

ANALYTICS

UCB builds data-led patient strategy

Pharmaceutical firm builds dynamic future with Qlik and Bardess





CUSTOMER STORY

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Raeann Mendoza, Head of Commercial Data Operations, UCB

Disconnected data led to poor response times

In 2020, UCB’s North American business set out to make a series of changes in line with its digitization strategy. The global pharmaceutical firm’s data warehousing and analytics were handled by ‘black box’ third-party vendors, and while these were chosen on a best-of-breed basis, their disconnected nature meant problems were emerging with the services provided.

UCB’s field representatives are the spearhead of its North American operation. They serve as the main point of contact between the back office, research operations and physicians on the front line. The engine behind the field force is the reporting team, with responsibility for tracking product sales, compensation incentives, physician engagements and representative performance. And essential to their success is data – specifically, data that is accurate, up to date and easily accessible and digestible at the time of need.

The data volumes that UCB’s North American operations typically generate for certain processes can reach up to 2TB and, given the fragmented vendor pool, turnaround times for data requests and regular refreshes were slow and often unreliable. As a result, UCB’s teams often found themselves working with aging information that led to poor response times and reduced market visibility.

The business aims to deploy all the tools at its disposal to build the broadest possible understanding of immunology and critical conditions such as epilepsy, Myasthenia Gravis and Psoriasis.

Solution Overview

Customer Name

UCB

Industry

Life Sciences

Geography

USA

Function

IT

Business Value Driver

Reimagined Processes

Challenges

- Improve timely access to data previously supplied by outsourced services
- Improve data refresh speeds and reliability for large volumes of sales data
- Cut latency to enable improved business-wide visibility

Solution

Transitioned from third-party ‘black box’ vendors to bring processes and ownership in house with Qlik® Sense® while ensuring transparency and security.

Results

- Bringing processes in-house reduces reliance on third-party vendors for real-time access to reporting
- Quick and accurate processing delivers critical business information
- Trusted partner provides secure cooperation and collaboration

A new strategy for the next best thing

UCB's transformation also involved a significant increase in alignment between processes operating in North America and its headquarters in Belgium. With other parts of UCB's global business already using Qlik Sense, an AI-driven cloud analytics platform, there was a precedent for the analytics and visualization goals that the business was looking to achieve.

What UCB needed was a trusted partner that would help enable this for its North American operation. Up stepped award-winning data analytics and data science consultancy Bardess Group, Ltd (Bardess).

Building a partnership to exceed benchmarks

UCB and Bardess together developed a strategy that would deliver transparent change, extend UCB's self-service capabilities and exceed current performance benchmarks.

Central to the process was a decision to bring the range of outsourced services and processes back in-house. Reporting would be the first UCB group to make the change, effectively acting as the pilot for the rest of the operation, and Bardess would be instrumental in making it a success.

"UCB realized it could access more benefits if it took control," explains Travis Rogers, VP, Technology and Innovation, at Bardess. "The company took incremental steps and moved the Qlik Sense reporting functionality into its own environment to give it ownership."

The transition would involve a switch in cloud provider, from the Amazon Web Services (AWS) platform managed by an external vendor to Microsoft Azure, managed by UCB and Bardess. This would enable the development of a new series of processes that would broaden UCB's access to data and bring new speeds and consistency to its weekly data refresh process, which previously took two to three days and often overran into four or five.

"One of the largest benefits we saw of bringing everything in-house was being able to have a partner that will collaborate with us and help us understand that we own the environment," adds Raeann Mendoza, Head of Commercial Data Operations for UCB. "Fixing the refresh cycles was a critical objective."

Reports and dashboards inform strategy

"We took a patient's perspective and decided on an omnichannel approach," explains Mendoza.

"We wanted to be able to bring in all sorts of data, going beyond the commercial side to connect with patient services and identify the next best thing for both patients and physicians."

UCB's new environment has significantly ratcheted up the reporting process and the insights it produces. With the weekly refresh cycle now typically completing in a single day, UCB's 700 North American Qlik users can now provide timely and accurate insights into its field force's activities and progress.

"The field force end users have goals within View360 powered by Qlik," says Mendoza. "They can identify quarterly targets and see where they are in terms of attaining them. They can also check their alignments with physicians and combine the information gained from Qlik with a dynamic targeting tool to build more effective strategies with them."

The reporting and dashboarding functions also allow the reporting team to supply insights in the format of the end user's choice; some like to have data presented in standard tables, others prefer charts and the ability to customize their appearance and the datasets and parameters that build them.

"One priority here at UCB is reducing the noise to signal. Ensuring the smooth delivery of data in the way we need it is a very important part of that, and also something we're really excited about," notes Mendoza.

The insights gained through Qlik Sense are instrumental in ensuring that more patients can access UCB's products. "We're using Qlik Sense to inform data strategy and patient strategy," says Mendoza. "The positive impact and influence that has on physicians and patients makes this a really exciting journey."

A new platform for the next generation

While UCB staff can clearly see the benefits that Qlik Sense delivers, Mendoza is also conscious that the platform still has much more to offer. Bardess has been a critical part of UCB's process of developing its NextGen warehouse, which will add around 25 new data sources to extend the business' omnichannel ambitions.

"Bardess has given us a much wider understanding of Qlik," says Mendoza. "We're barely using its benefits but having a partner with its expertise and understanding has shown us what's possible and that it's actually pretty simple."

The keys to success



80% reduction in data refresh times, from five days to one



700 users now have access to accurate and timely insights

“When we began this process with Qlik, it was really cool to be able to show people how easy it is to do things on the fly. Ensuring that data is delivered how we need it is very important to us, and also something we’re really excited about.”

Raeann Mendoza, Head of Commercial Data Operations, UCB



About Qlik

Qlik’s vision is a data-literate world, where everyone can use data and analytics to improve decision-making and solve their most challenging problems. A private company, Qlik offers real-time data integration and analytics solutions, powered by Qlik Cloud, to close the gaps between data, insights and action. By transforming data into Active Intelligence, businesses can drive better decisions, improve revenue and profitability, and optimize customer relationships. Qlik serves more than 38,000 active customers in over 100 countries.

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About Bardess

Bardess is an award-winning innovative data analytics and data science solutions provider, empowering clients to make smarter and faster business decisions by obtaining the exceptional value in data. For more than 25 years, hundreds of Fortune 500 and mid-sized companies have trusted Bardess with their most difficult and critical data needs. Clients choose Bardess because of the remarkable talent, deep experience and innovative capabilities of its elite team of data scientists, consultants and business leaders.

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