

BIG TIME SAVINGS.

Using Alteryx, Stratasys increases efficiencies and generates big time savings by automating repetitive weekly and quarterly reports. Reports that took five hours now run in 30 minutes.

Company Overview

Stratasys is a manufacturer of 3D printers and 3D production systems for office-based rapid prototyping and direct digital manufacturing for automotive, aerospace, industrial, electronic, medical and consumer products. The company is at the forefront of 3D printing innovation and offers a mix of technologies, deep industry expertise and flexible implementation options to meet customers' needs.

Jason Cheung and Jae Jun Soh manage all aspects of business intelligence and data analytics for customers and channel partners across the Asia Pacific region. Their responsibilities include lead and sales funnel analysis, sales forecasting, channel evaluation, customer analytics and purchase pattern analysis.

Stratasys Generates Big Time Savings by Automating Repetitive Reporting





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– Jason Cheung

Customer Advocacy Business
Analytics Team Leader,
Stratasys

Business Challenge

As the 3D printing industry boomed, business challenges for Stratasys grew from multiple angles. The market had become more saturated and the demand for impactful analytics increased, but data was scattered across different departments and routine processes were stacked up.

Increased Number of Data Sources and Limited Resources

Previously, senior management had to rely on several disparate platforms — including Excel, Salesforce, and Oracle — to get a complete view of the business. Cheung and Soh were the go-to guys to help bring everything together. And with a growing number of data sources, data management became an even greater challenge.

To address the needs of the business, Cheung and Soh had to combine pre-sales data in Salesforce with various Excel files not accommodated in the CRM system along with post-sales transactions data in Oracle. Presentations had all been in Excel, or sometimes put onto PowerPoint.

Huge File Sizes and Varying Data Formats

For a single year of transaction data generation, the raw data combined with formulas and charts would make an Excel file unmanageable for a typical laptop to process. This required the team to create a separate file for each calendar year, which made it extremely difficult to analyze historical data and report on booking trends to management. The time and effort required of Cheung and Soh to simply collate the data was limiting their ability to perform impactful analytics on the combined data set.

Another challenge was managing different data formats, such as data sets from customer support where one region uses a different system, and Cheung and Soh also collect external transaction data from Stratasys’s go-to-market channel partners. Cheung explains, “We have control of our data structure when we sell directly, but it is a challenge to collect and merge data from our regional channel partners, most of which keep data in different formats from how we manage information internally.”

Soh adds, “At the end of the day, our senior management team needs to see all of our pre-sales and post-sales together — from both internal and external resources. With the hours required to coordinate — consolidating and verifying data, and ensuring we account for any possible human errors, we needed a solution to improve the total processing and visualization of data.”

Solution

Cheung and Soh learned about Alteryx at the Big Data and Analytics Summit hosted by the Innovation Enterprise, where they were exploring ways to visualize and consolidate data more efficiently. While evaluating visualization tools from Tableau and Microsoft Power BI, they quickly ran into limitations with streamlining data and processing multiple data sources together. “The visualization tools weren’t working for us and we knew that we were missing something,” says Cheung. “Then we started looking at the self-service analytics capabilities of the Alteryx platform, and we realized this was the solution we needed.”

“The main reason we chose Alteryx, and the reason we are using the platform more and more, is because we see so much potential for what it can do for our team and for the company. Alteryx is now our secret weapon.”

– Jae Jun Soh

CRM & Business Intelligence
Manager, Stratasys

Revolutionizing business through data science and analytics, Alteryx offers an end-to-end analytics platform which empowers data analysts and scientists alike to break data barriers, deliver insights, and experience the thrill of getting to the answer faster. Organizations all over the world rely on Alteryx daily to deliver actionable insights.

generate the different report versions and publish more efficiently. Cheung says, “Running the financial report every quarter used to take a staff member one full day — starting at 9 a.m., downloading the report and then finishing the report, verifying everything, and then sending it out by 6 p.m. With Alteryx, that team member can do everything before lunch.”

MORE EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATIONS

Alteryx also empowers Stratasys to communicate more easily and regularly with partners. Cheung and Soh created a “one click” to send individual files to their internal product marketing team and to different resellers to create monthly campaigns and run with different activities. Though they maintain numerous useful dashboards on Salesforce, not all dashboards are equally useful for different stakeholders. For instance, the team found Tableau to be a versatile dashboarding tool for improving the way colleagues consume and gain insights from data, especially when the data has been effectively consolidated from multiple sources. Alteryx engineers the process automation behind this enhancement. Soh says, “With the recent addition of Alteryx Desktop Scheduler, we were able to build and send out dashboards that we simply were not able to in the last few years.”

PROCESS MAPPING AND BETTER DOCUMENTATION

Alteryx has also enabled Cheung and Soh to map processes that they didn’t have before. Cheung explains, “When I first joined Stratasys, my predecessor had showed me where to download data and run the reports. But there was no documentation or official process mapped out, so if anything ever happened to one of us, then the next person would have to figure out the process and reporting on their own. Alteryx enables us to map our processes so anyone can just open Alteryx and see clearly defined steps, which gives us the documentation we need.”

360-DEGREE CUSTOMER REPORTING

Cheung says that the most important thing Alteryx brings to Stratasys is enabling the company to have a 360 degree view of the customer to better track purchases and nurture lead generation. Cheung says, “Now with Alteryx, we can see all transaction data for our customers, which wasn’t possible before.”

CROSS-DEPARTMENTAL COLLABORATION AND EMPOWERING INDIVIDUAL CREATIVITY

Cheung and Soh also highlight positive changes in how team members across different departments can work together. Soh says, “Our work is really changing the mindset of people in the organization. Stratasys has incredibly smart and talented people, and with Alteryx, cross-departmental team members can move beyond old processes and think more creatively about how to bring additional value. It changes from a reactive mindset to a proactive mindset.”

Soh concludes, “These are only initial examples of the benefits we are experiencing with Alteryx. The main reason we chose Alteryx, and the reason we are using the platform more and more, is because we see so much potential for what it can do for our team and for the company. Alteryx is now our secret weapon.”