

Smashbox Cosmetics finds beauty in knowledge

Sharing information across the organization enables an agile sales force

Overview

In 1991, two very unique entrepreneurs and the great-grandsons of makeup legend Max Factor combined their talent and heritage to create Smashbox Photo Studios. With a slew of starlets passing through the studios daily, Dean and Davis Factor were frequently asked to create a makeup line to meet the perfecting needs of a photo shoot. Combining their skills — Dean, a business guru with an MBA, and Davis, a leading celebrity and fashion photographer — they launched Smashbox Cosmetics.

The Smashbox Cosmetics website states, “Knowledge truly is a beautiful thing, and ours is just too good to keep to ourselves...we’re inspired daily to create innovative beauty products for women everywhere.” Applying that same vision inside the organization, the Smashbox Cosmetics team is transforming data into knowledge and sharing it to promote innovation and respond with agility to consumer preferences. Implementing ClickBase as their business intelligence solution has provided the national field sales team with easy access to critical sales information allowing them to collaborate with merchants and respond quickly to changing customer preferences.

“Smashbox Cosmetics needed one voice across the organization and ClickBase is providing that. Now that we can access and evaluate our data, our teams and customers are empowered to make better decisions.”

Steve Gomez, Smashbox Cosmetics IT and HR Director

The Situation

In 2007, the Smashbox Cosmetics Executive team charged HR and IT Director Steve Gomez with developing a three-year IT strategy plan to build the framework that would support the vision of one voice to the customer from across the organization. Partnering with trusted technology advisor Faye, Pollack and Associates, the Smashbox Cosmetics project team interviewed people from the accounting group, operations and sales to identify internal challenges. “Overwhelmingly the common concern was that reporting was inconsistent, outdated and inflexible,” Steve said. “Critical business decisions were being made without reliable, timely information.”

Sold in premium retail outlets, including Sephora, Ulta, Macy’s, and Nordstrom, Smashbox Cosmetics has seen consistent growth since its inception, currently nearing \$100 million in annual revenue. As an up and coming organization in a competitive landscape, it was clear to the project team that to effectively respond to the three drivers of profitability — product innovation, promotion and efficiency — Smashbox Cosmetics needed to improve access to information across the organization.



Business situation

Need for user friendly, centralized business intelligence to leverage historic and current data from disparate applications and meet unique reporting needs of each department from finance through sales through operations.

Solution applications

- ClickBase™ business intelligence
- Sage™ MAS™ 200 ERP
- Microsoft™ SQL™ Server 2005

Benefits

- Eliminated manual sales data analysis and reporting.
- Increased available time for account management by 15%.
- Increased account coverage more than 100%.
- Consolidated view of disparate application data for complete information.
- Quick implementation provided immediate return on investment.
- Single business intelligence solution meets each department’s unique needs.



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“Previously, we only did side by side reports for 100 department stores and 60 gondola doors. Now each gondola Account Executive will be able to run reports for every one of his or her 100 doors. We are able to analyze numbers for 500+ more doors that we did not have the time to do before.”

Jenna Daunais, Smashbox Cosmetics Retail Administration Manager

Sage MAS 200 provides the accounting backbone for Smashbox Cosmetics, supporting the organization's financial and operations requirements. A key challenge for the project was the accuracy and timeliness of merchant sales data delivered through EDI [Electronic Data Interchange] and manual data entry. Critical to sales and marketing success is the ability to get accurate and timely reports on weekly sales by store, product and promotion. Sales teams use this information to manage territories while marketing analyzes launch planning and promotional effectiveness.

The Solution

As Faye, Pollack and Associates researched the best options for a flexible, cost effective business intelligence solution, it became clear that ClickBase had the functionality needed with a support team that took the time to understand the issues. ClickBase Regional Business Consultant, Kevin Dunn, demonstrated the ease of use and powerful access to information for Smashbox Cosmetics CFO, Patricia Boucher. With full confidence in the fit of the solution, Joe Hess, ClickBase VP of Technology, implemented a thirty day trial with no obligation to purchase.

Within days of the trial set up, accounting and finance reports with drill down capabilities replaced the static legacy reports. The flexibility and powerful analytic capabilities of ClickBase proved to be just the tool that the accounting department needed. Providing easy access to the data without impacting operations in the MAS 200 solution, Microsoft SQL Server 2005 houses the MAS 200 and EDI data that ClickBase taps. Faye, Pollack and Associates provided valuable input based on their experience with Smashbox Cosmetics and Sage that accelerated the implementation.

