

## National Frozen Foods Corporation enhances production analysis with QlikView

“ We’ve put QlikView analysis to work in identifying where additional efficiencies can be found. Our dry goods packaging department has already seen a time savings of 25% in its operations. That’s what QlikView is all about: putting the power of analytics into the hands of everyone. ”

*John Meersman, Director of IT, National Frozen Foods Corporation*

Seattle-based National Frozen Foods Corporation is a \$100 million+ privately-held company that processes, packs and freezes vegetables for a variety of customers including major grocery chains and consumer brands in the North American, Asian and Australian markets. Employing over 600 full-time and up to 1,400 seasonal personnel, the company produces over 300 million pounds of frozen corn, peas, beans and carrots per year.



The company recently upgraded its legacy ERP, Warehouse Management and other systems to better accommodate the selection, quality, varieties of crops, seasonality, growing methods and inventory

management needs of customers. While those systems provided better access to the information management and operations professionals needed, the source was limited to exported data in Microsoft Excel. This proved difficult and time-consuming, particularly for those users with non-technical backgrounds.

John Meersman, National’s Director of IT, led a search for a Business Intelligence platform that could merge data from the different systems for rapid analysis and decision-making. He selected three different vendors for a three-day proof of concept, and ultimately chose QlikView. “As soon as I saw QlikView, I knew it was what I wanted for the company,” recalls Meersman. “Its ease of use and ability to drill down into all the data regardless of origin sold it for me. I knew it was a platform the entire company would be able to use.”

### Real-time production data

Meersman focused first on production analysis. During the “fresh pack season,” when the vegetables are washed, blanched, inspected and frozen, National has a goal of a four-hour production window to ensure the highest quality and safety standards. Says Meersman,

### Solution Overview

#### National Frozen Foods Corporation

Leading private label packer of vegetables

#### Industry

Consumer Products

#### Function

Executive, Operations, Finance, HR

#### Geography

USA, Asia, Australia

#### Challenges

- Poor visibility into production data
- Difficult to analyze data across disparate IT systems for ERP, warehouse management, HR and other systems.
- No way to package company data to executives and other employees

#### Solution

National deployed QlikView to 200 employees. The first application was deployed in 1 week. With 64-bit QlikView, National is now able to aggregate and analyze 1-5 terabytes of data sourced from different systems across multiple departments. Real-time production analysis allows plant managers to spot anomalies and trends in output. Role-specific dashboards give all employees access to the data they need to perform their job on a daily basis.

#### Benefits

- Delivered real-time production analysis system during crucial harvesting season
- Improved efficiency of dry goods packaging by 25%
- Developed role-specific dashboards for all employees

#### Data Source Systems

Applications: Infor (ERP-Adage), Kronos (Time and Attendance Module, Payroll Module, HR Module), Cool Earth (WMS Whistle), In-house Growers Systems

Database: SQL server, DB2 400

Hardware: AS-400, IBM servers

“Without visibility into all the moving parts in the process, the company could end up taking significant write-offs as the product spoils and becomes a liability, affecting profit margins.”

Meersman and his team created a QlikView application that provides one-click reporting for a near real-time, graphical representation of the production levels for each plant at any point in the day. This in-depth analysis allows the plants’ general managers to make better decisions faster. By viewing production on an hourly basis, lulls can be investigated, allowing for improved operational efficiencies. Whether a machine needs maintenance or a process requires additional time, management can take action to adjust production levels to compensate. Since the company’s margins are very thin, this ability to react and save even fractions of a penny can make a difference.

“The Daily Production Summary was an easy application to deploy, but fulfilled an important need. We have since put QlikView analysis to work in identifying where additional efficiencies can be found. For example, our dry goods packaging department has seen a time savings of 25 % in its operations. That’s what QlikView is all about: putting the power of analytics into the hands of everyone.”

#### Role-based dashboards enable better decisions

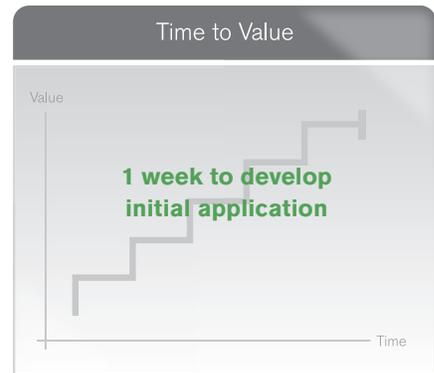
Since first deploying QlikView for production analytics, National’s IT team has used the platform to deploy over

100 applications across all departments. Meersman has also used QlikView to populate the company’s “My National” web portal, which provides personalized analysis via tabs and dashboards based on an employee’s job function and permissions. For example, an executive dashboard allows the company’s president to view a composite of the day’s production and switch to a view of financial data in seconds. An application is also in development to push this information to National’s top executives’ mobile phones using QlikView for iPhone.

As the expansion of National’s BI initiative continues, Meersman expects all company employees will use the system and that QlikView will become one of the most important applications in the company. “Analysis can be boring, but QlikView makes it fun. It allows the user to manipulate the data in ways they haven’t been able to before, leading to better, more informed decisions based on data integrity.”

#### Easing the integration of data and people in acquisitions

QlikView was a key tool in bridging a newly-acquired company’s data systems with National’s. Meersman’s team created a QlikView application that seamlessly married the SQL Server data from the acquired plant with the data in their own systems, creating an aggregate that was useful for analysis from the start. This eased the integration of the new company’s data, since analysis could be performed immediately without having to wait weeks for database integration and normalization.



Meersman also uses QlikView as a means to “on-board” employees from newly-acquired companies. By demonstrating how the dashboards can increase their productivity and efficiency, he is able to instill new employees with confidence in the systems – and in their role in their new company. “QlikView allows people to see things in the data that they couldn’t see before,” notes Meersman, “and that’s what we like to call the ‘WOW!’ factor. When they see they can rapidly analyze data to get answers on their own, they become confident in the system and in their own job performance.”

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