

## At FFF Enterprises collaboration is key to success with QlikView

“ The pharmaceutical industry can change instantly, impacting how, where and what products we bring to market. It is imperative that people at all levels of our organization have real-time access to the information that impacts our business and the delivery of safe, effective products and services. ”

*Chris Ground, SVP of National Accounts, FFF Enterprises*

FFF Enterprises was founded in 1988 and has since grown into a multidimensional healthcare company, delivering innovative solutions in biopharmaceutical distribution, health information management and consumer health services. Customers of FFF’s four divisions include members of the leading U.S. acute care and non-acute care group purchasing organizations, pharmaceutical manufacturers, biotech companies, contract research organizations,



managed healthcare companies and consumers. The company’s mission is to accelerate the availability of lifesaving products and services, from innovation to delivery, with commitment to Guaranteed Channel Integrity, product availability and responsible pricing.

FFF has implemented QlikView to carry out its mission faster and more effectively. “The pharmaceutical industry

can change instantly, impacting how, where and what products we bring to market. It is imperative that people at all levels of our organization have real-time access to the information that impacts our business and the delivery of safe, effective products and services,” said Chris Ground, senior vice president of national accounts.

The company is a study in strong relationships between technology and the business lines. The outcome is a true collaboration that reflects the company’s culture, allows fast decisions, nimble execution and efficient work flow.

### Choosing QlikView

Until QlikView, FFF lacked real-time data. The company implemented another technology, but people found it difficult to work with. “It was arduous to get information. We learned that if it’s not easy to get to the data, people won’t use the tool,” said Ground.

Bob Coates then joined FFF as the Vice President of Technology. After sizing up the problems the company was having with data access, he intended to use the BI package he used before – a traditional OLAP-based tool.

But Coates came across QlikView. “We liked its different approach. QlikView didn’t need to translate the data; it took the data directly from the system.” Instead of building very complex and

### Solution Overview

#### FFF Enterprises

Leading healthcare company, delivering innovative solutions in biopharmaceutical management and distribution, health information management and consumer healthcare services

#### Industry

Retail & Wholesale Distribution

#### Function

Executive, Sales, Marketing, Supply Chain, Operations, Finance, IT

#### Geography

USA

#### Challenges

- Speed data access and analysis for improved responsiveness to fast-changing industry conditions
- Provide employees with business analysis solution that is easy to use
- Enhance data access to improve operational efficiency across the company

#### Solution

FFF Enterprises deployed QlikView to 65 employees across three division in less than four weeks. Today, QlikView touches all aspects of the company including finance, sales and marketing, operations and IT. By leveraging the invaluable data that had been locked in a Lawson ERP system as well as many other sources, FFF Enterprises was able to achieve a real-time view of operational performance and improve the efficiency of the entire organization.

#### Benefits

- Enabled timely market execution and customer responsiveness through instant information access
- Provided up-to-date figures on demand chain synchronizing planning with business partners and customers
- Raised efficiency levels, saving the company time and money
- Slashed time invested in forecasts and reviews by finance department

#### Data Source Systems

Application: Lawson (M3)

Database: Access, Excel, XML, Text files

Hardware: IBM System i (AS/400)



time consuming data models based on OLAP cube technology, QlikView accesses data from just about any database via OLE DB and ODBC; from spreadsheets, XML or text documents; or from Access data using FTP via a LAN or the Internet. Using a powerful query language, QlikView automatically finds relationships between different data structures. Further, QlikView had existing templates that worked instantly with Movex, FFF's recently implemented ERP system. Coates and Ground saw them in action at a QlikView customer's site.

A pilot followed quickly for sales analysis, a hot-button issue with Patrick M. Schmidt, FFF's President and CEO. Deployed in less than a month, the pilot application analyzed sales for three of FFF's divisions across multiple dimensions, including product, salesperson and time with a multi-year span. According to Coates, "We knew we had success when Patrick came into a meeting a week after seeing the pilot and asked, 'What were our sales last June? Don't answer – I know, because I can find it in QlikView.'"

