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EAT.

Use Cases

Budgeting, Planning & Forecasting

Challenge

- Manual, complex planning process managed through dozens of stand-alone spreadsheets

- Finance team spent 30% of time on planning cycles

- Needed a quick, scalable planning process to maximize corporate growth without adding to headcount

Solution

- Create a single data repository, in Anaplan

- Finance team able to own and manage, without IT or external consultant support necessary

Results at a Glance

- Accurate, real-time, three-year planning model

- Able to see future business impacts of current growth and changes in real time

- Better understanding of optimal labour deployment

- Higher sales, increase productivity, and better flow through of profit

UK sandwich shop chain EAT **improves accuracy of forecasting and enhances labour optimization** with Anaplan

Introduction

London-based EAT was founded in 1996 with the ambition of providing the best food, soup, and coffee at reasonable prices. Today, the company operates more than 100 shops throughout the UK, and is seeing significant growth, with plans to double in size over the next three years. In 2012, under the leadership of Chief Financial Officer Strahan Wilson, EAT implemented Anaplan to replace a disconnected, spreadsheet-based financial planning and reporting process with a centralized, collaborative system.

> What **we are seeing through our results in our stores is higher sales, better productivity, better flow through of profit**, and so if you start attributing even a small percentage of that against the cost of Anaplan, the ROI is very good indeed."

Before Anaplan

Prior to implementing Anaplan, EAT managed their planning process through several dozen separate, static spreadsheets.

"Our setup pre-Anaplan was classic spreadsheet nightmare," said EAT CFO Strahan Wilson. "I think we had a total of 27 spreadsheets, all of which were barely interlinked and were used across our three planning horizons." These spreadsheets were used for managing EAT's quarterly store planning process, an annual company business planning process and a three-year strategic planning cycle. "All three processes required their own suite of spreadsheets, all three were completely unrelated, all three required Herculean efforts to setup and maintain," said Wilson. "It was a nightmare."

These outdated processes led to a demoralized finance department that spent too much time untangling the prior planning cycle's spreadsheet work in preparation for the next planning cycle, instead of being able to focus on analysis.

"We had never ending, highly manual planning on the horizon," recalled Wilson, "and the finance team dreaded it because it required more spreadsheet work, more untangling of the last work, and it was clear that if we wanted to be a finance function that could act as a business partner rather than simply just generate numbers for the use of the business we needed to get a handle on that."

Selection Process

EAT's primary requirement for a planning solution was scalability; it was imperative that they could implement a system that could easily—and inexpensively—scale to adapt as the business grows over time.

"If we were going to grow over the next three years, we didn't want to build a solution that was either, fit for today and not fit to tomorrow, or fit for tomorrow and too expensive today," said Wilson. "We needed a solution that could grow with us. That led us immediately to the cloud, where, our model could grow with us."

Additionally, Wilson was concerned with finding a platform that would allow the Finance team to have full control, without needing outside consulting hours or IT support.

"A lot of the planning solutions we looked at required a huge amount of external support to setup," said Wilson. "We didn't know what kind of business we would have in three years' time. We didn't know what adding 100 stores to the business would do to us. We wanted a solution that could evolve both in terms of the scale. Where Anaplan stood uniquely in the market in our minds

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was its usability from a non-IT perspective. Its front-end is very Excel-friendly, and therefore very finance-friendly. That meant we could own it, and we could take it in the direction the business needed."

Implementation and Deployment

Anaplan was EAT's first cloud implementation; they were pleasantly surprised by the quickness and ease with which it was implemented in comparison with prior on-premise solutions.

"This is my third planning implementation and by far the simplest to get up and running because you don't have any of the hardware concern. You literally turn it on and off you go," said Wilson. "You can start with a simple inexpensive solution in terms of the space you need. As the model grows and as your needs change, you can expand it and pay for it as you need it."

Benefits

"It's been a blessing to the Finance function implementing Anaplan," said Wilson. "Rather than sitting there on a quarterly or annual basis and saying 'Okay, how is the world different today than to whenever I last did it?' we are updating it in real time. We are seeing the impacts of the change in the business real time, and because we have built an integrated three-year model, those changes are being cascaded forward."

The power of being able to effectively and accurately model the impact of day-to-day business changes and their impact on the future of the business has made a significant impact on how the organization views the planning process and its opportunities.

"We can see in 2017 what the impact is of the decisions that we are making today," said Wilson. "That's massively empowering not only for the finance team themselves, but for us as a board to be able to say 'Okay, well actually, the fact that our margins are now better than they were last week by X% will deliver us X thousand million pounds in three years' time.' That's hugely beneficial in terms of driving change. What may seem like small changes today can have significant impacts on the overall profitability of the business down the line."

One of the quick wins the team saw from implementing Anaplan was increased transparency into the most effective use of their labour pool.

"Where it's added the greatest benefit in the short term is us understanding our labour deployment," said Wilson. "Historically, because it was just one of a thousand variables in a spreadsheet. We never really dug deep into how much labour we should have deployed in our stores at what time. But because Anaplan handles data so seamlessly, we were able to build it up from its KPIs and actually identify, from a product basis, how much labour we need rather than simply looking at a fixed percentage and saying a store should operate on this percentage. So you should find an EAT nearby that has faster queue times, better service, all because Anaplan knows how much labour should be there."

Wilson noted that since implementing Anaplan, they've seen significant increases in productivity and efficiencies throughout the company, with significant positive financial impact.

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What's Next?

Thanks to the significant impact Anaplan has had in the financial planning process, and having been inspired by the multitude of use cases illustrated in the apps in the Anaplan App Hub, Wilson plans to bring Anaplan into more parts of the business.

"We are trying to turn Anaplan into the heart of our decision making process," said Wilson. "Clearly today, it sits roundly in finance; it's very much a tool that is used by the finance team to help understand the decisions we are making. But as it touches on more and more non-financial areas, as we extend its functionality, we are introducing it to the operations team, the HR team, the marketing team, the people team, all of whom understand the opportunity it presents to them in their world. Then Anaplan stops being a pure financial tool, and starts becoming a decision making tool for the business users as a whole."

Thanks to Anaplan, Wilson's Finance team has been liberated from their "spreadsheet nightmare", and empowered to act as a strategic partner, guided by real-time data.

"Historically, 30% plus of our time was spent on planning," said Wilson. "When you are spending that amount of time just trying to churn the numbers, you simply don't have enough time to do much above and beyond that. Anaplan has physically reduced the amount of time we need to spend planning. And more importantly, the insights it provides into the planning process helps inform the consequences of the decisions we are making today throughout the company. That is really empowering Finance to be able to support and partner the rest of the business in our plan for growth."

About Anaplan

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 15 offices worldwide. To learn more, visit **anaplan.com**. Follow us on: **Twitter**, **LinkedIn**, **YouTube**, and **Facebook**.

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