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CASE STUDY

British Sugar chooses BOARD to deliver Planning, Budgeting and Forecasting



Business Challenges

Consolidation and Standardisation of Budgeting and Forecasting Process

Replacement of complicated and difficult to control spreadsheets

Industry

FMCG

Application Area

Budgeting & Forecasting

“Producing the sales forecast that we use would be impossible in spreadsheets. BOARD allows us to have an accurate forecast for our business in a timely manner.”

Adrian Hallam,

Senior Analyst, SilverSpoon

The Company

With c1600 employees British Sugar and SilverSpoon, both part of the ABF group are 2 instantly recognizable brands. Tracing its roots to 1912, the focus of the business evolved in 1936 with the introduction of the Sugar Act. Now British Sugar produce over 1 million tonnes of white sugar, plus animal feeds, bio-ethanol and even electricity!

The Challenges

British Sugar had identified the need to displace a complicated array of spreadsheets that made up its Planning, Budgeting and Forecasting processes. The complexities in the spreadsheets caused a multitude of issues. For example there was insufficient time between the production of each quarterly forecast to adequately run any comparisons, what-if scenarios or to monitor performance against the forecast. Thus the business was limited in its ability to respond to issues, identify the processes that were working efficiently or indeed make savings.

The Selection Process

British Sugar began with an original shortlist of 5, narrowed down to 3 all of whom were invited to officially tender. BOARD was identified as being the tool of choice in this process, ahead of other market leading technologies. Three key reasons were cited, ease of use, best match to the requirements and most cost effective.

The Solution

British Sugar had already identified the issues and areas which BOARD was to address:

- More timely Forecasting and Budgeting
- SilverSpoon – Sales Forecasting to SKU level
- Standardized Budgeting Process for British Sugar
- Improve Control
- British Sugar – Budget Standardization and Consolidation



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“BOARD has delivered the significant time to budget savings, we were looking for”

Dave Richmond,
IT Business Manager,
British Sugar

BOARD has given us the ability to produce a much more controlled and standardized budget, errors are less common and from a user perspective, BOARD is simple to use Even those users, more comfortable with spreadsheets make no complaint!”

Zoe Matthews,
Management Accountant,
British Sugar

Previously the myriad of complex spreadsheets made running a time efficient budgeting and forecasting process almost impossible. SilverSpoon, which runs its sales forecast from the lowest level of detail (SKU – Stock Keeping Unit), were finding it incredibly difficult to produce accurate, reliable forecasts. With the acquisition of Billingtons, Askeys and the Allinsons brands, SilverSpoon’s SKU’s increased from circa 300 to over 1000. The BOARD implementation has enabled SilverSpoon to produce an accurate and detailed sales forecast that is quick and easy to use. Issues can be identified easily and acted upon by the relevant business manager. Adrian Hallam, senior analyst, SilverSpoon says “Producing the sales forecast that we use would be impossible in spreadsheets. BOARD allows us to have an accurate forecast for our business in a timely manner.”

The time factor is critical to the success of the solution. There is now sufficient time between each quarterly forecast to compare, monitor performance against forecast and factor in some what-if scenarios, all impossible before the introduction of BOARD. Consequently, the business is much more aware of its successes, issues are picked up much more quickly and the business can react more swiftly to changing circumstances, such as cost.

The BOARD process began some 24 months ago and has delivered significant improvements to the budgeting process in British Sugar and the sales forecasting processes in SilverSpoon. Dave Richmond, IT Business Manager, British Sugar comments that “According to our Finance Director, BOARD has delivered the significant time to budget savings, we were looking for”

The budgeting process for British Sugar needed to be standardized, consolidated and have tighter controls imposed on it. Developed entirely within finance rather than IT, the budgeting application allows Central Office users, Business Managers from British Sugar’s 4 manufacturing sites and 8 finishing plants to input critical information into one central budget.

Zoe Matthews, Management Accountant, British Sugar adds “BOARD has given us the ability to produce a much more controlled and standardized budget. Errors are less common and from a user perspective, BOARD is simple to use. Even those users more comfortable with spreadsheets make no complaint!”



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“The business has definitely benefited from the introduction of the BOARD solution.”

Fiona Miller,
Head of IT, SilverSpoon

Business Benefits

British Sugar is reaping significant business benefit and has certainly seen a Return on Investment. Benefits include

- Significant reduction in time to budget
- Standardised and consolidated budgeting process
- Greater control
- Automation of complicated processes that could not be achieved with spreadsheets

Fiona Miller, Head of IT for SilverSpoon adds “The business has definitely benefited from the introduction of the BOARD solution.”