



**Casual Dining Group (CDG) is one of the largest independent restaurant companies in the UK operating with some of the most recognisable and loved casual dining restaurants including; Bella Italia, Café Rouge, La Tasca and Las Iguanas. It also operates sites under the Belgo, Huxleys, La Tasca, Oriel Grande Brasserie and La Salle brands.**

**CDG operates 286 restaurant sites in a variety of locations including leisure parks, shopping centres, airports and high streets. They are a national business, with restaurants located across the country - from Aberdeen to Plymouth - employing more than 7,500 people and serving more than 20 million meals each year.**

In 2015 the new CDG management team set the Systems team a challenge to replace outdated and largely manual reporting processes with a unified set of management reports utilising a single underlying data set. These management reports were needed to drive improvements in targeting customer promotions and increase footfall in shoulder periods.

Tahola partnered with CDG to provide a useful, accurate and a completely bespoke business analytics solution, that is available to all levels of management, from the CEO to individual restaurant GM's and have been working successfully together in partnership, ever since.

The history of data analysis at CDG was predominantly based around manual processes and no single version of the truth existed. There were many complex interfaces between multiple systems and the organisation had no agreed data strategy, the approach taken was about data entry, not data analysis

and so a common framework was agreed, that would support the business in maintaining its market position.

Over the last 4 years CDG and Tahola have developed and implemented a wide range of BI and reporting projects throughout the organisation and Tahola has provided the required tools, techniques and analysis of the underlying data, that forms the basis of the reports developed using Qlik technology.

CDG had already been using QlikView for a number of years and undertook a brief market review prior to renewing their commitment to the product set. It quickly became clear that Qlik had a leading position in the marketplace and this cemented CDG's decision to make it the basis of their new project, with consultancy skills and implementation provided by Tahola.

The first deliverable was a standardised set of daily sales and KPI reports distributed automatically each day to individual site managers, providing business insight into restaurant performance, rolled up to area, brand and company views. At this point a complete review of existing reports was undertaken and reviewed from the ground up and Tahola implemented their EposMart data mart software to transform Epos data into the data warehouse. It was

"The reports that we have built with Tahola give us greater insight and visibility of labour deployment enabling us to achieve targets. We're now able to effectively measure sales performance and ensure our teams recommend complimentary products from our menu to accompany their meal".

Mike Stringer, Group Productivity Director, CDG

essential that the project deliverable was easy to understand at all levels, from restaurant general managers to the C-level management team. CDG and Tahola worked together to design a dashboard that would display KPI's to support the business in maintaining its market position. Up until this time, data analysis at CDG was predominantly based around manual processes and no single version of the truth existed and there were many complex interfaces between multiple business systems.

Data was interfaced from a number of sources including point of sale transactions, time and attendance, purchasing and third-party data. Reconciliation with existing systems took time, however getting this right ensured the operations team had confidence in the reports and a view of the data became available at restaurant, area manager, operations, brand and company views.

"Tahola has worked with CDG for quite a few years now during which time we have developed a very close working partnership. Over this time we have been involved in a wide variety of different projects some of which have been department or brand specific and others which have spanned the entire business. We've seen CDG become a more data driven business and therefore the accuracy, speed and trustworthiness of the data is paramount. We achieve this with a centralised data warehouse fed by all key data sources ensuring that we achieve the "one version of the truth" essential for insight and informed decision making. The analytics platform is in constant development, ensuring that we continue to meet the needs of a fast moving and demanding business. The future is looking exciting too as we explore ways to deliver highly complex data to a wider audience across the business in a simple way. It's a delight to work with a business that sees the potential, and benefits from, the data they collect."

## Simon Blackbourne, Commercial Director, Tahola

Periodic reports were provided for approval prior to distribution and the distribution of daily and weekly reports were automated. An online tool was also provided by Tahola, that enabled staff to perform a deeper dive into the data to gain a greater insight. Standardisation of reports and accuracy of data drove uptake and rapidly the project deliverables became an essential part of the operational managers day.

Adopting an agile project management methodology enabled the daily sales work stream outputs to be verified during the project to ensure the project team remained aligned with stakeholders. Shortly after completion of daily sales, development work commenced on a flash reporting structure, again by site and rolled up to area, brand and whole of company. This included not only revenue information but also cost of goods sold and labour statistics. Promotional activity is now driven by accurate insight and is able to target specific restaurants, area or trading period. Top-line revenue, labour cost and cost of goods can be quickly reviewed and corrective action can be taken, enabling operational management to monitor and respond quickly to changing trading patterns, all of which has resulted in an increased demand for data throughout CDG to inform critical decision making.

