

Hitachi Consulting UK helps Experian FootFall leapfrog the competitive retail landscape



New Microsoft-based analytics platform dramatically increases customer service levels, supports global reach, and maintains market leading position for retail site performance.

Experian FootFall is a market leading provider of visitor analytics. The company enables its clients to understand site-related consumer behaviour to increase profitability and enhance customer service. Its solutions provide accurate insight for customers, driving site performance and efficiency in areas - increasing conversion rates, optimising staff resource levels and maximising shopper transaction value.

Part of the Experian Group, Experian FootFall is the world's largest and most experienced provider of audited, managed and advanced retail intelligence based on measured visitor behaviour.

Business challenge

Experian FootFall helps organisations to increase their profitability, selling efficiency and customer service, and realise business improvement opportunities by analysing customer numbers, sales conversion rates and customer behaviour. With how the data is being used changing – both in terms of business relevance and technology expectations - Experian FootFall recognised that in order to maintain its market leadership position, it needed to update its solution set to meet the rapid pace and demands of its retail customers.

“The retail sector is fast paced and requires analytic insight into the fundamental issues that are directly impacting site performance,” said Mike Roberts, Director of Product Management and Development at Experian FootFall. “Relying on static, retrospective performance data won't give clients the competitive edge they need. We wanted to provide them with near real-time information that can not only alert problems, and trigger automated reports, but also enable them to customise their own data as needed – all so that site performance can be optimised.”

The new platform needed to have continued security around the data, including retail and property information, worldwide sales figures, as well as client cost data which must be kept secure. It also needed to be truly multi-lingual and accommodate non-Latin languages, such as Simplified Chinese, have enterprise level scalability and easy integration with third party systems, as well as a consistent user experience which was the same for internal and external users.

“We also wanted the system to be easy to use and allow clients to either self-administer the system if they wished or have the option of using us for support.” added Roberts. “Most importantly, we wanted to improve the focus of our business around site performance, not count performance.”

Overview

Project objectives

- Update Experian Footfall's existing platform and functionality to meet the rapid pace and demands of the retail industry
- Deliver first mover advantage and help maintain market leadership
- Define architectural design and requirements, and design next generation site performance solution, delivering state-of-the-art site performance measurement
- Enable integration of leading edge technology as part of new IT environment
- Implementation of SharePoint, SQL Server and .NET

Scope of solution

- Requirements gathering
- Process mapping
- Testing
- Implementation

Solution

Experian FootFall selected Hitachi Consulting UK as its technology implementation partner, and Microsoft as the technology platform.

“Hitachi Consulting has deep sector expertise in the retail arena,” added Roberts. “Their consultants have a high level of competence in both Microsoft technologies and the retail market, which gave us confidence, particularly with regards to security. They are also able to seamlessly integrate on-shore and off-shore resources to deliver projects on-time and to-budget.”

Hitachi Consulting designed a proof-of-concept based on Microsoft SQL Server 2008 R2 Enterprise, PerformancePoint Services in Microsoft SharePoint Server 2010, and Microsoft .NET connection software.

The architectural design was subjected to a series of tests for performance, scalability and resilience at the Microsoft UK labs. Hitachi Consulting tested the product design on over 13 billion rows of data and automated creation and email distribution of more than 30,000 individual reports within the rapid timescales expected of Experian FootFall's clients.

The solution was designed to provide a next generation platform for Experian FootFall, moving them further forward as the global leader in site analytics, enhancing customer service levels and maintaining the company's market leading position of delivering in-depth understanding into the business value of data.

Customers are able to access analytical data and reports through a selection of tools including, dashboards, scorecards, reports and key performance indicators. This allows clients to seamlessly access data anytime, from virtually any location. Fully flexible, the system allows retailers to customise and view near real-time performance data in any number of ways, including by PDF or through a web browser. Through this software, retailers can also receive customised alerts

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via web browser, email or SMS, providing immediate access to a wealth of information.

The benefits

Experian FootFall now has one of the most sophisticated solutions on the market, providing clients with a 360 degree view of retail site performance to pin point priorities of action to focus on the areas that need improvement.

Roberts added, “Our customers now have a rounded view of the business and are able to take action quickly based on the information the Experian FootFall solution delivers. It's enabled us to deliver key information for customers, bringing lots of statistics, data and analysis into one place for actionable insight into site performance. Hitachi Consulting worked closely with us at each stage, ensuring the outcome was a step change in competitive retail technology.”

Experian FootFall also integrated Bing Maps into the interface, providing a comparative view of site performance. The company is the first to market with its range of highly competitive services. The new high-performing solution also supports rapid growth, enabling Experian to easily integrate new functionality to meet requirements and increased user volumes, and supporting multiple languages and currencies to accommodate Experian's international customer base and help increase its share in local markets.

Experian FootFall clients gain a myriad of benefits including, improved store profitability, better conversion rates, accurate identification on staff to customer ratios for optimum customer service, as well as the ability to track the effectiveness of marketing campaigns, streamline operations in every inch of the store and unlock latent store potential.

The first release of the solution will be available to customers globally from January 2012.

Why Hitachi Consulting?

- **Qualified:** Accredited Microsoft Partner since 2003. Gold UK partner since 2004. Recognised as global CRM Dynamics Partner of the Year. Named industry's sixth largest systems integrator (Gartner)
- **Resources:** Combines the skills and delivery capabilities of a specialist Retail technology practice with the depth and breadth of capabilities found in large global consultancies. Hitachi Consulting aims to recruit senior, experienced people with a minimum of ten years' experience in their discipline – and have worked for end-user organisations
- **Experienced:** Trusted Consultancy & IT delivery partner for some of the biggest names on the high street, as well as major suppliers and service delivery companies in the retail industry to deliver market leading solutions quickly and cost-effectively
- **Approach:** Methodical and phased approach includes full documentation, regular stakeholder updates and reports, thorough system testing prior to deployment, knowledge transfer to key staff and solution delivery on time and on budget

“Hitachi Consulting provided expert guidance in delivering our next generation solution, which reaffirms our position as the leading site analytics company, supports customer requirements, and gives us a global growth platform”

Mike Roberts
Director of Product
Management and Development
Experian FootFall