

Leading e-commerce site puts data at the center of success

A fast-growing online retailer had always placed operational data front and center of its expansion, but they were struggling to scale their manual data integration operation to keep up with their success, and were looking for a better way to harness their data to continue to build better business insights.

This leading e-commerce company built a data warehouse, with the help of CloverDX, that enabled them to rapidly access the value held in their data. The solution meant they could be flexible enough to adapt to changing business requirements, and use data insights to continually optimize every aspect of their business. The company confirmed their position as a true innovator in data-driven business when they were acquired in one of the largest ever ecommerce deals. Their data-driven rise to success shows how a young startup looking for rapid growth has been able to harness its data to achieve a competitive advantage.

Solving data challenges

Data architecture designed to deliver business insights

The online retailer had achieved rapid growth in just a few years since being founded. Having built the business as very much a technology-first enterprise, they were looking for a data solution to better help all areas of the organization, and one that could

scale with and support the company's expansion. The decision to build a data warehouse was made to provide rapid access to the value held within their operational data. By deploying a flexible data warehouse they had direct access to source systems via a replicated database. One of the key requirements from the IT team was to handle changes in the business more easily, and to be able to get quick answers to business questions from the data. While a traditional data warehouse is built to answer specific questions, the ability to access source data meant that the company could be much more flexible and responsive in its approach, and get the valuable insights they needed, fast.

Enabling innovation

New ways of collaborating and making decisions

The benefits of the data warehouse weren't only felt by the IT team. Once the data warehouse was up and running, it led to better interaction between the wider business and IT. The company attributes

a big part of their success to their tech-savvy team. Each department has people who can self-serve their data needs by taking core data and building their own business intelligence and analytics. This meant that every team creates its own business critical reporting.

As the company grew their vision, they realized the need to iterate beyond the existing interim, manual reporting platform. The existing manual reporting solution consisted of SQL, stored procedures and ad-hoc scripts, but the system had begun to encounter performance issues that needed to be addressed. Like most manual approaches, it was difficult to manage, troubleshoot, expand and scale out.

To gradually build the reporting database, the company opted for a Vertica-based data warehouse. With a drive to use modern technologies to get things done in a smart, efficient way, they looked for a data integration tool, knowing that the entire data warehouse solution depended on getting this right. After shortlisting a number of providers for the task of feeding the data warehouse with the right data in the right format, the business ultimately decided on CloverDX as the best offering in terms of price, performance, capability and the level of support offered by the company.

Rapid growth

Automation supports seamless data flows

The transition from SQL first started with the review of the target model. The company's IT Director said "We very quickly built a different kind of relationship with the people from CloverDX than with other similar vendors." CloverDX worked closely with the retailer during the trial period, and beyond into deployment, with CloverDX engineers fully supporting the in-house staff.

The transition itself was a smooth process. The IT Director commented "It was effortless to put the existing SQL into CloverDX components. And we can scale the business needs by shifting from a manual to an automated system." All of this has helped the company maintain its pace as it grows.

Departments looking for business insights were able to get them regularly and rapidly by using CloverDX's automation abilities. To answer questions such as 'how do I do this every hour' or 'how can I be notified if something fails?', the teams were able to configure the data integration automation to keep the data flowing seamlessly. The automation features meant the data warehouse had a constant stream of live daily updates, allowing each department to work with more data in terms of complexity.

United data

Hybrid data sources working together

Data from different sources – from the cloud, databases, applications and elsewhere – was brought into the data warehouse and can now be accessed without the need for extra development work. The warehouse contains all data generated by the business, including procurement, marketing and sales, inventory, logistics, product development and more, as well as comprehensive customer insight such as transactions, preferences and purchase information.

"Other solutions could fulfill our needs in some ways, but CloverDX seemed to have the total package, both in terms of the technology and the people behind it"

Because all data is processed through CloverDX, it helps the company to optimize business processes, analyze costs and develop growth strategies.

The company believes that having one source of information for the business helps give them a competitive edge. "CloverDX is the technology that allows us to deploy our working methodology to bring all our data into one place, so we can look at it and derive benefit from the insight we discover. There are clever people that work around this, but they wouldn't be able to achieve what they need to without the means that CloverDX gives us to bring everything together."

The data advantage

Data insights contribute to successful acquisition

The Business Intelligence team is charged with optimizing everything from sales analytics, logistics and delivery to shipping and control costs and vendor comparisons. As the organization moves forward, the roadmap includes product costs and margins, cohort analytics and lifetime value. In retail, having the right tools and insights that can substantially reduce costs is key. For this leading e-commerce company, they now have an environment where business unit leaders and their teams can really get into detailed analysis around costs, margins and pricing promotions. The competitive edge gained by the company's initial investment, and their forward thinking, has become clear in a short space of time. With lean IT at the center of their efforts, and with a multi-billion dollar acquisition to show as a result, the organization shows what success looks like for companies who play it smart in the fast-growing, data-driven e-commerce landscape.