

CUSTOMER STORY

An integrated approach to growth

End-to-end data optimization helps insurance specialist keep up with seismic changes in the automotive market





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“It turns out some of our assumptions were wrong. Qlik has changed how we see our customers, and our business.”

Patrick Straub, Vice President of Business Intelligence, IAS

Changed buying habits

Innovative Aftermarket Systems (IAS) is a provider of warranties to the automotive sector. It offers a broad range of finance and insurance products and works alongside some of the largest dealer groups in the USA.

“The way consumers buy cars has changed,” says Patrick Straub, IAS’ Vice President of Business Intelligence. “A lot more research is done online before they buy, and there is a greater sense of Total Cost of Ownership. IAS educates the consumer on the cost of a vehicle they’re considering with individualized costs. We become their partner in defraying the cost of ownership.”

Data transformation begins

Historically, IAS was data rich, but information poor. “Much of our corporate intelligence was in the heads of our senior management – their experience, their knowledge of the market. That’s great, but it’s not scalable as we grow,” says Straub. IAS wanted to change this mindset and adopt a data-driven focus to future operations.

IAS adopted Qlik Sense in 2017, after an exhaustive search covering 15 vendors, seven demos and three Proofs of Concept. “Our goal was to have a tool that could be widely adopted, not siloed within the Business Intelligence department. The functionality of Qlik was easy to understand by the widest number of users. We soon created an environment for people to build their own apps.” The adoption rate skyrocketed.

Qlik Sense has since inspired a transformative approach to data. Where once data was static in PDF reports, now it is dynamic and can be interrogated. Reports are faster to produce, and insights are more accessible.

Solution Overview

Customer Name

IAS

Industry

Financial Services

Geography

Austin, Texas

Function

IT

Business Value Driver

Reimagined Processes, Customer Intelligence

Challenges

- Respond to changes in the automotive market by identifying new revenue opportunities
- Create a consistent approach to data management, enabling the business to share and access data

Solution

IAS began its data transformation journey with the deployment of Qlik Sense. It has since expanded its approach through the adoption of Qlik Replicate, Qlik Compose for Data Warehouses, and Qlik Data Catalyst

Results

- Simplified the means to interrogate data, revealing actionable insight to inform business strategy
- Produced five-fold increase in productivity of Business Intelligence function through automation
- Allowed access to previously unavailable data
- Accelerated the integration of new acquisitions

“Our analysts have gone from being report writers to business consultants. We encourage them to say: ‘tell me about your problem,’” says Straub. “They ask a question, run the data, then ask the next question. By the time you’ve asked the sixth question, you’re way further down the road than you ever thought possible.”

The need for integration surfaces

With IAS continuing to grow, organically and through acquisition, it became clear there was a wider opportunity. Existing IT processes were not fit for this kind of growth. Acquired companies would send siloed data in a range of formats, often from legacy mainframe systems. Internal departments, especially accounting, were tasked with reconciling two different ways of looking at the same type of data. “We had a long line of people waiting outside the BI team’s door waiting for data. It wasn’t scalable,” Straub says.

IAS again turned to Qlik, this time to integrate data that was accumulating in disparate, inaccessible repositories. Qlik Replicate™ (formerly Attunity Replicate), Qlik Compose™ (formerly Attunity Compose), and Qlik Data Catalyst® were chosen as the integration tool set. Qlik Replicate handles the task of data replication and ingestion from acquired company sources, including mainframe systems. “AS400 was our biggest Mount Everest to climb,” Straub says. “It used to take us a year to move mainframe data to our system. With Replicate, we can leave the data where it is.” Qlik Data Catalyst is used to build a secure catalog of data, including XLS and CSV flat files, from acquired companies. It also helps IAS with master data management. IAS Data Stewards are engaged to govern their data and create mappings or new rules.

In addition to the new software, IAS implemented structural changes around Business Intelligence. The “BI Guild” is made up of Qlik Sense developers. Data Stewards manage data rationalization. A Data Governance Committee oversees how data is governed. In a growing business, Straub says this is vital in establishing a master process and a sense of ownership. And the results speak for themselves:

“I was amazed how quickly we went from purchasing these tools to having our data replicated and profiled by Data Catalyst. I thought this would be a nine-month project; in fact, we were already writing reports off it in less than two months.”

Realizing the full value of insight

Today, IAS is more efficient in the way it manages data, and more focused when it comes to applying insight. A broad range of data from new acquisitions is integrated faster, with insights gleaned in record time.

