



Extracting actionable insights to enable business agility

Southern Oil's journey
with Insight Consulting



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“Our journey with Insight Consulting and the shift to using Qlik Cloud exemplifies how actionable insights, enabled by modern SaaS analytics, can transform a business’s operations,”

George Turck, Business Systems Lead, SOILL

Introduction

Southern Oil (Pty) Ltd (also referred to as SOILL) has experienced immense growth, evolving from a small business to a complex, modern oil extraction plant and edible oil refinery, comprising multiple departments and hundreds of employees. As SOILL expanded, traditional methods of communication and data management, such as classic daily team meetings and the extensive use of spreadsheets, became inefficient and insufficient.

Challenges

Before adopting Qlik Cloud, SOILL was experiencing significant operational and data management challenges. Because of the rapid expansion from a small business to a complex organisation, the business experienced:

- **Communication breakdown** - As the business scaled, traditional methods of communication, such as daily status and team meetings, became inadequate to keep everyone across the organisation aligned.
- **A cumbersome reliance on spreadsheets and manual processes** - much like many other businesses that have not yet undergone digital transformation, the business was heavily reliant on spreadsheets for reporting and data management. This led to inefficiencies, data silos and an inability to extract real-time insights.
- **Complexity leading to inflexibility** – SOILL’s business includes multiple, different business units, including agriculture, refining, pressing, bottling, logistics, marketing and sales, engineering, laboratory testing, and more. This made it difficult for traditional ERP systems to provide the necessary flexibility and insight that the business needed.

Solution Overview

Customer Name

Southern Oil (SOILL)

Industry

Agriculture, Manufacturing, Food and Catering

Geography

South Africa

Function

Finance, Production, Sales

Business Value Drivers

- Live, actionable insights
- Automation
- Self Service
- Culture change
- Enhanced Collaboration

Challenges

- Communication breakdowns
- Cumberse manual processes
- Inflexibility

Solution

SOILL and Insight Consulting introduced Qlik Cloud and write back extension Inphinity across the entire organisation.

Results

- Early problem and anomaly detection
- Self-service analytics
- Collaboration
- Elimination of scattered spreadsheets

- **Delayed and fragmented decision-making** – The lack of integrated, real-time data made it increasingly difficult to identify issues early and to respond proactively, which impacted the business's efficiency and productivity.

The business needed something different, where real-time, reliable insights would enable intelligent decision-making. In other words, as a complex organisation, it needed a scalable, integrated solution to manage a large volume of financial, operational and production data to provide actionable insights which would enable timely, data-driven decisions across diverse business units.

The Qlik journey

SOILL's partnership with Insight Consulting is a mature one, having started more than a decade ago. In the beginning, the partnership focused on QlikView for financial and operational reporting. As a trusted data specialist partner, Insight Consulting walked the journey with SOILL as it developed and grew its business. Over time, the business transitioned to Qlik Sense to keep up with demands and then, most recently, moved to Qlik Cloud, Qlik's software as a service (SaaS) platform.

The migration to Qlik Cloud was driven by a need within the organisation to reduce on-premise infrastructure costs, alongside the need to access the latest features instantly. This is an important differentiating factor when using SaaS platforms, because when using on-prem software, businesses typically need to wait for a new version to be released and then perform the upgrade, whereas in a SaaS environment, new features are instantly and automatically available. The migration to Qlik Cloud also involved re-evaluating and optimising data extraction and transformation processes to ensure efficient use of cloud resources and to support a potential move to a capacity-based subscription model. This meant optimised data pipelines.

Planning and implementation: The role of Inphinity

SOILL, in partnership with Insight Consulting, undertook a detailed planning and implementation process to modernise their analytics environment. A key part of this planning was the adoption of Inphinity, a write-back extension for Qlik Sense.

The following features were the key factors behind the decision for SOILL to implement Inphinity:

- Data capture and write-back functionality enabled users to capture and input data directly within Qlik Sense, eliminating the need for scattered spreadsheet files and manual data consolidation.
- Immediate impact analysis meant that as users entered data through Inphinity ∞, they were instantly able to see the impact of their inputs on reports and analysis, supporting more informed and timely decision-making.

The integration of Inphinity was instrumental in enabling SOILL to move away from fragmented, manual processes and toward a unified, real-time analytics environment that supports proactive management and continuous improvement.

Key features enabled by Qlik Cloud and the move to SaaS

The transition to Qlik Cloud occurred as a direct result of the rapid growth of SOILL and the complex nature of its business, including dealing with variable farm outputs, to oil and meal extraction, to production and laboratory testing functionalities, to distribution and accessing markets for the final products, and the full financial management of the business. The adoption of Qlik Cloud unlocked a range of advanced features and self-service capabilities, to the benefit of SOILL. These include:

- **Immediate access to new features:** Qlik Cloud users benefit from weekly updates to the environment as opposed to on-premise environments that require periodic upgrades
- **Anomalies and early problem detection:** The system allows SOILL staff to make use of automated alerts and triggers for anomaly detection and early problem intervention. This is a critical enabler of proactive management and operational efficiency across business divisions. Users can set up custom alerts that monitor key business metrics in real time. When data deviates from a pre-programmed expected range, such as production yields, stock level issues or sales performance, alerts notify staff who can proactively respond to issues before they become a bigger problem, which would happen if anomalies were only detected in periodic reports or manual checks.

- **Self-service analytics:**

Users can adapt the system to give them precisely what they need to perform their tasks optimally. They can create their own subscription reports and alerts, enabling personalised, real-time notifications to support proactive decision-making.

- **Additional features:**

Users have access to collaborative notes, where they can annotate analyses, which fosters collaboration and shared understanding around the data. They can customise their home pages for a tailored Qlik Cloud user experience, as well as make use of advanced reporting for streamlined information delivery. The Inphinity write-back extension allows users to input data directly into Qlik, eliminating scattered spreadsheet files and providing immediate feedback on the impact of data changes.

Business outcomes

- **Live, actionable insights** – Real-time data, alongside automated alerts, has empowered teams to respond quickly to anomalies. This has optimised operations and enabled informed decisions.
- **Automation and self-service** have drastically reduced manual reporting, which in turn has freed staff to focus on strategic tasks to the benefit of the business.
- **Culture change** – While there is still work to be done across the entire organisation, especially where teams are accustomed to the traditional way of doing things, the overwhelming culture has shifted from static, spreadsheet-based processes to dynamic, cloud-based analytics. This has driven a cultural transformation in the organisation, where there is broad adoption of data-driven thinking.
- **Scalability** – The SaaS delivery and capacity-based licensing have enabled SOILL to scale analytics access to all employees, which, besides driving a culture of data-driven decision-making, continues to support ongoing growth and innovation.
- **Enhanced collaboration** – Having the centralised, cloud-based platform and its collaborative features has improved communication and alignment between departments that focus on sometimes vastly different functions.

“As an organisation, by working with Insight Consulting to adopt Qlik Cloud we have modernised our data infrastructure. But it doesn’t end there. This modernised data infrastructure and analytics capabilities has empowered our people to make faster, more agile and smarter decisions, all of which is crucial in driving efficiency, profitability and a sustained competitive advantage.”

George Turck, Business Systems Lead, SOILL



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At Insight Consulting, we recognise data's role in business operations. Our team of experts is dedicated to using data to empower organisations like yours. We help you to harness the full potential of your people, processes, and technology. We discover opportunities, transform data into strategic value, and partner with you to foster a culture where informed decisions drive sustainable success.

We don't just consult – we collaborate, problem-solve, and grow with you. Together, we turn challenges into progress, and ideas into impact.

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