#### QlikView proliferates throughout the company

FFF extended its sales analysis application further and then created an application that tracks vital statistics related to the functional areas of its warehouse operations. They are capturing critical data to be used for tracking and monitoring the volume and value, in various units of measure, of all product transactions involving the receipt, internal movement and distribution of products. Tracked metrics include such data as number of transactions, lines and dollar value of shipments per day.

Now QlikView is used for all facets of FFF Enterprise's business, including finance, sales and marketing, operations, IT and research. Standardizing on QlikView allows all company decision makers to see the same data, so connections can be easily made and management can respond quickly to changes in the market. The ability to see trending issues and analyze these trends from every point in their business has increased

FFF's efficiency, saving the company time and money.

Of particular interest is FFF's Flu Dashboard. The Fall of 2004 saw dramatic shortages in flu vaccines, making national headlines in the U.S. and an "emotional market." As the largest flu vaccine distributor in the United States, FFF's customers have kept a spotlight on supply for the current season. FFF was vigilant in tracking daily shipments in from the manufacturer and out to the customers with both data and graphical reports. This instant knowledge of shipments energized the entire company, according to Ground. "When I saw that we shipped a million doses of the flu vaccine to one of our largest customers, I sent a voicemail to the team. There were 'high-fives' all around!"

Coates said it's this timeliness that gives FFF a competitive advantage. QlikView's instant access provides the ability to look at information very quickly – without the overhead of creating a report – allowing the company to execute quickly. "That's the substantive part; everything else is just frills."

#### Information at a click spares precious human resources

FFF is an extremely lean organization. While the privately-held company earned \$600 million in revenues in 2004, it employs only 150 people. "We look for efficiency gains because our human resources are so valuable," said Ground.

Before QlikView, his rolling annual forecast reports would take a day and a half of finance people's time. Now, he looks at it in QlikView on the fly. "QlikView has fundamentally changed the way we work. It provides us up-to-the-minute access to vital status reports and acts as an early diagnostic tool for the growth of our business," Ground said.

#### Information integrity follows the culture

In addition to speed as a competitive advantage, what sets FFF apart is its culture and integrity. On the cultural front, FFF puts people ahead of technology – right down to an actual person



always answering the phone. "QlikView is a great, flexible tool that supports our people. We're not technology-driven but people-driven," Coates said. That's an unconventional statement coming from a VP of Technology.

That leads to integrity as the foundation for FFF. Ground points out that the dynamic nature of the pharmaceutical industry has led to unethical business practices, including counterfeit drugs. FFF's unique distribution business model has institutionalized Guaranteed Channel Integrity™, which reflects the company's commitment to purchase only from manufacturers and ship only to healthcare providers – one clear line with no gray in between. This protects products from the risks inherent in secondary and gray markets, and improves patient safety.

Ground appreciates QlikView for the “information integrity” it shows FFF’s partners. He accesses production forecasts in QlikView before meetings with business partners for up-to-date data for salient decision points. “It’s a perception thing. We have a solid reputation for executing quickly and reliably. Our effective presentations with instant command of the numbers – and the data to answer questions in a click – reinforce that reputation.”

#### Advice for success

FFF’s successful deployments of QlikView applications provide useful insights to other companies embarking on a Business Intelligence initiative. Coates advises that it has to be a collaborative process involving IT, business users and management. “You need to capture the metrics that matter to people: What are the top three or five things that the boss worries about everyday? Focus is important; you can analyze anything and everything in QlikView, but should you? Part of the fun is evolving the applications and narrowing the focus to essential metrics that make a difference.” He



also believes in getting the applications out quickly to build momentum and excitement.

Ground seconds the importance of cross-functional input. “Address all business practices up front: Don’t just think about now, but also think through what you might need.” QlikView is easy to work with and powerful enough to expand.

Lastly, Coates stresses the need for an executive proponent to gain buy-in. “Patrick was our ‘center of gravity’ for the initiative and critical to its success. Once he and senior management were using QlikView, it was easy for everyone else to use it, too.”

““ We’re able to access information anyplace and anytime. That puts us in a position of trust with our customers and partners.””

*Chris Ground, SVP of National Accounts, FFF Enterprises*