Ready to scale

With IAS continuing to acquire more businesses, Straub says it is better able to rationalize data sources: “We needed to integrate data, and for there to be consistency. We now have that. Ultimately we’re enabling the business to move quickly.”

Although the IAS data ecosystem becomes more diverse with every acquisition, Qlik provides the ability to scale with no centralized choke point.

Increased employee value

The impact is also felt at a human level. Prior to Qlik, business analysts would spend most of their time working on reports instead of higher value data analysis, synthesis and recommendations. Today, the model has flipped, and analysts spend 90% of their time solving business problems. Developer productivity has also increased five-fold.

“It used to take us months to develop a report; now it takes weeks,” says Straub. “Qlik was a reset button for everyone. We are out of the production game.”

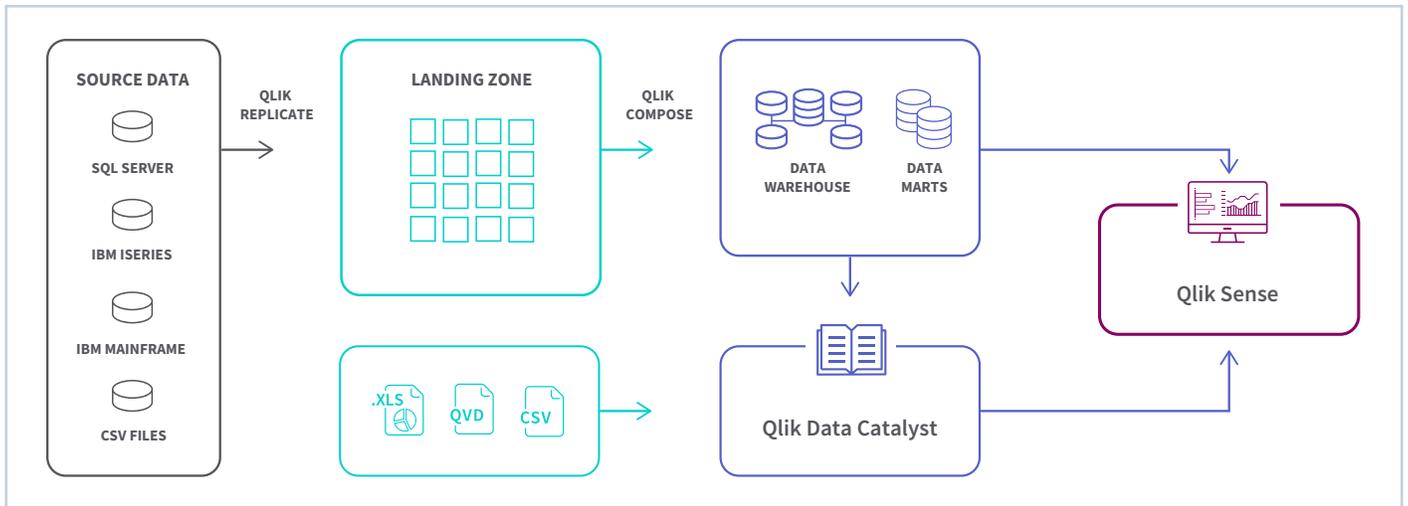
Smarter business decisions

IAS now looks at data in a new way. Instead of being confined to how data is stored in databases, analysts can construct information models from new vantage points. Actionable insight has enabled IAS to access customer and dealer penetration by ZIP code, to move from a revenue-by-coverage to a more insightful revenue-by-VIN model, and to analyze revenue by region. By identifying the best performing dealers in the country, IAS is better able to repeat best practices and focus budgets more effectively.

“It turns out some of our assumptions were wrong. Qlik allows us to drill down into the data and keep drilling. We now look at the business differently,” says Straub.

The effect is transformational. IAS users have the tools they need to share and access a consolidated view of their data, and the business has gained a new level of insight to inform future strategy.

“We’ve created an environment for the business to thrive,” says Straub. “We have the tools; our focus is now on enablement.”



“We realized we needed an end-to-end approach to data. We needed to integrate data, and for there to be consistency. Ultimately we need the business to be able to move quickly.”

Patrick Straub, Vice President of Business Intelligence, IAS



About Qlik

Qlik’s vision is a data-literate world, one where everyone can use data to improve decision-making and solve their most challenging problems. Only Qlik offers end-to-end, real-time data integration and analytics solutions that help organizations access and transform all their data into value. Qlik helps companies lead with data to see more deeply into customer behavior, reinvent business processes, discover new revenue streams, and balance risk and reward. Qlik does business in more than 100 countries and serves over 50,000 customers around the world.

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