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## CASE STUDY

# Retailer realises benefits of Integrated, Business Wide Management Information

## HARVEY NICHOLS

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**Mr. Martin Schofield,**  
Retail Operations Director,  
Harvey Nichols

**“The pilot, replicating the sales reports produced in Business Objects was completed in a matter of days, it was clear to us that BOARD would provide us with the single integrated environment that we wanted”**

**Alistair McDonald,**  
Senior Business Systems  
Manager, Harvey Nichols

### **The Company**

Founded in 1813, Harvey Nichols is a high fashion retailer, focusing on branded merchandise and quality food and restaurant offerings. With a staff of 3000, Harvey Nichols is a leading retailer in the UK and Ireland.

### **The Challenges**

In the fast moving retail environment, consistent, trustworthy and easily accessible information is key to understanding the needs of both the customer and the business. Harvey Nichols realised that they needed to implement a sound framework that would support their requirements as their growth continued.

It was essential to provide a more harmonised approach to Performance Management, that was more accurate, easier to use and more cost effective. Martin Schofield, Retail Operations Director, explains “Our existing reporting wasn’t cohesive or reliable and was produced by a myriad of different tools. Users were not confident in the accuracy or reliability of the data. BOARD has allowed us to consolidate our information into a single, integrated solution and displace multiple systems, Hyperion (Financial Reporting), Business Objects (Sales Reporting and Analytics), Arthur Planning and a multitude of spreadsheets, giving the users much more faith in the results”.

### **The Selecton Process**

BOARD’s Business Partner Retail Assist were already a trusted supplier of Harvey Nichols with the Merret supply chain ERP solution. With a pilot, completed utilizing Merret BI powered by BOARD (an out the box solution with retail ready reports based on the BOARD solution), the comparison to the existing platforms was carried out. BOARD was the clear winner. Alistair McDonald, Senior Business Systems Manager says “ The pilot, replicating the sales reports produced in Business Objects was completed in a matter of days, it was clear to us that BOARD would provide us with the single integrated environment that we wanted”



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### Industry

Retail

### Application Area

Reporting/Analytics  
Budgeting & Forecasting

### The Solution

Harvey Nichols identified several areas which BOARD would address:

- More accurate, harmonized reporting
- Integration of data from multiple sources
- Replaced several existing BI systems with one. BOARD.
- Budgeting /Forecasting
- Easier, more timely ad-hoc reporting. Self Service BI
- Data Consistency

Previously the myriad of solutions and their disconnected approach led to a multitude of spreadsheets and different departments constructing their reports in different ways, thus data consistency was poor and confidence in the information being accurate, low. Control was difficult and too loose.

The BOARD solution has allowed Harvey Nichols to eliminate this disconnect by providing a consistent framework and solid foundations from which to deliver a wide range Performance Management applications.

BOARD's programming-free approach has allowed users to become self sufficient. Ad-hoc reporting has become much simpler and quicker and the vastly improved data integration has instilled confidence in the accuracy of the information. "Data consistency and the provision of a 'single version of the truth' has encouraged users to delve deeper into the underlying data. There is a greater thirst for the information on which to base sound decisions, which can only be healthy for the business" says Schofield.

The BOARD process began some 12 months ago and has delivered significant improvements to Daily Sales, Stock, Financial Reporting as well as Cost and Sales Forecasting.

The Daily Sales database and reports were the first to be built in BOARD replacing Hyperion.

Data is loaded at the lowest level allowing Harvey Nichols to analyse daily information by the SKU, till, day, hour, payment type and operator (cashier). Aggregated data also allows analysis by Style, Colour, Size, Fit, customized product attributes and standard attributes (sub-section section, category and department)

The Daily Sales application was rolled out to users across the business (merchandisers, finance, operations. sales etc) who with some basic training, can use the drill anywhere functionalities to perform on the fly, ad-hoc, root cause analysis, relieving a massive amount of pressure on IT,



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saving time and money. The next step was to replace the weekly sales reporting previously produced in Business Objects which has also been successfully completed.

Cost and Sales Forecasting has also been implemented, replacing 100's of spreadsheets. Utilising the workflow functionality in BOARD has not only automated the process but has introduced an element of control not previously available to Harvey Nichols. “Even those users wedded to spreadsheets are happy to work with BOARD, thanks to its ease of use” says McDonald.

McDonald continues “We have now rolled out financial reporting and sales and stock reporting across the business, making Hyperion redundant and phasing out Business Objects. We have just completed work on cost and sales forecasting in BOARD, which replaces hundreds of manual spreadsheets, and our main project on BOARD next year is to create a WSSI. BOARD has given us a single application that has simplified and fully integrated our MIS reporting and planning. We are able to quickly produce ad-hoc reports, giving both head office and stores much greater visibility of our KPI's.”

### **Business Benefits**

Already, Harvey Nichols is reaping significant business benefit.

#### System Enhancements

Monday mornings, a critical time in any retail organisation used to see systems grinding to a halt, purely because of running reports. Thanks to BOARD this is no longer an issue.

#### Data Consistency and easier Ad-Hoc Reporting

The huge pressure put on the IT department by the business to provide ad-hoc reports/analysis and to answer a barrage of questions about the accuracy, consistency and usefulness of the data has virtually disappeared, freeing up time to concentrate on delivering further projects and enhancements.

#### Improved Performance

The biggest single ‘win’ is highlighted best in improved performance. Business Objects reports used to take anywhere between 30 – 60 minutes to run, however BOARD allows those same reports to be produced virtually instantaneously. Martin Schofield comments “Users are now able to have the data that they require at their fingertips, allowing them to concentrate on the analysis they should be doing, rather than sitting around waiting for the reports to be produced. The time/cost benefit to the business is significant and as we discover more ways of utilising



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**Martin Schofield,**  
Harvey Nichols

BOARD that can only grow.”

### Replacement of Business Objects, Hyperion, Arthur Planning

Martin Schofield continues “The new solution is easier to implement and easier to use. User requests can be actioned in hours, not days. Our reporting is now more accurate and, as we have only one licence to pay, it’s more cost-effective. With the BOARD BI framework in place, we can build in enhancements that will support our business expansion.”

### **Future Plans**

Harvey Nichols has several plans in the pipeline.

- Introduction of the WSSI (Weekly Sales, Stock Intake)
- More customer information to stores
- Push information to hand held devices
- Integration of further data sources

Alistair McDonald says “The more we use BOARD, the more uses we can see for it. We have achieved a lot in the first 12 months, but there is a lot more to come”

Martin Schofield concludes “We have made a great start with a product that we believe can do the job we want it to and both the processes and relationships with Retail Assist and BOARD have been extremely positive. We like to choose suppliers that we want to work with and have confidence in, not necessarily the ones that have the most technologically advanced solutions, and in this case we appear and hope to have achieved both”

### Implementation Partner

Retail Assist was BOARD’s partner of choice on this project. Their retail sector knowledge and competencies proved invaluable in providing some out of the box, retail-ready reports that were essential to Harvey Nichols.

The mix of support from both Retail Assist and BOARD has enabled Harvey Nichols to leverage the solution in the most effective way.