

The background image shows several painters in white shirts working on a wall. One painter in the foreground is using a red-handled tool to work on a hole in the wall. The wall is partially painted in shades of orange and red. The scene is outdoors, with a ladder and other construction elements visible in the background.

Asian Paints: Enabling Real-Time Analytics Across Growing Data Volumes

Executive overview

Company

Vision

Why SAP

Solution

Benefits

Company

Asian Paints Limited

Industry

Chemicals

Products and Services

Paints and coatings – interior and exterior wall finishes, wood finishes, enamels, home decor, and wallpaper

Web Site

www.asianpaints.com

SAP® Solutions

SAP® BusinessObjects™ business intelligence solutions
SAP Business Suite applications
SAP Business Warehouse application
SAP IQ database software
SAP HANA® platform
SAP Mobile Platform



For the last five years, Asian Paints Limited has experienced rapid growth, with its dealer base soaring past 35,000. This growth led to massive data volumes in multiple data cubes, creating significant data access, visibility, and usability issues. After migrating data to the SAP HANA® platform, the company leveraged SAP® IQ software's near-line storage functionality to **affordably store data, enable real-time analytics, and streamline data-intensive tasks.**

Executive overview

Company

Vision

Why SAP

Solution

Benefits

Paint Supplier to a Continent

Founded in 1942, Asian Paints is now India's largest, and Asia's third-largest, manufacturer and supplier of decorative and industrial coatings. The firm operates 23 paint manufacturing plants in 17 countries, supplying paint and ancillary products to consumer and commercial markets. A team of 1,200 sales representatives connects with a network of more than 35,000 dealers in India – creating unique business challenges as the company copes with seasonal demands and services dealers from more than 100 company warehouses storing 3,000 stock-keeping units (SKUs).

As Asian Paints grows, it plans to further differentiate itself by promising dealers a four-hour cycle from order placement to fulfillment. The only way to achieve this goal is through real-time analytics capable of informing campaigns, tracking product lift and costs, and ensuring service-level agreements are met.

35,000
dealers in India



Executive overview

Company

Vision

Why SAP

Solution

Benefits

Anticipating and meeting customer demand with business intelligence

An extended period of double-digit annual sales growth has dramatically increased the complexity of Asian Paints' business. The company serves a highly diverse market, with customer needs changing seasonally across several continents.

In the midst of this transformation, Asian Paints saw the need for improved communication among salespeople and managers in order to optimize outcomes. To strengthen its decision-making processes across the company – and determine which data was critical to each business role – Asian Paints undertook an enterprise-wide business intelligence (BI) initiative to empower employees with access to relevant information and actionable insights.

As a result, Asian Paints was able to create a hand-book outlining which key performance indicators were most important to each business role, helping the company easily transfer decision-making best practices across geographies.

For example, to prevent stock-outs, the company found it was essential to provide field sales representatives and supply chain executives with both the exact product range available at each retail counter and each counter's sales by SKU. Order fill rates are crucial in a low-involvement category like paints – as nonavailability of the right SKU at the right retail counter would lead to competitor products getting sold by the dealer.

The BI initiative gave company leadership a clearer view of each product line at each retail location and convinced the company's CIO of the quantitative benefits of enabling real-time analytics for all aspects of the business.



Executive overview

Company

Vision

Why SAP

Solution

Benefits

Timely access to current and historical data

Facing significant data processing challenges, Asian Paints turned to a familiar partner: SAP. “Our company is always looking for solutions that can extend our competitive advantage,” explains Harish Lade, general manager of systems at Asian Paints. “In the past, that has often meant implementing new solutions from SAP and leveraging business intelligence in new ways.”

At the time of its BI initiative, Asian Paints was managing data across its far-reaching enterprise with disparate processes for sales, supply chain, marketing, and other departments using the SAP® Business Warehouse (SAP BW) application along with non-SAP solutions.

But as Asian Paints and its data grew, complex computational performance requirements demanded a more powerful database platform.

At about the same time, SAP announced its in-memory, high-performance database, the SAP HANA® platform. Asian Paints adopted this new technology, allowing it to adopt a radically different approach to data analytics.

“There were many areas in which we were not getting the performance we needed,” recalls Lade. “For example, across our vast distribution channel, different employees want to look at data on different levels – some all the way down to the SKU level. But in our classical database system, queries were taking too long and sometimes timing out. That’s why we turned, once again, to SAP and began to consider SAP HANA.”



Executive overview

Company

Vision

Why SAP

Solution

Benefits

Real-time access to all data

Asian Paints began using the SAP HANA platform as a sidecar implementation to its main SAP BW installation and quickly saw impressive performance gains. The solution provided real-time sales data, giving the company valuable insights into sales patterns during its heavy month-end period. In addition, the company achieved a compression ratio of almost 6 to 1, reducing the data footprint of one of its largest cubes from 180 GB in the legacy database system to 30 GB in the SAP HANA platform. Plus data extraction performance improved more than 90% across acquisition, transformation, loading, and reporting.

Asian Paints needed a cost-effective way to bring these same benefits to all enterprise data users. This is when it began investigating SAP IQ software as a near-line storage (NLS) solution. When combined with the SAP HANA platform, this high-performance columnar database software provides real-time access to all enterprise data.

SAP IQ connects to an NLS feature in SAP BW to unify in-memory and disk-based column stores. This means Asian Paints can combine the real-time comprehensive analytics of the SAP HANA platform with historical data that it stores cost-effectively in NLS through SAP IQ.

Now that Asian Paints can connect historical data while running three years of “hot” data on SAP HANA, its managers have a streamlined analysis experience from both a current and a historical perspective.



90%

improvement in data extraction performance



Executive overview

Company

Vision

Why SAP

Solution

Benefits

Compiling data in seconds, instead of days

After going live using the NLS capabilities of SAP IQ, Asian Paints saw improvements that spanned its entire business.

The company has also been able to promote self-service analysis for managerial teams – zeroing in on markets and dealers that are experiencing service issues in the moment. Through real-time, highly granular analysis, sales representatives are able to correlate the performance of every dealer via targeted schemes and promotions, and then offer cross-sell and up-sell advice.

Previously, aging inventory reports had to be run for each material category by location, which took days to complete. Aging inventory for more than 5,000 items across 200 locations can now be tracked in one pass – a huge advantage where material costs are 60% of product value. This enables more agile decision making for slow moving SKUs. Inventory analysis throughout the supply chain now shows a holistic picture – from start to finish.

The auditing process has also benefited. Substantial time used to be spent correlating information from multiple data cubes and manually filtering out exceptions. Today, with the power of the SAP HANA platform, only exceptions are presented to auditors.

“Considering the real-time access to current and historical data and the overall improvements in processing speed, the implementation of SAP HANA and SAP IQ is looking like another win for Asian Paints.”

Harish Lade, General Manager – Systems, Asian Paints Limited



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