



Greencore boosts incremental sales in three months with Qlik

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- Jenny Thompson, Commercial Executive, Greencore Northampton



Greencore Group is a leading international producer of prepared foods based in Dublin, Ireland, with 22 manufacturing sites across the United Kingdom (UK) and the United States (US). Greencore’s global annualised sales, including its US operations, amount to more than £1.2 billion a year.

In 2011, Greencore acquired convenience food supplier Uniq Prepared Foods. Uniq derived more than half its revenue from supplying leading retailer Marks & Spencer (M&S), with the Northampton site being lead supplier for sandwiches and wraps.

Jenny Thompson, Commercial Executive, Greencore Northampton, says: “Previously, Greencore Northampton used Microsoft Excel reports to monitor sales performance, which involved complex pivot tables and took hours of work to produce. We were able to deliver only weekly reporting from the M&S electronic point of sale (EPOS) system on key performance indicators.

She continues: “As a result, we were often slow to react if a particular product wasn’t selling well in a particular store. We had no real-time information on which were the best-selling lines, so stores in some areas ran out of stock and in others they had to throw away food.” Greencore Northampton saw an opportunity to deploy business discovery software for daily and weekly reporting on sales performance. The aim was to reduce waste and improve the availability of sandwiches and wraps at M&S stores in the UK.

Greencore Northampton deploys Qlik to improve sales

Previously, some members of the commercial team at Greencore Northampton were aware of traditional business intelligence systems such as Cognos. The team organised a meeting with Qlik Elite Solution Partner and manufacturing IT specialist Informance, who immediately understood Greencore’s business needs as it had experience in deploying Qlik for other manufacturing solutions.

Jenny Thompson says: “We wanted to provide our team with accurate business intelligence and we needed a solution to be delivered quickly. We rapidly formed the view that Qlik was the top business discovery solution for our industry, especially after seeing a demonstration at one of Informance’s Qlik customers; Harboro Rubber.”

Significantly, Informance delivered its first application for testing and reviews within days of the initial decision to go ahead, which gave Greencore Northampton the confidence that it was making the right choice. It also provided fully certified training services for users and super users.

The initial project supported the commercial team with the replication of the existing Excel weekly reports and analysis completed on this data.

Once the power of Qlik was outlined, the second stage involved moving the performance management of a relatively small segment of the category—wraps.

Solution overview

Customer Name:

Greencore Northampton

Greencore Northampton is part of Greencore Group—the largest maker of ready-to-go foods in the United Kingdom (UK). Greencore Group has 22 convenience food manufacturing sites in the UK and US, employing more than 11,000 people.

Industry: Consumer Products

Function: Executive, Finance, Operations and Sales, Marketing, Supply Chain

Geography: United Kingdom

Challenges:

- Analyse electronic point of sale (EPOS) data
- Reduce waste in stores selling ready-to-go foods
- Improve availability and increase sales

Solution:

Greencore Northampton deployed Qlik for its commercial and supply chain teams to monitor availability and wastage of food-on-the-move products at M&S stores in the UK.

Benefits:

- Improved reporting of daily and weekly data
- Enabled faster, smarter decision making
- A 20 per cent increase in on-shelf availability
- A 3 per cent reduction in waste

Data Source Systems Database:

M&S EPOS, Microsoft Excel

Partner:

Informance

Return on investment

ROI in less than 1 year

Time to value

Boosted incremental sales in three months

Greencore Northampton improves availability and delivers incremental sales

Having gone live with Qlik in April 2012, Jenny is highly impressed with the measurable results so far, which have included:

- A not insignificant increase in incremental sales for M&S
- A 20 per cent increase in on-shelf availability
- A 3 per cent reduction in waste

Jenny says: "Availability of wraps increased dramatically, which in-turn means improved sales and lower waste for M&S. There will always be some waste with convenience food, but the reduction figure speaks for itself. None of this would be possible without the ability to access the real-time data in an easy-to-use format. We expect return on our investment within a year."

Near real-time daily reporting results in faster business decision making

Qlik has made the creation of daily reporting on sales of wraps at M&S faster, easier, and more flexible. Jenny says: "Accurate decisions can be made quickly because all the data is available within a day in near real-time from a single source. We're seeing some fantastic results from Qlik already. Each member of the commercial team can now easily access information on a self-service basis—that wasn't possible before."

Greencore Northampton's finance team has also gone live with an analysis and reporting dashboard using Qlik. Integration of sales and financial dashboards will enable the commercial team to incorporate financial data into its sales performance figures, and help the finance team analyse profitability more effectively. Jenny says: "With data going as far back as 2006, we can model and trend data in a way we've never been able to before," She continues: "The inclusion of historical data offers us greater insight, and in spite of the volume of information Qlik has to process, we know the technology is up to the challenge."



Power user champions Qlik within the organisation

Qlik is providing Greencore Northampton with near real-time analysis of EPOS data from M&S stores with daily and weekly reporting on product sales and wastage. This data is used to support M&S by getting the correct products and stock levels in the right stores. The secondary benefit internally is helping the commercial and executive teams to access daily and weekly data through self-service reporting tools in Qlik.

As a power user of Qlik at Greencore Northampton, Jenny is impressed with the ability of the solution to extract data from any system. Jenny concludes: "Qlik has changed my working life. If I want to know why a product isn't selling, I can get the answer in seconds instead of waiting hours. Other team members are now also less reliant on me to produce reports because they can do it themselves."