Tahola provided CDG with trackable KPIs and business performance data, that enables them to make more informed business decisions, this was done by building a unique dashboard for the entire CDG estate to provide a suite of KPIs in the form of a 'Balanced Scorecard' dashboard. Through the development of a data warehouse

CDG has a 'one stop shop' for all their data sources, including epos and labour data, customer service scores, margin data, TripAdvisor scores and advance bookings and through the use of QlikView Business Analytics software, users are able to access daily and weekly reports, that enable them to make more accurate and timely business decisions.

The solution was needed to speed up the processing and distribution of data across a data hungry company, the data warehouse is the foundation of the company's data strategy, as it helps to consolidate data into a single source and provides the foundation for their reporting and self-service analytics requirements.

Both daily sales and flash are a key output of the Qlik reporting environment and are seen at all levels across the business. However, having access to a comprehensive single source of performance metrics meant that there was considerable demand for new reports and analysis. The reporting team were able to quickly provide each site manager with a blended report, that went deeper than that provided by sales or flash alone, helping to drive sales by individual team members. Other data sources continue to be incorporated, including general ledger, online booking and reservations data.

CDG makes intense use of its reporting environment and there are a number of future projects including deploying self service using Qlik Sense and continuing to incorporate additional data sources.

These projects have enhanced the company's competitive position by allowing CDG to focus on the areas

that matter within each individual restaurant, ensuring that every area of the business exceeds expectations.

The projects have enabled us to focus on peak sales capture and achieve labour control targets, in addition to highlighting outlier performance, by making use of data from multiple sources to monitor labour deployment and compliance.

Managers have greater insight to expected weekly performance and are able to plan/adjust far more effectively to ensure that targets are met. For example, the inclusion of weather forecasts allows managers to reassess and forecast staff numbers accordingly or if a manager is down on sales for the week they can actively try and promote forward bookings to attract customers.

"As a data-driven organisation we are now able to meet user demand for new and deeper insight, helping to drive the business. We can identify improvement opportunities quickly and maintain our reputation for high quality guest experience across all of our brands."

Michael Shaw, CIO, CDG

BI and Reporting within CDG has demonstrated the power of 'Big Data' and how bringing together the data from many systems and sources can drive business growth and enhance the guest experience, by creating and acting upon otherwise invisible insight.

There is now one version of the truth, the holy grail of what the business is aiming to achieve, with a suite of reports that are critical for timely and informed decision making, that are accurate and up to date - no matter who runs them or when they are run.

## The Benefits

- Easy access to key performance metrics
- Rapid decision making underpinned by accurate data
- Automation of repetitive reporting tasks delivering efficiency
- Focus on adding value rather than data processing
- Various 'versions of the truth' have now been eliminated
- Standardisation of reports
- Promotional activity is now driven by accurate insights
- Increased group productivity – labour costs and costs of goods can be quickly assessed and corrective action taken
- Greater understanding of what influences sales and how that can be used to drive revenue
- Decision making is now under pinned by analysis
- Data is now used effectively to support the business at all levels to maintain its market position
- An agreed common framework across the business now exists

## Intelligent integration, at your fingertips

In a data-driven world, success is defined by the insight and business value created from legacy and digitally-enabled data. Having the strategy and technologies in place drives better outcomes for both internal and external customers.

At Tahola we understand that one size definitely does not fit all and that the Business Intelligence and analytics market includes platforms that can be rapidly implemented, either by business users who need to find insights or by IT leaders who want to build analytics content to meet business requirements.

We have been producing elegant and intuitive data warehousing and business analytics solutions for over 15 years, with a strong focus on Hospitality, Retail and Wholesale. However, the nature of our approach means that our solutions and skills can be easily transferred, which is demonstrated by the variety of clients we have across many other sectors.

We offer a variety of solutions to meet the differing and challenging needs of our customers, all of which are designed with one aim in mind, to maximise the use of data that will support their business growth.

Everyone across the business has differing data requirements, but how can this be managed in the most efficient and cost effective way to ensure that the gap between Business and IT can be bridged.....we believe we have the solutions to bridge that gap...

As important as the software is, we believe that choosing the right partner to work with is often more important and in our experience is often the key to the success of any BI and analytics project. This is why we provide Business analytics solutions that are designed through a consultative approach. We understand that business needs change and so provide the flexibility and responsiveness to adapt projects quickly, to meet those changing requirements.

Our experience and knowledge means that we can help you decide, not only what you want, but also suggest what we think your business needs throughout the lifetime of the partnership, not just the implementation. We are not your typical software provider, we do not just take sales orders, we pride ourselves on working with our customers every step of the way to ensure that they always have a solution that works for them.

Would you like to find out how? Contact [leigh.baillie@Tahola.com](mailto:leigh.baillie@Tahola.com)

**[www.tahola.com](http://www.tahola.com)**