BUFFALO
DAVID BITTON

Overview

The need
In the fast-moving fashion business, leading brands need to know where products are selling, what styles are most popular, and how to stay on trend.

The solution
Buffalo uses an integrated suite of analytics and planning tools to gain detailed insight into performance – helping it compete more effectively in a crowded market.

The benefit
Maximizes visibility across all channels including on-line, in-store and wholesale, enabling analysts to focus on decision support rather than information gathering. Weekly reports are now ready on Monday mornings – one day earlier than before.

Buffalo David Bitton

Leveraging insight across multiple lines of business to improve business planning and performance

Competition in the apparel industry is fierce. For fashion businesses like Buffalo David Bitton, it is vital to make the right style, color and size choices, and ensure that the right amount of stock is allocated to the right sales channels at the right times.

However, analyzing, planning and forecasting demand and inventory for wholesale, on-line and in-store channels can be a complex challenge, as Stephen White, IT Director at Buffalo, explains: "We work in a tough business. Once you get a customer onto your website, or into your space, you want to be able to maximize your ability to sell to them. It's vital to understand sales trends across all of your channels so you can be sure you always have the right products on hand to appeal to each customer. When your sales data is held in different systems, it can be very difficult to get that holistic view."

Buffalo runs its sales channels – on-line, in-store and wholesale – on different software systems, while its financial data is managed in another system. Historically, this disparity meant that reporting was a laborious process.

"Buffalo's systems are well engineered to run our day-to-day operations," says White. "However, their reporting capabilities are limited, making it difficult to gain an overall view of the business or to slice, dice and drill down into data.

"Our senior management team really believes in using technology to make our business smarter," says Stephen White, IT Director at Buffalo. "It makes me proud that analytics has become such a critical part of everyday work at Buffalo. It's very satisfying to see how delighted our users are when we launch a new tool that makes their lives easier."

Solution components

Software
- IBM® Cognos® TM1®

IBM Business Partner
- Knowledge Providers Inc.

"When we were looking at a product, a style or a vendor, we had to rely on ERP data, output as spreadsheets. We then had to analyze and consolidate these spreadsheets into reports, which took an entire day. If you have weekly channel meetings every Monday, but the figures aren't ready until Tuesday, that hinders your ability to make decisions."

Gaining maximum visibility of all business operations

With the support of IBM Business Partner® Knowledge Providers Inc. (KPI), Buffalo opted to deploy IBM® Cognos® TM1®. "We have worked with KPI for nine years," recalls White. "Not only do they know and care about our business, they also have people with key technical skills who are well-placed to help us.

"We initially looked at standalone demand planning applications, but when KPI showed us TM1, we were impressed that it could handle demand planning, forecasting and budgeting as well as scorecarding.

"KPI helped us implement financial and operational reporting, analytics and budgeting, demand planning and dashboarding," he adds. "What is key is that all these applications talk to each other and can be leveraged across all parts of our business. In the past, I used to think of IBM as just another vendor, but over the course of this journey I have come to see them as a true solutions provider."

Turning information into insight

By harnessing IBM analytics and performance management tools, Buffalo has transformed its ability to support decisions with timely, accurate data.

"We can see our whole business, fully integrated across all business channels, on one single platform," says White. "We can see vendor performance or product performance at the style, color and size level, and we can automatically feed that information not only into reports and dashboards, but also into our planning and budgeting applications."

Key business figures are available on demand for all parts of the business – on-line, in-store and wholesale.

"In the past it took us one working day to generate our weekly figures, and this relied on a manual process that often led to inconsistencies and human error," recalls White. "Now we can generate reports in seconds giving everyone the figures at their fingertips.

"Automating the reporting process also means that our analysts can use their time more efficiently on analyzing information rather than gathering it. It gives me great pride to see how many people are using these tools, and how analytics has become a critical application for our business."

"Analytics helps people think better, act smarter and work faster – which all adds up to a strong return on investment."

— Stephen White, IT Director, Buffalo

Better analysis thanks to increased staff efficiency

Having started by unlocking the power of analytics within its retail business, Buffalo has now also rolled out similar tools to its wholesale and on-line operations. Analytics has changed the corporate culture fundamentally. Managers have become independent and empowered, thanks to their ability to access accurate, timely and relevant information. They can now visualize and measure performance at a glance, and make better and faster decisions with confidence.

"Analytics helps people think better, act smarter and work faster – which all adds up to a strong return on investment," comments White. "We're excited about building on our success by taking the next step – we're investigating how predictive analytics can help us understand customer behavior on an individual level, and build a personalized, customer-centric approach to sales and operations."

About Buffalo David Bitton

Buffalo David Bitton was founded in Montreal, Canada, in 1985. As a leading fashion brand, Buffalo sells denim collections targeted at men and women ages 18 to 34 in stores spanning 18 countries and 3,000 locations worldwide, as well as on-line. For more information, please visit www.buffalojeans.com

About Knowledge Providers Inc.

Knowledge Providers Inc. (KPI) is a leading Business Analytics and Information Management software and services provider with over 30 years of industry experience. KPI's track record of success spans clients from the mid-market to the Fortune 500 in a broad spectrum of multiple industries across North America. To learn more about products, services and solutions from KPI Knowledge Providers Inc. please visit **knowledgeproviders.com**

About IBM Analytics

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