

Developing a Forecasting Modeling Tool for a Consumer Products Manufacturer

The client, a global \$46B confectionery company, was looking to improve forecasting processes and systems while also enabling more functionality to allow for adjustments, items management, and baseline change management.

The client had been previously using multiple systems and manual processes. Because of this, there were inconsistencies in data input, data accuracy, and reporting as well as a frustrating user experience. The current approach was no longer meeting the needs of their consistently growing business and demands on their sales and trade teams. Due to the complexity of their business and go-to-market strategies, the client decided to build its own internal solution to best meet the needs of the organization and its users.

The system was developed utilizing advanced forecasting algorithms and AI to predict future baseline sales volume. Direct customers were implemented first, followed by Indirect customers, distributors, and hybrid accounts. Clarkston supported the client by serving as the project manager for the implementation, bringing functional expertise to the forecasting solution and demand planning efforts, and serving as the data lead to ensure transition to the new customer hierarchy and associated master data items were cleansed and finalized for the implementation.

Consumer Products Case Study

PROJECT OVERVIEW

INDUSTRY:



Consumer Products

PRODUCTS AND SERVICES:



Confectionary Products

PRIMARY OBJECTIVES:

- Successfully execute a Concept and Initiation (C&I) phase for internally developed forecasting system
- Determine the business requirements for the new forecasting tool
- Support the development of the architecture of the forecasting solution to ensure it met business needs
- Successfully execute a Build phase for the new internal forecasting system
- Build the system to successfully meet the user requirements outlined in the C&I phase
- Decrease operating cost of owning and using a forecasting solution
- Improve business intelligence and data analytics within the forecasting processes to improve productivity
- Enable global scalability for the forecasting tool

RESOLUTION:

- Managed the holistic project from the business side in coordination with the client's project manager and functional lead
- Provided functional expertise for both forecasting and data and reporting workstreams
- Supported the development of the client's homegrown forecast modeling tool through providing subject matter expertise and strategic improvements throughout the build and test of the tool
- Helped write and coordinate testing for forecasting system
- Developed and delivered training to SMEs, admins, and end users
- Provide bridge scenarios between forecasting and TPM system
- Delivered a forecasting fundamentals training at national sales meeting in partnership with the client

KEY BENEFITS:

- Build, testing, and successful go-live of homegrown forecast modeling tool
- Baseline sales volume managed in one location, allowing for:
 - Easy and accessible historical and predicted baseline values
 - Ability for users to make volume adjustments to the statistical baseline with audit tracking capability for those changes
 - Items management, where users can activate and de-activate items
 - Change management, allowing users to accept or refuse adjustments
- Consumption baseline forecast introduced for key strategic accounts
- Real-time integration with TPM system
- Ownership and management of Authorized Distribution List (ADL)



KPIs

- All Direct customers planned in the tool
- Base driver best practices developed
- Near real-time integration of changes between forecasting and TPM tool
- The ability to forecast optimized accounts using consumption data

"Clarkston Consulting proved to be an exceptional partner during our recent IT and process improvement project. Their team brought not only deep business acumen—enabling seamless communication—but also valuable best practices drawn from their experience across multiple industries. This combination allowed us to proactively identify and avoid potential pitfalls, significantly increasing our project's success. I would gladly partner with Clarkston again on future initiatives."

-SENIOR MANAGER, CHANNEL
OPERATIONS

CONTACT US

