



Solution Profile

Company: Fortune 500 Consumer Products Distributor

Performance Improvement Goals: Improve revenue and margin visibility to better manage to plan. Improve account-level tactical decision-making in a competitive market sensitive to pricing and retail promotions.

Prior Application: The company relied on a very large number of desktop spreadsheets to collect "latest estimates" from their field sales organization. The process of consolidating the large number of inputs was slow, frustrating efforts to model different scenario and forecasted outcomes. The company had a separate operational forecasting process.

Best Practices: The company determined that an accurate forecast was necessary at the key account level. This translates into forecasting approximately 550 active items for each of 3,000 key accounts. Responsibility for the forecasting process was placed in the field sales organization, which means 300 active users are accessing reports and contributing valuable account level insight.

Workflow: The company has evolved a workflow that is repeated each week. Field forecasts are updated at the beginning of the week, reviewed and analyzed early in the week and finalized for management reporting by mid-week.

eiVia Application: The eiVia application leveraged this company's existing data warehouse. The application was deployed initially within one region to refine workflow processes and gauge user acceptance. The application was then rolled out to the entire market area. Because the eiVia application continuously updates the "latest estimates" in the data warehouse, the application enhanced reporting capabilities provided by this company's existing Business Intelligence application. Most importantly, the analytic capabilities within the eiVia application rapidly evolved from an initial set of 18 measures to over 85 measures, including financial measures that are a function of sales volume. Revenue and margin visibility extends all the way down to the individual week, account and item. The application is the equivalent of a 150-million-row spreadsheet that is being updated by 300 users.

Results: The company acknowledges that field sales forecasting accuracy has improved to a level where it is key to both operational forecasting and the annual operating plan process.