CUSTOMER STORY

Better decisions based on trusted data

Qlik Cloud enables BESIX Group to harmonize hundreds of systems with improved data capture

LEAD WITH DATA™   Qlik

BESIX

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Jon Harford, Business Intelligence Manager, BESIX Group

Mountains of unusable data

What do Dubai's Burj Khalifa, the European Parliament in Brussels, Giza's Grand Egyptian Museum and Ferrari World in Abu Dhabi have in common? The answer is that they are all projects in the impressive global portfolio of Belgian construction company, BESIX Group.

Formed in 1909, this leading contractor operates in 25 countries across five continents and is also active in the property development and concessions markets. Its projects include skyscrapers, marine infrastructure, waste recycling and water treatment plants, real estate projects, football stadia and hydroelectric dams.

These huge projects generate a mountain of valuable data but BESIX was limited in its ability to convert that into meaningful business intelligence (BI). Construction is traditionally a less digitized domain and at BESIX, BI was fragmented. Different tools were used by staff to create their own local BI solutions and a fresh BI exercise was often implemented for each new project. Staff spent more time collecting and consolidating data into Excel reports than analyzing the data.

Independent silos with varied coding

"Complex project sites and our many IT systems were creating data but all these systems were working independently in silos and they were unable to be consolidated easily," says BESIX's Business Intelligence Manager, Jon Harford. "There was no way to connect and structure the data to be able to use it in the right way. We needed to bring data from many different systems and consolidate it across projects."

Solution Overview

Customer Name
BESIX Group

Industry
Construction

Geography
Global

Business Value Driver
Excel in creating sustainable solutions for a better world

Challenges
- Harmonize data from hundreds of systems and improve data capture
- Provide decision makers with data they can validate and trust
- Introduce automated processes to save time and money

Solution
Implemented Qlik Cloud and a master data management system based on resources, projects, vendors, clients and legal entities.

Results
- Real-time trusted data supports better decision-making across the group
- Time-consuming manual processes and fragmentation have been eliminated
- BESIX is now better placed to maintain its global position in a demanding sector

Automation and improved data capture

To achieve harmonization, BESIX decided to replace manual data capture through automation and, in doing so, convert data reporters into data analysts. BESIX created a Microsoft Azure data warehouse and implemented a master data management system based on resources, projects, vendors, clients and legal entities.

However, it also needed a visual representation tool that would enable it to build dashboards, show the value of the data it had and also show any gaps in the data. Working with Qlik partner, Keyrus, it evaluated several different solutions and decided that Qlik Cloud was best for both ease of management, useability and cost.

"One critical reason why we selected Qlik Sense Enterprise SaaS was that through its associative engine, it can show what you have but also highlight what you don't have," says Jon Harford. "It costs less than other solutions and the SaaS version fits with our cloud strategy."

With the focus on group projects, BESIX has built many tools and front ends to improve data capture, using harmonization and automation of data processes and data visualization to achieve quicker results. In 2020, BESIX had 50 Qlik users and that has now grown to 285 with 20 Qlik apps. Qlik champions build their own dashboards then train their teams and a Qlik community is planned to share ideas.

Greater efficiency through automation

BESIX can now collect reliable data and use historical analysis to guide and evaluate future projects.

Safety is important in construction and the company's quality, health, safety and environment (QHSE) department is using Qlik dashboards and NPrinting reports to look more closely at site safety, redefining KPIs and investigating how they can be improved.

The QHSE department uses two Qlik apps. One supports reporting and monitors incidents – the type, the variety, how they happened and the causes. This enables the company to focus on where incidents are occurring and what needs to be done to tackle them so that they can be minimized in the future.

The other app supports safety walkabouts which, says BESIX QHSE Manager, Pimmie Aendenboom, are vital to reducing incidents.

"Using the app, we can get information on who does these walkabouts, how many are done and what type of observations are recorded," she says. "We can see what rules are breached most on a project level, on a country level or business unit level and even on corporate level.

"We can see where the problems are. We can see how proactive they are in trying to mitigate what's happening with these risks. It's really a treasure trove of information that is now accessible."

Automation has also brought measurable improvements. An engineering report that used to take one person nine days a month to build is now automated and instantly available. That is just one of 85 different Qlik projects that the company has started.

Forward planning has also been improved and project updates that were previously available for clients on a quarterly basis are now available daily, online. This improves both transparency and client trust.

Confidence in trusted data

Having real-time data to support Active Intelligence decision-making is particularly important at A-Stay, the flagship hotel in Antwerp owned by the BESIX hospitality brand, BESIX STAY.

Qlik data analysis is used to navigate sensitive hotel margins and streamline the day-to-day running of the hotel. It answers questions such as how many beds are needed, how many staff are required and how much food needs to be bought. This creates a good foundation for the development of future hotels.

"This is about having reliable data," adds Jon Harford. "Now we have harmonization and better data collection, the data quality has massively improved. For example, we now know how many unique vendors and unique customers we have. That sounds crazy but we didn't know that before. We had no idea."

One of many future plans is to create new visualizations incorporating more geographical information and possibly 3D modelling. A new QHSE solution using embedded analytics is being implemented using all the latest Qlik visualizations available on the platform. Already there has been very positive feedback from users who like Qlik's ease-of-use and flexibility.

"Before, people took more time to come to meaningful conclusions," concludes Jon Harford. "Now, everyone is looking at data in exactly the same way and they can make decisions that they were too cautious to take before because they could not trust the data. With Qlik, they can validate data, use it and trust it."

The keys to success

85 different Qlik
projects underway

285 Qlik users and
20 Qlik apps

"This is about having reliable data. For example, we now know many unique vendors and unique customers we are working with. It sounds crazy but we didn't know that before. Qlik has made the world of difference."

Jon Harford, Business Intelligence Manager, BESIX Group

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About Qlik

Qlik's vision is a data-literate world, where everyone can use data and analytics to improve decision-making and solve their most challenging problems. Our cloud-based Qlik Active Intelligence Platform delivers end-to-end, real-time data integration and analytics cloud solutions to close the gaps between data, insights and action. By transforming data into Active Intelligence, businesses can drive better decisions, improve revenue and profitability, and optimize customer relationships. Qlik does business in more than 100 countries and serves over 38,000 active customers around the world.
qlik.com