

Beyond Reporting: Creating Operational Excellence with Qlik

by Michael Dove – Vice President for the Center of Process Excellence at PSCU

In the financial services industry, we follow a simple formula: data plus understanding equals valuable business intelligence. Without understanding, numbers stand inconsequentially small amidst the pace and vector of business. At PSCU, we have the numbers from a broad range of data stores to help support our more than 800 credit union Owners improve their operational processes and actions. Most importantly, we have the expertise to translate that data into a field of narratives for applicable value. A credit union-owned cooperative, PSCU operates on the principle of “people helping people,” and provides its Owner credit unions competitive rates and a robust array of payment solutions.

Maintaining relevant space in the financial services industry can be increasingly difficult as costs associated with comprehensive product offerings are factored into the equation. PSCU helps credit unions offer consumers the products and services they demand by delivering expertise and minimizing ancillary costs, such as fraud detection and mitigation.

Data + Understanding = Business Intelligence

A multiyear initiative to evolve and broaden our call center services for credit unions was underway when I joined PSCU. My role was to help collaborate on a three- to five-year plan to support this initiative, focusing uniquely on business-process management and implementation of the new and improved call center infrastructure. As you can imagine, call centers are inherently data-rich in terms of recordings and captures.

Data modeling and reporting opportunities were identified and used to support improved visual management. A better understanding of all of our data, as well as insights — not just the numbers is mission critical. Our Owner credit unions and our leaders depended on it.

Engineering a Road to Business Intelligence

PSCU divisions were a rich source of data, however, the best intentions in sorting, analyzing, and implementing the data could be improved upon.

Centralized reporting had in some cases, inadvertently resulted in something more similar to a centralized Excel camp. Using tools such as SAP BusinessObjects provided for more sophistication, with the input of data into databases. Still, there were opportunities for improvement.

PSCU continued to receive tabular reporting and **ETL** jobs or scripts were able to be run, but the result was the same flat reporting. Statements of significance were hard to come by; analysis, color-coding, and cross-functionality were not present. Each report served a specific need or

solved a specific purpose, but did not show all of the inputs or outputs due to lack of integration. Despite all efforts, the problem persisted.

“Flat reports aren’t true metrics—they’re just numbers that don't necessarily tell a story.” @qlik

PSCU recognized the need to better organize our data to more effectively align with our business model. We knew that we needed full visibility into our credit union relationships if we were to continue providing the full suite of products and member experience they require. Additionally, we knew that the view needed to be cross-functional in order for us to optimize and innovate where necessary.

The Catalyst for Change—Years in the Making

Our COO championed an initiative to develop a centralized area to aggregate the disparate data and display it in an easy, integrated way that would deliver the right insights. We started to look for a real BI solution, evaluated multiple solutions and we began a relationship with [Qlik](#).

Our challenge at this point was threefold: data quality, data accessibility, and overall understanding.

Qlik looked to us to know our data. We adhere to strict PCI compliance. This meant a thorough data cleanse of credit union members’ information before we could build solid, usable data models.

The Rise of the Dashboards

With alignment and confidence in our source data, our initial objective was to build what we call the COO Dashboard. This was a centralized system that would demonstrate our COO’s main business priorities, such as the call center, operational services, fraud, and our product.

Since then, we’ve gone even further, building 12 new reports that reflect down to the business-unit level. Additionally, we’ve built a cross-functional Member Experience app that helps us analyze the data from credit union service calls, and we’ve built another app for HR that helps measure attrition. Perhaps best of all, we now even manage the performance management of the call centers.

Daily, thanks to Qlik, all of our call center agents get a Qlik NPrinting report of their particular metrics from the Qlik Sense app. Their supervisor gets a printout that shows all agents’ metrics; managers and site leaders get their own versions as well.

To date, we have a good partnership with our database management team, and we're actually creating some roles for data scientists to make sure we maximize the use of our data with predictive analytics.

Currently, we are focused on getting our environment positioned within a more traditional Qlik model, where we work off of Qlik Sense data. And being more sophisticated now, we know where our gaps are in the data management, and we've applied the right resources to continue to grow our data ecosystem. We feel confident that these measures will continue to add value to our business and that of our credit unions.

The Personal Side of Cold, Hard Data

Pushing out this data-driven initiative hasn't been without its challenges. Many within the PSCU organization "get it," but it requires an education as to how to benefit from it. It makes sense: Financial data is highly personal information that can feel similar to opening up someone's individual email or a wallet. For some, the nature of this tool produces resistance as a natural response. With a number the key priority of data protection, security, and data integrity top of mind when dealing with our members' data, and we were confident about proceeding forward.

Once we got rolling, we decided to implement an internal marketing campaign. We started by getting to know our internal target market, asking them what kind of reporting they do, and whether they'd like it to be automated, and offering to show them how Qlik could help.

It's all about the story you tell; how you position the message. You tell them you have a tool that will not only alleviate their major data pain points but will also automate and streamline the process altogether. You get in their world. It's more personal instead of hard-lined.

Don't force your data-driven initiative. Instead, show your colleagues how better numbers impact their world.

We had to win hearts and minds before we could implement something like Qlik.

Hit Refresh: Monthly Reports on the Daily

Overall, Qlik has allowed PSCU to integrate disparate data sources into a single view. In the past, reports just shared numbers, requiring us to add context at a later point in order to tell a story. But with Qlik, we can streamline this quite effortlessly.

We are proud today to be connected to between 10 and 20 different data sources from Teradata, SQL, and Oracle connections. We even connect to the 'old-fashioned' Excel spreadsheets in shared folders. Without Qlik, we could not have achieved such results. We would have been downloading and uploading enormous amounts of data between our systems, arranging and analyzing the data in pivot tables, and struggling all-around. Now with Qlik, we just hit the refresh button, and our data is up to date. Previously, we were only able to update data daily, but now we can update and refresh it every 30 minutes.

We've spent the last year getting some of these key applications—around performance management and the contact center—up and running. The early feedback from the agents and the leadership team has been incredibly positive. We're very hopeful of the new insights we'll be able to receive from the call center, but that will take time to truly see the impact.

Call center agents used to see their metrics maybe once a week and review their overall performance quarterly. Now, they review it daily. In less than a year since starting, we can review the results and ask whether we're viewing statistically significant improvements in their overall scores based on Qlik's impact. By the end of our fourth quarter, I believe that we'll be able to share member experience impacts and considerable financial savings because of Qlik.

We do all of this because PSCU has a responsibility to our credit unions. By evolving our systems and implementing the right tools, we can drive greater efficiencies across our organization and serve our members more effectively. It all starts with data, but it's what we do with the data that ultimately unlocks its potential. The result helps us tell a meaningful story for both our organization and the communities we serve. Now, the future looks clear.