

Use Cases

Budgeting, Planning & Forecasting

Challenge

- Highly volatile, extremely complex planning models
- Data sourced from three disparate systems
- Need for rapid analyst-driven implementation with minimal consultation

Solution

- Replaced massive Excel spreadsheets with a single Anaplan model
- Highly flexible, real-time driver-based scenario planning down to the transactional level
- Workflow approval system at point of sale or channel
- Flexible financial reporting from multiple perspectives and currencies

Results at a Glance

- Reduced time spent creating new variance reports from one month to four days
- Initial model built in two weeks. After six weeks global end-to-end roll out complete
- Unprecedented accuracy, with all stakeholders from front-line employees to management to the Board trusting the numbers



AirAsiaExpedia rolls out **global financial planning and analysis (FP&A)** system in six weeks with Anaplan

About AirAsiaExpedia

AirAsiaExpedia is the joint venture between the world's leading low cost airline and one of the world's largest travel companies. Since their founding in 2011, the Singapore-based partnership has been powering an online travel revolution across the Asia Pacific region, offering customers an unprecedented range of great value flights, hotels, and holiday packages. The company's out-of-the-gate success is reflected in a steady year-over-year growth rate of 40 percent – on track to increase in 2014.

Pre-Anaplan

From day one AirAsiaExpedia's planning and forecasting processes had to account for 22 points of sale across two brands, 14 channels, and a wide range of metrics. Modeling such complexity at such scale while keeping pace with the highly volatile travel industry posed extraordinary challenges to Henry Tjan, head of FP&A Asia, and



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his finance team. To do so called for a fast global rollout and a flexible, scalable solution; something capable of providing one central location to manage all aspects of their FP&A process with speed and accuracy while enabling the ability to "what if" on the fly.

Challenges

"When we first started there were big problems trying to bring all the numbers together," said Tjan. AirAsiaExpedia was feeding data from three disparate systems into Excel models with some 400 different formulas. Uploading, consolidating, and finessing millions of cells in their global spreadsheets took the finance team three to four days of manual work. And they were constantly bumping up against capacity constraints. Monthly variance reporting took several days to prepare; new versions took up to a month and were unreliable. "We had no accuracy, no workflow, no way to 'what-if,'" recalled Tjan.

Selection Process

"We wanted a very flexible, very fast, easy-to-maneuver system that put our data in one place, leaving more time for driver-based budgeting and analysis," said Tjan. Just as important was time-to-value. "Between myself and my colleagues we had worked with all the big legacy systems: SAP, Oracle Hyperion, Cognos TM1," he said. "We knew we had neither the resources nor the time to go down that road." The business was growing too fast to spend months scoping and implementing a system in the traditional way. They wanted a finance-owned, self-service tool that they could start using quickly. Anaplan's promise of a rapid global roll out convinced Tjan and his team to come on board.

Implementation

AirAsiaExpedia's implementation was remarkably fast. Integration with their Hyperion systems, GL accounting Pac, and SQL databases was achieved within two days – putting their real-time data in one place for the first time. Within two weeks, AirAsiaExpedia had built out the initial model for their planning and forecasting process. "Anaplan is 0 script," said Tjan. "We didn't have to come up with complicated specifications for our model. We brought what we had and made changes as we went." One month later, the business had completed an end-to-end role out to every country in operation.

Benefits

By combining user-driven modeling, on the fly adaptability, and real-time performance no matter the volume and complexity, Anaplan enabled AirAsiaExpedia to begin driver-based planning across all their points of sale, channels, countries, and regions. Tjan estimates this has increased their ability to "what if" by ten-fold. And the new versions that used to take one month to complete are now being produced in four days.



Faster, more flexible data analytics also increased the efficiency of channel owners and market managers by enabling them to tailor reports to different perspectives and shift flexibly between currencies. Crucially, this new-found speed and flexibility required no sacrifices in precision. In fact, Tjan saw “at least a 50% increase in the accuracy of financial results” and “the same margin of improvement in the speed we produce financials for our top management and board.”

Tjan is quick to reel off the list of benefits that Anaplan has brought to his finance team: “We’ve got quick and fast forecasts, total accuracy, and audibility in the numbers. We’re doing scenario planning and sensitivity analysis for the whole business across Asia, and that’s giving us a dynamic understanding of where the business is and where it’s going.”

Going Forward

The FP&A team’s original intention was to automate their planning processes, but after accomplishing so much in so little time, they quickly expanded their vision for the platform. Their next steps will be to go deeper on analysis and scenario planning and begin rolling out Anaplan to OpEx and HR planning.

The platform has given Tjan and his team precisely the combination of agility and control needed to manage daily operations in a hectic fast-paced environment. “It was a real eye opener for us to see how easy a system like this could be to use,” he said. “My whole team has been surprised. The stakeholders, too. Everyone’s happy.”

About US

Anaplan is the leading planning and performance management platform for smart businesses. Anaplan combines an unrivaled planning and modeling engine, predictive analytics, and cloud collaboration into one simple interface for business users. Anaplan is a privately held company based in San Francisco with 16 offices worldwide. To learn more, visit anaplan.com. Follow us on: [Twitter](#), [LinkedIn](#), [YouTube](#), and [Facebook](#).