



Yakult's New Product Sales in the Netherlands Increase 15 to 20% with Spotfire

Competitive advantage, better retailer relations, and greater productivity

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— Egbert Jan Vierkant,
Market Analyst, Yakult

CHALLENGE

As Yakult Market Analyst Egbert Jan Vierkant explains, in the first several years in Europe, Yakult sales grew steadily, but suddenly, after competitors began to enter the market, something surprising happened. "We had an extraordinary sales increase, especially in the Netherlands."

The company wanted to know why, but tools like Excel were not suitable. "We were suffering from time-consuming analysis, mistakes, and spreadsheets. We had multiple data sources that we could not bring together. We were spending time on gathering and collecting information instead of on thinking about the business."

SOLUTION

Yakult chose TIBCO Spotfire® for many reasons. "If you want to distinguish sales drivers from non-drivers in a very dynamic environment in which you're doing a lot of things simultaneously, you must be able to collect all the information and look at it from all perspectives," says Mr. Vierkant. "You have to zoom in by region, look at trends at all the retailers. Spotfire makes these perspectives feasible. You can quickly find what is working and what is not."

Yakult was able to identify the elements in its marketing mix that drove the sudden category growth. Applying this knowledge to future marketing budget decisions fueled additional growth.

"When I met Spotfire, it was like coming home," says Vierkant. "How was it possible that this tool hadn't been invented earlier because it's so simple and yet brilliant? If we were still struggling with spreadsheets, we would be an average company, and retailers would have less interest in us. Today we are able to quickly reveal newsworthy insights about our market and immediately make them visual for retailers."

DETAIL

15 TO 20%

Sales increase due to Spotfire

YAKULT HONSHA CO., LTD

Yakult is the world's leading probiotic beverage, created in Japan and produced by Yakult Honsha, the world's pioneer in probiotics. The company's portfolio includes a range of consumer, cosmetic, and pharmaceutical products.

FAST FACTS

Founded: 1935
Founder: Dr. Minoru Shirota
Headquarters: Tokyo
Global distribution: 33 countries and regions
Consumption: 30 million bottles/day
2014 Net sales: ¥350,322M
Employees: 3,000

BENEFITS

IMPROVED RETAILER RELATIONS AND SALES

"If we visit a retailer and have done our homework, which we can do very quickly in Spotfire, we have a lot of information for them. Our visits have become more interesting because we bring news that before would probably not have been observed.

"At one time, there was a lot of pressure from retailers who said that if we wanted to grow, we must use product discounts, which are very costly for us," says Vierkant. "With Spotfire, it was very easy to convince them that a price cut would not help increase Yakult sales, especially not in the long run. The effect could even be negative. Thanks to Spotfire, price cuts are now a non-issue. Today, we talk to them about long-term strategies instead of short term peaks, and much more interesting things."

When Yakult introduced new products in the Netherlands, Spotfire helped increase sales. "Sales rose 15 to 20%. Spotfire absolutely accelerated new product distribution because seeing is believing. If you have a great graph, or 10 great graphs, it's easier to convince retailers of the advantages."

COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE

Yakult now knows almost everything about its markets. "That is a competitive advantage," says Vierkant. "Because we have very few products, we need to understand our market much better than our competitors, and we succeeded. We have a tool that digs deeper and does it faster. Speed is the most important thing, and secondly, great visualizations help communication. When I talk to other firms, even the big ones, I think we are much more advanced than they are in many aspects."

GREATER PRODUCTIVITY AND EASE OF USE

Data integration is also a key benefit. "Integrating data isn't that complex with Spotfire; instead, it's easy," says Vierkant. "If you want to really find out what drives your sales and what does not, integrating multiple data sources—such as internal marketing and sales data, as well as point-of-sale and media data from companies such as Nielsen, IRI, and GfK—is a must-have. There are so many potential factors that if you don't use all the data, you'll never find the right answer.

"Previously, when I worked with Excel and other tools, maybe half of my time was spent collecting data, putting sources together, checking for mistakes. Today, it's only five minutes every four weeks. So, I have a lot more time to think about the business, which is what I was hired for.

"To be honest, I hardly ever make use of TIBCO Support because I never encounter problems. The product is so well designed and intuitively clear. This great product is the best support."

FUTURE

Managing Director in The Netherlands and Germany, Piet Dekkers, says, "The amount of data we face will explode in the near future. Spotfire turns data into stories that convince me, my colleagues, and our customers."



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