



Elephant Bar Restaurants

Rapid Information Access Sheds New Light on Restaurant Business

Business Challenge

Elephant Bar Restaurants has steadily grown into an extremely successful chain of 35 restaurants in seven different states across the U.S. with more than 4,500 employees. When the business first began, analysts were able to manage and analyze the organization's data manually using Microsoft Excel and Lotus 123. However, as the company has grown, so too has the amount of operational data it accumulates. As a result of Elephant Bar's rapid success, coupled with an aggressive future growth plan, the company developed a need for a more efficient and effective business intelligence (BI) strategy.

"When we had only 10 restaurants it was possible, albeit challenging, to analyze our data in Excel and Lotus," said Andy Mai, Vice President of Information Technology for Elephant Bar Restaurants. "Now that we have more than 35 restaurants across the country, it's become more difficult to understand how the company is performing. What's more, we're aiming for an aggressive growth rate in the next five years; therefore, BI is going to play

an essential role going forward to help us effectively manage our growth."

Elephant Bar Restaurants had outgrown its BI capabilities and technology, and with the aggressive growth plan it was imperative for the company to take the necessary steps to effectively analyze and manage the business; Elephant Bar needed BI technology that would provide insight into the performance of the entire organization.

Solution

ProClarity Insight—

Microsoft Integration

In its pursuit for better business intelligence, Elephant Bar "test drove" several competitors' solutions before finally selecting the ProClarity BI platform. According to Mai, other technologies proved to be too limited, and made it difficult to manage data. In the end, ProClarity's integration with Microsoft SQL Server Analysis Services, ease of use and deployment made it much easier to filter the company's information. Patented and patent-pending visualizations offered a more intuitive interface and superior analytic



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Andy Mai
Vice President of IT
Elephant Bar Restaurants

capabilities. “Because we already had our data resources identified, we were able to build informative and resourceful cubes within a short amount of time and the implementation really took off from there,” Mai attests.

“As a smaller organization we took business performance for granted,” Mr. Mai continues. “We’re now a more mature company, and as such have purchasing power that we didn’t previously have and a need to better understand and manage the different facets of our business. Before ProClarity, we never really understood how much vendors were charging us; our purchasers are now able to quickly analyze product price versus performance, allowing them to make much better buying decisions and more effectively negotiate with vendors.”

Utilizing Microsoft SQL Server 2000, Elephant Bar is able to pull data from various sources including Great Plains (financial information) and a restaurant industry back office software package called Hula Software (sales, inventory, purchasing, and labor information). The company currently has five power users who manage the majority of the organization’s daily, in-depth analysis and reporting requirements. Prior to the ProClarity implementation, the company never had a robust resource to dynamically analyze their data, and therefore had limited visibility into how the organization was performing. ProClarity gives Elephant Bar that insight.

ProClarity’s patented and patent-pending data visualizations have played an important role in the dissemination of

information; executive-level decision makers, from the CFO to the VP of Purchasing and the marketing department, rely on advanced visualizations to identify trends in sales, costs, promotional programs and overall company performance. This type of insight is extremely beneficial in the restaurant industry. The Performance Map, for example, allows users to compare the performance of different menu items, enabling the company to identify correlations between sales and contribution margins. This also allows R&D to understand how to refine menu items and recipes allowing the company to operate much more cost effectively. With ProClarity, data becomes information and everything about the business is much more visible.

Business Benefits

Business Performance—

Eliminating the Guess Work

Prior to the ProClarity implementation, Elephant Bar Restaurants simply did not have visibility into the performance of the business. “We are now able to view the company in a completely different light, which allows decision makers to more effectively manage the growth of the company,” concludes Mr. Mai. “In order to get this kind of business insight in the past, someone from accounting would have had to request specific information from the IT department, who would then have to spend days pulling data from various data sources. Finance would then have to put the data into the proper format. In the end, the company went from waiting for days for a report to having it in mere seconds.”

For more information

For more information on analytic solutions from ProClarity, visit www.proclarity.com or contact ProClarity by sending e-mail to sales@proclarity.com.

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