Once the accounting team had the information that they needed up and running, Steve Gomez stepped in to lead the roll out of ClickBase to the rest of the organization. A Smashbox Cosmetics national sales meeting was scheduled two months out and Steve wanted to be ready to show the sales team how ClickBase was going to transform their jobs.

Leveraging EDI data to create powerful sales tools

To support retail industry reporting standards, consistent application of the “4-4-5 calendar” is required to provide accurate comparison of period to period sales results. Inconsistencies in the accounting and EDI calendar treatment were causing data errors that skewed report results. Joe Hess and Stig Haukland, Chief Technology Officer for ClickBase, worked quickly to identify and solve the issues. According to Steve Gomez, “The ClickBase team stepped up to the challenge, helped us to resolve the period issues and got the project back on track in record time. They were great to work with, turning challenge into triumph.”

ClickBase

ClickBase was established in 1997 with a specific mission to create a unique management decision tool that helps businesses to simplify and manage their numerous and sometimes widely varying information. The result is the innovative ClickBase IMAP solution, which today is used by some of the most successful companies throughout the world.

Companies use ClickBase to better manage their operations, extend the life of databases, keep track of business information, and provide their customers with better service... in short, to make better informed decisions.

ClickBase has offices in the United States and Europe serving thousands of users worldwide.



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“The only limitation of business intelligence for most organizations is the vision to see the possibilities. With ClickBase, managers begin to see how they can gain competitive advantage by looking at data more comprehensively than with Excel alone. When that vision starts, the possibilities are endless.”

David Faye, CEO, Faye, Pollack and Associates

EDI sales data provides detailed information on product and store information that, if accessible, could be used to spot and respond to sales trends and store performance. Steve's focus on the end user was again a driver to success. The ClickBase team configured reports to meet the specific requirements of the sales team — and just as importantly — in formats that account executives could easily use. “The ClickBase team was very tuned into our nomenclature, which is critical to user adoption,” Steve noted. Providing the information to build competitive advantage for Smashbox Cosmetics sales through retail outlets included:

- Executive Summaries with weekly, monthly and yearly comparisons to past performance and budgets,
- Detailed regional results for district managers with store to store, year over year, and plan comparisons,
- Store and product level analyses for account executives to monitor weekly results, promotion effects and product launch success.

When the time for the sales meeting came, the project team was ready and Kevin was scheduled for an onsite training session. He showed the Account Executives and District Managers how to use ClickBase to create reports instantly that previously had taken days or weeks to prepare. The response was phenomenal.

Increasing productive time 15%

Before ClickBase, account executives spent more than two weeks twice each year painfully extracting and validating limited data to create store reports. Only 30% of the stores and gondolas were analyzed due to the time intensive analysis and reporting process. With ClickBase, account executives have freed up more than a month of their time each year to work proactively with their stores to plan and take action based on timely and complete information. Access to the larger pool of store and gondola data allows for more accurate consumer preference and trend analysis.

The analysis capabilities enabled by ClickBase have transformed merchant relationships and provided access to real-time consumer preference analysis. With EDI sales data fully unleashed, Smashbox Cosmetics has the capacity to compete effectively with the industry's larger players with a more agile and informed sales force.

The Future

Adoption across the organization has accelerated with international sales, marketing, operations, and web sales teams establishing user requirements and time lines. As a “young thinking” company that leverages technology to gain competitive advantage, employees are connected with Blackberries and laptops. ClickBase enables the sales team and all remote workers to have instant access to the information that they need — no matter where they are. The beauty of the Smashbox Cosmetics success story is just beginning to come to light.

Smashbox Cosmetics

www.smashbox.com

Culver City, CA

Smashbox Cosmetics, Inc. is a privately held prestige cosmetics company creating trend setting beauty products for lips, eyes, cheeks, face, and body; multi-use products; tool-boxes; kits; and a variety of cosmetics collections.

Faye, Pollack and Associates

www.fpainc.com

Encino, CA

Faye, Pollack & Associates, Inc., has provided outsourced IT services to growing businesses since 1991, providing a variety of services, including technology consulting and management; Sage MAS 90/200 accounting software implementation, support, and training; custom programming; website design and development; and related IT services. With a special emphasis over the years on cosmetics distributors and manufacturers, FPA has been able to provide additional value to these companies with its deep knowledge and experience of the unique challenges faced by those in the cosmetics industry.



Making Business Intelligence Easy

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