



At a glance

Organisation

Dome Café Group

Industry

Hospitality and Food Service

Location

Perth

Solution

QlikView Business Intelligence solution, NPrinting report generation, scheduling and printing application

Business Objective

To support management decision making and assist staff in the delivery of superior service by accessing, visualising and analysing the wealth of data stored in Dome Café Group data warehouse.

Business Benefits

- Comprehensive sales analyses covering all aspects of the business including margins, and individual store productivity
- Detailed analyses of labour and productivity across the Australian business, leading to improved staff scheduling
- Improved inventory management
- Better menu development based on insights into customer preferences and order bundling
- "What if" analyses enables the organisation to explore the impact of ingredient substitutions and menu changes for better cost management

A little over 20 years ago Perth-based Dome Café Group opened for business. The European-style café quickly gained a reputation for its great coffee and its all day menu. Consumer interest led to the opening of additional Western Australian-based cafés and later, to the adoption of a franchise business model that would carry the brand to new geographies. Today the company has more than 60 sites in Australia and another 60 internationally, in countries ranging from Singapore and Malaysia to the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain. The size of the cafés has also changed, where once they seated 35 or 40 patrons, the typical Dome Café Group now has the capacity to seat 200 or more.

The role of technology

The hospitality and food service industry is based on people. The quality of staff and the way they work together can make or break a business. It's a foundation principle that is understood at all levels of Dome Café Group business. Even when it comes to technology, the focus is firmly on staff.

"Café managers are trained to achieve productivities. The system helps them achieve this by analysing what's happening. It allows us to really break the data down and look at productivity and skills at an hourly level."



Bill Lee, Information & Technology Manager, explains. “Our belief is that technology is all about assisting people in the café to deliver a better customer experience. Our approach is to help franchisees and managers to understand the business better and therefore improve or fix things faster. It’s a way of enabling managers to spend more time with their staff and customers.”

Information demands analysis

Five years ago, Dome Café Group invested in the development of a SQL-based data warehouse to bring together the data contained in various business systems across the company. There was a hosted back-of-house system, a dedicated system for customer feedback, a corporate database plus individual databases for each café’s point of sale system. The idea was to tie all this information together within the warehouse, to enable better analysis of the business.

On completion of the data warehouse build however, Dome Café Group realised they needed additional tools to analyse and report on the data. “We were struggling to use the information for management. We needed a way to make sense of it, to report and visualise the data.”

To solve the problem, they decided to deploy a business intelligence (BI) solution. At a BI seminar held by Professional Advantage, Lee was introduced to QlikView. “I saw that it could do what we were after and I liked the associations that the software offered. I especially liked the fact we could get something to a web end very quickly. It would allow us to deliver something that was usable and very agile,” he says.

Dome Café Group approached Professional Advantage and explained that thanks to their IT skill set within Dome Café Group, they didn’t need help building the solution. Instead, they wanted to be trained to use the BI tool and he required the assurance that Professional Advantage would be there to provide a second opinion or advice when necessary.

“I asked Professional Advantage to fast track into being a developer. I already had the data warehouse so I knew where the data was. I just needed to be able to get it out,” Lee acknowledges.

With the scope of the project clearly defined, a Professional Advantage consultant was soon sitting beside Lee, walking him through the finer points of the BI tool. Development began not long after and was completed within the first half of 2013.



Understanding sales and labour

Initial work focused on sales data. Dashboards and reports were created to provide managers with the ability to analyse overall store performance and to look at factors such as sales, margins, inventory and the impact of time of day.

Next, in keeping with the focus on people, Dome Café Group turned their attention to labour analyses. “Labour in hospitality comes down to scheduling, knowing when labour is needed. It sounds like common sense but it can be difficult to do well because sales can be quite erratic,” Lee notes.

By combining different dimensions of data, QlikView enables Dome Café Group to analyse trends such as staff churn, stability and training, and their implications for service quality. “What we do is continually monitor and compile time and attendance, hourly sales and the skill levels of staff to derive our net sales per wage hour.”

Managers can see the impact of seasonal hiring patterns on sales, productivity and profitability. Year-on-year comparisons of stores, store sizes and locations are helping the cafés to identify the right time to ramp up staff numbers and when to slow down.

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The menu as a bill of sales

In addition to the sales and labour analyses, Dome Café Group developed a menu system that is delivering extensive insights into customer demand, inventory and cost management, and which is helping to shape the development and bundling of future items.

By approaching Dome Café Group's menu as something akin to a bill of materials, he has created the ability to measure the relationship between the sale of menu items and their underlying ingredients. This allows the organisation to examine its use of ingredients, to understand the ramifications of changing to cheaper or different ingredients, and to broadly identify how much of each ingredient should be used at any given time.

The benefits range from improved inventory management to more thorough management oversight. In one instance, a café was able to identify and resolve an issue where certain products were being used in excess of expected demand.

Rolling QlikView out across Australia

Management reaction to the new tool has been extremely enthusiastic. "They love it," Lee observes. "For a long time we had the data to obtain this information, but we weren't able to to use it easily. We had Excel and Pivot Tables, but periodically we would lose them. It wasn't the same. Now we have something that keeps on loading and reloading, that looks after itself. I love the fact that we can make a change on the fly and with the help of NPrinting, it is done and out for everyone to see within a few hours or less."

"The two things that stand out about QlikView are that it is very fast to put something together, and the associative nature of the software allows a level of discovery that I haven't been able to find in other applications," he notes.

At present, only Dome Café Group head office personnel have access to QlikView but this will change in 2015 as the system is opened up to provide filtered views of each individual café. It's a step that will please franchisees by enabling them to access information as needed while at the same time reducing reporting demand on head office staff.

"Everyone is really keen to get access. We capture a lot of transactional data for all the menu items we sell in all the cafés. They process 10 million sales transactions, Australia wide, per year. That's a lot of cups of coffee and sandwiches. With the help of QlikView we'll be able to do all kinds of transactional and investment analyses and visualise the results quite quickly."



Asked when he thinks the project will end Lee smiles and says, "I think the system will always evolve. Some of the fundamentals will remain the same, but we'll need to keep up as customer habits change. And, as senior management change, different people will have different ideas about what they want to see. What we visualise and the way we visualise data will continually be evolving," he concludes.



Enabling *High Performance* Workplaces

About Professional Advantage

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