CASE STUDY

EMPIRE DISTRIBUTORS

JOURNEY TO THE CLOUD: OPTIMIZING DATA INTEGRATION AND ENSURING ANALYTICS AVAILABILITY

KEY TAKEAWAYS:

❐ Dimensional Insight cloud service ensures Empire Distributors has uninterrupted access to their data

❐ Dimensional Insight allows for data integration across all locations in four states

❐ Users across the company can access data at any time from any location

BACKGROUND

Empire Distributors, founded in 1940, is a beverage distributor (spirits, wine, beer, and non-alcoholic) headquartered in Atlanta, Georgia. The company has nine warehouses and 14 sales offices spread out among four states: North Carolina, Tennessee, and Colorado, in addition to Georgia.

Empire Distributors has been a Dimensional Insight customer since 2003 and has about 750 employees using Dimensional Insight products.

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QUICK FACTS

EMPIRE DISTRIBUTORS

JOURNEY TO THE CLOUD: OPTIMIZING DATA INTEGRATION AND ENSURING ANALYTICS AVAILABILITY

ORGANIZATION:
EMPIRE DISTRIBUTORS

INDUSTRY:
BEVERAGE DISTRIBUTION

LOCATION:
HEADQUARTERED IN ATLANTA, GA

EMPLOYEES:
750

CUSTOMER SINCE:
2003

WEBSITE:
EMPIREDIST.COM

SOLUTION:
DIVER PLATFORM

> **"** HOW CAN WE GET ALL THIS DATA REPRESENTED IN ONE SPOT? HOW CAN I SEE HOW THE ENTIRE COMPANY IS DOING? **"**
>
> **JEFF WILLIAMS,** SAP SYSTEMS DIRECTOR, EMPIRE DISTRIBUTORS

THE CHALLENGE

Prior to 2017, Empire Distributors was using six ERP systems across its different locations, all of which ran with different data structures and different processes. In addition, the company had local installations of Dimensional Insight's Diver Platform, which each had their own look and feel and ways of displaying data.

Further, many of the systems were running in a local data center that was attached to the organization's Atlanta warehouse. If that data center went down or lost connectivity, every office depending on that data center was affected. In addition to availability concerns, the company also wanted a better way to see its performance from top to bottom.

"The question from executives was always, 'How can we get all this data represented in one spot? How can I see how the entire company is doing?'" says Jeff Williams, Director of SAP Systems for Empire Distributors. "It's very difficult to answer that question when you have one SKU in one state and it's totally different in another. We had no continuity in our data structures and in how we defined our data."

THE GOAL

Empire Distributors wanted:

- ❐ Access to all of its data in one place
- ❐ Integrated data allowing executives to see how the entire company is performing
- ❐ Continuity in its data structure

THE RESULTS

In December 2015, a storm knocked out the power in Atlanta, and the generator at Empire Distributors' headquarters did not come on. That shut down all activity that was running out of the processors at the warehouse in Atlanta – which included data from Georgia, part of Tennessee, and North Carolina.

"I call that 'The Big Bang,' because it's kind of a genesis story for what kicked us into motion," says Williams. "It showed us the great risk we were running with that set-up."

Over the next six years, Empire began to roll out SAP implementations to each of its locations, and while it did so, it switched to a single instance of Diver Platform to merge all of its data, normalize it, and standardize the reporting process.

As the company rolled out a new version of Diver Platform, it also decided to implement Diver in the cloud rather than on-premise as it had been doing. This was a strategic decision that would help centralize the company's data and safeguard it from adverse events by ensuring access and availability.

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EMPIRE DISTRIBUTORS

As part of the process, Empire requested feedback from sales teams in different states and incorporated their preferences into the new solution. This meant that the new cloud version of Diver Platform was more robust and more than doubled the number elements that users could dive on. Williams says getting user buy-in was important to the process, and by providing a better, more user-focused solution, the Empire team was invested in moving to and using the new version of Diver.

All nine facilities and 14 sales offices now feed into a single Dimensional Insight-hosted cloud, so Empire does not have to rely on or maintain on-premise servers. Everyone in the organization is now looking at a single version of the data, and users across the four states can look at the data from anywhere and on any type of device.

Empire uses a number of Dimensional Insight's applications, among them ProDiver. Before the cloud migration, if deliveries were running late and Diver wasn't updated, it was difficult to get the necessary information out to sales teams. With the cloud, the data is automatically updated to be viewed anywhere, any time.

"It's been a meaningful journey for us," says Williams. "It's been strategic, and it's really built us to a place where we can have a lot of success going forward."

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