

Deckers Outdoor Corporation

CLIENT SUCCESS: BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE

SNAPSHOT

deckers
OUTDOOR CORPORATION

ORGANIZATION

Founded in 1973, Deckers Outdoor Corporation is a global company that designs and markets a full line of footwear for outdoor activities and casual lifestyle use.

CHALLENGE

Integrate disparate financial systems to enable Deckers to view accurate sales and financial data, so managers can view data from existing and acquired brands in a cohesive way. Create a cohesive BI and reporting environment that enables consistent analytics across the corporation.

STRATEGY

Merge flat files from Sanuk's AS/400 system with extracts from Deckers' Oracle ERP system and present "one version of the truth" so reports reflect a single business entity. Create interactive BI dashboards that let business users slice and dice data according to pre-defined dimensions and hierarchies.

RESULTS

Users now have a cohesive view of financial performance for all products, with easy access to the metrics they need to analyze their business. Using the new BI dashboards, they can monitor and chart trends and drill down to details across multiple dimensions—for example, slicing wholesale and retail data by gender, style, color and size. Millions of records can be instantly viewed and analyzed across stores, showing YTD and year-over-year comparisons. Ad hoc, user-generated views can be exported or printed on demand. These capabilities enhance Decker's ongoing sales and marketing efforts.

The \$120 million acquisition of the Sanuk® brand created data integration challenges for Deckers Outdoor Corporation. Leaders at the company realized they needed assistance rolling financial performance numbers from Sanuk's mainframe database into Deckers' financial system so they could obtain consistent, at-a-glance metrics from the merged entities. They sought a technology partner with expertise in business intelligence (BI) to help them optimize their information systems.

"The skillset of the BI experts at Visus LLC and their technical proficiency in the systems we work with set them apart from other technology providers," says Ben Borowski, Data Architect at Deckers. "Everything Visus brought to the table – project management, technical expertise, and the flexible way they approach each project – has been spot-on for what we needed to accomplish."

Borowski and his colleagues have high standards for performance. Since its founding in 1973, when an enterprising student at the University of California recognized a market opportunity for casual, comfortable footwear, Deckers has grown steadily to become a billion dollar company that designs and markets a full line of footwear for outdoor activities and casual lifestyle use. Fueled by the success of its popular Deckers flip-flop sandals, the company has acquired a number of other brands over the years, including UGG® Australia, Sanuk®, Teva®, Ahnu®, TSUBO®, and Mozo®.

Deckers' first BI project involved deploying iQ for Business, a business intelligence software solution designed to make reporting and analytics simple for business users. After the system had been in place for about a year, Borowski and his team realized they needed additional assistance with data integration, setting up and optimizing the back-end architecture, and migrating and transforming data.

Deckers needed BI experts with competency in iQ for Business along with Microsoft SQL Server and Oracle E-Business Suite. They enlisted Visus for help with a master data management (MDM) project to synchronize disparate data elements into a single version of the truth.

Visus merged flat files from Sanuk's AS/400 system with extracts from Deckers' Oracle ERP system to create consistent records for reporting and analysis. Today, having an integrated view of this information helps the sales team understand market trends. It also helps Deckers' marketing team develop campaigns that are better targeted to those trends.

"The Visus team communicated with us very well, defining the project requirements up-front and learning our business needs," Borowski recalls. "They have remained flexible throughout the project with their ability to react and respond to changes when the project has shifted directions."

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Taking Steps Toward Unified BI

The first stage of the project involved extracting flat files nightly from Sanuk's AS/400 system and loading data into cubes in the DataServer component of iQ for Business. This step allowed sales from the Sanuk product line to be viewed through the iQ for Business reporting front-end, helping managers see the business as a single entity and gauge overall financial performance.

Deckers also wanted to get historical sales data from Sanuk into the iQ for Business dimensional hierarchy so people in the Deckers organization could view performance trends from both companies. Visus brought 10 years of Sanuk historical data into iQ DataServer and Analysis Server, modifying some of the underlying architecture to make it work. The Sanuk brand is now fully represented in Oracle E-Business Suite, with the AS/400 only used for historical data. From a reporting standpoint, it's fully transparent to the end users.

Next, Visus leveraged its expertise with Microsoft SQL Server Integration Services, SQL Server Reporting Services, and SQL Server Analysis Services to build iQ for Business "cubes" including a wholesale cube, a retail cube, a forecasts cube, and an eCommerce cube. The cubes comprise current sales performance data plus historical data for Deckers and Sanuk. Each cube includes more than 20 dimensions to allow users to look at data in a multitude of ways. Each dimension can have up to 15 hierarchies.

"Thanks to Visus we now have thousands of ways to analyze our data through reports and dashboards," says Borowski. "Our BI environment provides the foundation for the metrics we use to analyze the business. Visus did a great job of fine-tuning our data and reporting assets to create the best possible BI environment."

"As we gain traction with BI, the value of having a 'single version of the truth' has really hit home. Visus has helped us attain clarity about what that is and how we deliver it to the business."

– Ben Borowski, Data Architect, Deckers Outdoor Corporation

Applying Up-to-Date Information to Stay Competitive

With an eye to performance, Visus went on to enhance the cubes, dimensions, and hierarchies to ensure that data-intensive reporting jobs wouldn't dominate precious computing cycles. Through it all, their objective was to supply current, accurate data. Sales figures that are accumulated through all of Deckers' divisions are brought into the iQ DataServer cubes and processed twice daily so that users in America and Europe have visibility into current data from the prior day close-of-business. Approximately 250 people use the BI system to make decisions.

"Visus optimized our BI system to support analysis across all our brands," Borowski says. "Business users can confirm that their suppositions are correct for ongoing sales and marketing efforts, perform what-if analyses to design new campaigns, and generate retail business reports."

Visus is also helping Deckers create supply chain analytics and assisting in the rollout of a new Oracle point-of-sale system. They will use the Oracle Discover BI tools to integrate data from the new Oracle system to the old point-of-sale systems.

"You can't acquire a company unless you are going to integrate it properly," Borowski summarizes. "A big part of that is having one set of books and one cohesive view of the products. Visus helped us attain that. These BI projects with Visus are fundamental to Deckers' growth strategy and operation going forward."

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