided Booking.com’s FP&A team with not only greater levels of granularity and forecasting capabilities, but faster and more efficient processes. Andrew DeGennaro, Financial Analyst at Booking.com, shared that analysts using the Anaplan platform recognize how much more time they have for analysis—and this value-added benefit has greatly improved how they can better balance their work responsibilities and strategic focus.

Data: out of Excel® and in the hands of users

For Booking.com, one of the most significant benefits of the Anaplan platform has been its ability to improve financial planning through the automation and streamlining of its manual processes. This has also greatly reduced the amount of time that the FP&A team had formerly spent on consolidations.

Prior to implementing Anaplan, the FP&A team at Booking.com had to upload upward of 50 Excel® models into its consolidation tool. Not only was this incredibly time consuming, but it also left the team more vulnerable to manual errors. “Now, nearly all of our work is automated, which saves us valuable time and reduces our risks for human mistakes,” Chiara shared. “All of our calculations are completed in the Anaplan platform, and our process is now much more efficient and quicker.”

The team has also found the insights they’ve gleaned from real-time capabilities and better data clarity to be extremely beneficial. “The real-time calculations are extremely helpful to us—once one component of the model is updated in Anaplan, everything else is immediately updated accordingly,” Chiara said.

Andrew adds, “The data integrity has also improved and the platform is very modular. If there’s a problem or area of concern, we can easily pinpoint calculations and the realization with the equations. This makes issues extremely easy to solve—whether it’s a quick formula fix or an issue in the basic assumption.”

They also report a buzz of excitement from team members across the entire organization using the tool. “It’s been rewarding and motivating to see that our users are excited about how they can model their data, and how they can present it visually. The graphs in the tool give us a better understanding of the holistic big-picture view of the business,” Andrew reported.

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About Anaplan

Anaplan is driving a new age of connected planning. Large and fast-growing organizations use Anaplan's cloud platform in every business function to make better-informed plans and decisions and drive faster, more effective planning processes. Anaplan also provides support, training, and planning transformation advisory services. Anaplan is a privately held company based in San Francisco with 16 offices and over 150 expert partners worldwide.

To learn more, visit anaplan.com

About Finext

Finext is a family of consultancy companies with in-depth knowledge of industries, themes and technologies. For more than 18 years we have been implementing the leading Performance Management solutions at a large variety of customers throughout Europe. Our performance management practice consists of almost 100 experienced, skilled and certified EPM professionals. This makes us one of the largest independent performance management firms in the Benelux. With our combined expertise of infrastructure & installation, consulting & implementation and maintenance & support we enable better control, reliable figures and fast reports from stable applications.

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