SafeWork NSW

Qlik connects strategic, tactical and operational data to ensure data drives customer outcomes

CUSTOMER STORY

– By Rachel Groococh, Principal Business Analyst, SafeWork NSW

SafeWork NSW is the NSW Government workplace health and safety regulator. At SafeWork, our focus is on harm prevention as well as improving the overall safety cultures in NSW workplaces. Our Roadmap for NSW 2022 sets out a six-year strategy targeting high risk industries, harms and vulnerable worker groups to prevent fatalities, serious injuries and illnesses.

As part of our regulatory work, we offer free advice on improving workplace health and safety, provide licensing for dangerous work, testing services and investigating workplace incidents to ensure compliance. When necessary, we enforce the work health and safety laws and practices in NSW, Australia.

SafeWork has around 500 staff – 300 of whom are front-line inspectors delivering services to about 780,000 workplaces and 4 million workers. It's a lot to cover and as a regulator we have to work smart and hard to deliver important information across the state about managing risks as well as ensure safety practices and standards are maintained.

The challenge SafeWork faced was that its systems and reporting were very limited. Yes, there were hundreds of reports available – but they were compiled manually, provided limited insights and were often not well-utilized or trusted.

We've been using Qlik Sense to transform that – to create a platform to align the business operationally, tactically and strategically – and always with the goal of keeping workers safe.

The importance of 'managing by facts'

As part of making sure we are delivering our services well and in the right places, three years ago, I was brought onboard to research and commence a stock-take of business reporting activities, the data capture systems and business measures, with the aim of understanding what was required to drive and achieve an exemplar state.

The review found over 700 reports, most of which were produced manually, incurring large labor costs and providing limited insights. Further, there were 26 data sources which

Solution Overview

Customer Name
SafeWork NSW

Industry
Public Sector

Geography
Australia

Challenges

- Needed to analyze all the interdependencies in 26 different data sources
- Enable a line-of-sight from Operational activity to Strategic outcomes
- Address the data culture and develop business data literacy

Solution

- Introduced Qlik Sense and Qlik NPrinting

Results

- Reduced 700+ reports down to a suite of 9 analytical apps - completed balanced a scorecard in 9 months
- Rationalized and transformed data sources from 26 to 12
- Ability to monitor, drive and quantify operational and strategic success within SafeWork NSW – 13% increase of GOS achieved in the first 3 months
- Substantial increases in report usage - Since the introduction of NPrinting Reporting, Qlik App usage has grown by 92%

needed to be consolidated, with timeliness and consistency of
this data also a problem.

As can be expected, in the absence of good data, managers would base their decisions on 'gut feel', or from only having spoken to a few stakeholders. This management by 'perception' rather than 'facts' was impacting good business decision-making and outcomes.

The limited 'line of sight' had a downstream effect on the data visibility and engagement of operational staff. Staff going about their daily tasks couldn't see how they contributed to our strategic goals, they couldn't understand how their effort contributed to outcomes. With burdensome processes, as well as poor data visibility and value, resentment towards reporting had set in. It was time for a rethink.

The first step was to determine exactly what reporting was required by the regulator and then make it easier. We reached out to our industry leads nationally, and also looked at some international jurisdictions for examples of best practice. We then overlaid this against the stock-take to develop a plan of action.

We knew one thing, we didn't want a plain vanilla business intelligence system – we wanted an intelligent, data fueled solution that would drive strategic success. Now we just had to build it.

Tackling the right problem from day one

There's a great quote from American mathematician John Tukey, "An approximate answer to the right problem is worth a good deal more than an exact answer to an approximate solution."

This is important because like many organizations, we were working with imperfect, occasionally narrow and incomplete data. But as long as we focused our energy on making it easy to answer the 'right problems', the business would begin to achieve its goals.

We started off by ensuring we had a solid reporting framework and implemented a balanced scorecard at the operational level against critical areas of business performance. We focused on transforming and producing insights which would benefit our customers and strategic goals. At the tactical level, we started looking at our reach and portfolio measures. We also ensured governance committees were established to oversee decision-making and prioritization of issues arising from operations through to strategic levels.

Steady progress from a simple start

When we looked under the hood, we found 26 different data sources that we needed to transform and produce insights from. When we approached our ICT department and asked them what it would take to develop the balanced scorecard, we were quoted "$1 million and 2 years". The business didn't have that kind of budget or time on their hands.

We shopped around and found Qlik. After a quick and smooth set-up, we rationalized our imperfect data sources down to 12 and in nine months, delivered a balanced scorecard at a cost of $340,000.

What proved most important during the process, was to develop this whilst always keeping the end user in mind. I was really excited by Qlik and all the possibilities (heatmaps, data mining etc.) – but it wasn't where the business was at the time. In phase 1, they needed simple visualizations and data sets.

Once the basics were covered, *then* we could further develop the platform to provide more complex data and insights, such as capacity and forecasting, as well as portfolio project mapping and management.

To produce this, we needed to tackle functionality reviews, workflow development, address multiple work processes, as well as perform data cleansing. Despite the complexity in the background, we've been able to bring all this together with simple analytical visualizations and it's all done with Qlik.

Solving the people puzzle

To really extract value from the work that we were doing, we needed to get people comfortable with Qlik.

At the beginning, there was definitely some resistance. People were hesitant to touch the technology and there was even some disbelief in the accuracy of certain data, as it contradicts long-term perceptions that had been held.

Through working with the business as well as providing regular engagement and support, we have achieved steady increases in user numbers month-on-month. We have also seen the rise of the 'super user'. With some managers accessing Qlik for up to 40 hours a month. They are understanding the value of data and how it's driving effective decision-making and service delivery.

We noted that different people use Qlik differently. Whilst middle management are onboard with the app solutions, our time poor Executives required a different approach. For them, the value and use of data is not in question – ease and time is! This is where we have taken advantage of Qlik's NPrinting product to produce and automatically schedule dashboards that monitor and drive strategic conversations within SafeWork.

Four steps to success

First, ensure you have a clear monitoring framework that lets you properly organize your data and measures – it keeps you on track and ensures you are developing the right analytical reports for the business.

Second, don't lose sight of the organizational culture – understanding where it stands can help prevent your program success from being derailed.

Third, be prepared to work with imperfect data – answer the 'right problems' and things will develop from there.

And finally, evolve the BI platform and the business together. Start simple and then move to more complex data and insights.

Most importantly, just get started – regardless of how imperfect your data sets are, the benefits of Qlik Sense analysis in terms of your efficiency gains are still well worth it!

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I have worked as a Business Improvement Analyst in both the private and public sector for 20+ years. Developing and delivering improvement frameworks and data-driven projects and programs, with onshore and international reach. I am passionate about technology and the impact reporting has on strategic direction, business efficiency and customer satisfaction.

About Qlik

Qlik is on a mission to create a data-literate world, where everyone can use data to solve their most challenging problems. Only Qlik's end-to-end data management and analytics platform brings together all of an organization's data from any source, enabling people at any skill level to use their curiosity to uncover new insights. Companies use Qlik to see more deeply into customer behavior, reinvent business processes, discover new revenue streams, and balance risk and reward.

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