Infoworks

THE AUTONOMOUS DATA ENGINE

Case Study:
Consumer Packaged Goods Manufacturer

Automated Data Workflow for Business Intelligence

The Situation
A critical analytics report takes to long to build or modify in a big data production environment

Walmart is not only the number one retailer in the world, it is the number one company on the global Fortune 500 with $466 Billion in worldwide revenue. To reach and maintain this level of dominance, Walmart often partners with its suppliers to help them optimize the product placement and sales for any given product category. These suppliers are referred to as Category Leaders and are given not only their own sales data from Walmart, but the sales data of all of their competitors. In exchange for this information, Walmart expects Category Leaders, who know their category better than Walmart, to optimize total sales for the all products in that category, not just their own.

X Corporation (company name withheld) is a Fortune 500 consumer packaged goods manufacturer and is a Category Leader in multiple categories. As a Category Leader, they were expected to deliver what Walmart refers to as the "Monday Morning Report," a weekly report with roll-up information about the weekly sales for their category.

Unfortunately for X-Corporation, delivering the category report had become problematic and the category report was often delivered after the due date. The amount of data was continually growing, the analytical requirements were continually changing and as a result, X-Corporation was constantly challenged with keeping up with the demands of delivering on the responsibility of being a Category Leader

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Challenge
Big data expertise is both expensive and difficult to find

X-Corporation had several challenges they needed to overcome to satisfy Walmart. Like so many companies these days, demands on data analytics have grown, but IT budgets have not grown at the same pace. Not only was IT being asked to meet the evolving demands of X-Corporation's Walmart sales team, they also faced similar demands from many other retailers. In addition, the existing business intelligence infrastructure had been built on what at the time, had been a considered state of the art data warehouse appliance. But like so many of these systems, the growth of data and the expected flexibility could not keep up with the rate of new uses cases that need to be deployed.

As a result, X-Corporation made a decision to move to a big data cloud environment in an expectation that it would help them deal with their need for greater agility. The belief was that new technologies, like Hadoop and Spark combined with the convenience of cloud based service providers would provide a more agile and scalable infrastructure.

However, X-Corporation didn't have in-house big data knowledge, and acquiring the necessary skill set was a challenge. People who had the skills were both difficult to find and extremely expensive to hire. In fact, the few big data experts who were available only had experience standing up big data environments for performing analytical discovery and experimentation. However, they didn't have a background in preparing an enterprise class production environment for use in ongoing operations. Knowledge of making big data work for a data scientist doing one-off analytics was one thing. Knowledge of making big data work with tens, hundreds and eventually thousands of data pipelines was another problem entirely.

45x Improvement

Fortune 500 Consumer Packaged Goods Manufacturer:

4 day implementation with Infoworks
6 month implementation without

- Deployed in only 4 days

- Ingested 20 tables from 4 sources

- Built 40+ data transformations

- 13 Interactive Dashboards

The Solution
Automation of the big data development and production environments

X-Corporation recognized the ultimate answer to their issues would be to eliminate the complexity of deployment and operation of a big data environment and the key to eliminating this complexity would be through automation.

X-Corporation worked with Infoworks to deploy an end-to-end solution that automated their big data workflows for business intelligence & analytics. The solution was installed in a matter of hours and after 4 days of implementation effort, the full Monday Morning Report was up and running. The complete solution included ingesting 20 tables from 4 data sources, designing and deploying the 40 + data transformations in a graphical development tool, and configuring and automatically generating optimized data cubes that delivered sub-second performance for 13 interactive dashboards. The full configuration included automatically tracking and capturing changing data from the sources as well as a complete operational dashboard that monitored the status of the production environment automatically orchestrating the production data flows and ensuring system uptime by starting, stopping and restarting system process… all automatically.

The initial deployment was implemented on an Azure cloud environment. After a few weeks, X-Corporation made a strategic decision to move from Azure to Google Cloud. Because they had based their implementation on Infoworks, the migration was completed in one day. The original expectation without Infoworks was a 6-month effort and due to the change in the cloud services platform, that would have added another 6 months to the project. In the end, the entire effort took only 5 days. In addition, because Infoworks requires no coding, the work was completed by a business analyst, freeing them from future dependency on scarce IT resources.
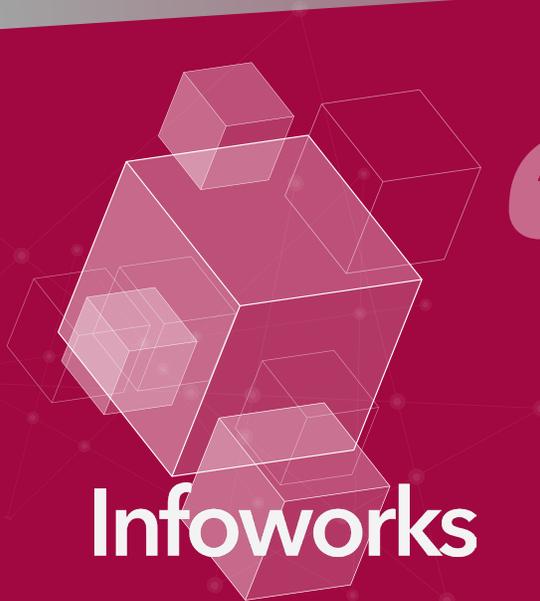
The Result
A 45x Improvement

X-Corporation achieved a 45x improvement in time to deployment.   The solution provides greater flexibility and agility, making it easier to respond to changing inputs and requirements from their business partner. In addition, they now have the ability to deliver the same kind of agility and flexibility to all of their other retail partners without having to hire an army of technical experts.

"Infoworks reduced our time to introduce new end-to-end analytics models from 6 months to a couple of weeks, without IT involvement. This allows our analytics teams to quickly meet fast-changing business requirements and directly enables growth."

Director of Omni Chanel Analytics and Innovation

Infoworks

What Our Customers are Saying:

"With Infoworks we were able to complete our project plan for the entire year, in a few days!"
- Lead Enterprise Architect, Fortune 10 Retailer

"Infoworks reduces our time to introduce new end-to-end analytics models from 6 months to a week, without IT involvement. This allows our analytics teams to quickly meet fast-changing business requirements and directly enables growth"
- Director of Analytics, Leading CPG company

"With Infoworks we can quickly execute on our large backlog of data projects. If we were to custom build our ideal data platform it would be like Infoworks"
- Data Architect at a Fortune 100 technology company

"Prior to Infoworks we had long turn-arounds for data requests to IT. Now we have self-service reporting end-to-end"

- Business Analyst

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