

Adding Business Analysis into the mix to guide business transformation



Coupland's Bakeries, an iconic New Zealand bakery chain, faced a challenge in having two different enterprise systems. The 'obvious' solution was costly middleware and integration. However, Business Technology Manager David Main had reservations. He engaged Assurity Consulting's Business Analysis specialists, who uncovered the underlying issue: a lack of system visibility and inadequate, inaccurate data. This collaborative effort not only saved the bakery millions by avoiding unnecessary changes, they gained crucial insights for improving their business systems.

Results ✨

The workshops and interviews exposed all sorts of challenges and issues.

The internal team have undergone a capability uplift by working alongside Assurity's Business Analysts.

Created lasting artifacts, including mind maps and process flows.

About

Organisation

Coupland's Bakeries

Industry

Food and Beverage Services

Solution

Business Analysis

Founded in 1971, Coupland's Bakeries is proud to be one of the largest independently owned bakery chains in New Zealand, with retail bakeries throughout the South Island, Hamilton, Rotorua, and Tauranga.



Challenge

David Main says the essence of the challenge Coupland's faced was, on the face of it, two systems which didn't talk. "We call them Enterprise Resource Planning systems, which one is, while the other is a Point-of-Sale system used to manage the retail stores around the country," he explains. "But it isn't just the systems that don't talk; the terminology and descriptions of data, numbers, descriptions of actions and so on are completely different: on one, you have a Purchase Order, in the other, a Sales Order."

Magnify this problem by hundreds of descriptions and items, and the problem goes from slightly absurd and comical to an ugly leviathan – and it's a commonly encountered beast at that. "Of course, you'd want the systems running the back-end financials and so on interfacing seamlessly with the ones where our goods are going out the door," David points out. "And as this is a fairly routine problem, the go-to for the software vendors is always 'middleware and integrate'."

It's the go-to because it typically achieves the desired outcomes – but as David points out, those outcomes are only possible if certain conditions are met first.





Solution

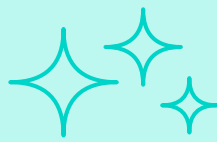
With the possibility of a bill running well over a million dollars for the 'middleware and integrate' option, David decided to first pull in some trusted expertise for a second opinion.

"I'd worked with Assurity's Business Analysts in the past, so I knew they have all the tools and acumen necessary to expose things for what they really are."

Assurity got to work with multiple workshops and interviews with stakeholders in the business processes across the business – everyone from executives to store managers, store men, inward goods dispatchers, finance people, operational staff and more. Workflows were documented, requirements matrices built, and traceability and analysis performed. "The beauty of working with Assurity is you don't have to worry about the Business Analyst and the toolbox they bring. They come with the lot and they know how to use them."

The detailed examination of processes exposed inefficiencies or deficiencies; as an example, David says an inefficient instore customer order solution resulted in a paper snowball in which payments might be missed, orders go missing or unfulfilled, the wrong goods being assigned for delivery, and – ultimately – affecting business performance.

Results



“The workshops and interviews exposed all sorts of challenges and issues, none of which would have been solved through an expensive integration,” David confirms.

He highlights that automation or improvement of deficient business systems or processes is not a solution. While integration may or may not achieve desirable results, moving too soon on it can exacerbate existing issues and cause additional and potentially thornier problems. “I was sceptical that integration was the answer, and Assurity’s Business Analysts confirmed that. What we have in place of the middleware and the enormous bill is a PowerBI dashboard, which was built for a couple of months’ worth of internal time instead.”

The PowerBI solution is an elegant response that exposes the information needed at the store level by the store managers as well as at the factory, with information from both ERP systems.; “For example, it identifies variances between what the store orders and what it receives at all the stages of the end-to-end process. We couldn’t do that before,” David notes.

It has also led to a secondary engagement dealing with customer orders. A ‘pillar to post’ engagement with a software vendor gave way to the application of Assurity’s skill in software development and business processes. This resulted in ‘getting the ordering to where it needed to be’, says David – and on a broader scale, it led to questions about the basic suitability of the POS system for Coupland’s needs.

Lasting value, adds David, has accrued to his internal team, who have undergone a capability uplift by working alongside Assurity’s Business Analysts.

And will Assurity be back? “Definitely. When we have difficult problems to solve, we know where to look for help,” he concludes.



“Along with lasting artifacts, including mind maps and process flows, our people have seen first-hand how a senior Business Analyst works, developing their own skills. The engagement has 100% left our team in a better state.”

— **David Main**

Business Technology manager, Coupland’s Bakeries



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