
CASE STUDY

End-to-end supply chain visibility and collaboration with TradeEdge Market Connect and Distributor Management System

For a global beverage company, TradeEdge delivered a 90% reduction in manual reporting, ~20% reduction in stock-out, and a 10% increase in case-fill rates with TradeEdge's globally scalable data exchange platform.

The client is a multi-billion-dollar European beverages company, primarily in the business of brewing and selling beer. They operate in over 70 countries, owning over 165 breweries, managed through a network of operating companies in each region, who sold to distributors, who took it to retailers and end consumers.

They took special interest in the African region, where there was rising awareness, demand and maturity in the market for

beer. Africa was becoming a strategically important market for our client — beginning with Rwanda and Congo, with an eye on Ethiopia, Algeria, Sierra Leone etc.

To effectively address market demand and beat competition — both from local breweries and multinational companies — our client needed marked supply chain efficiencies. This couldn't have been achieved without data-driven technologies.

Business challenge: Invisible secondary data

While the operating companies had data about stock provided to distributors, anything further down the supply chain was a black hole. This resulted in significant impact on supply chain management and profitability.

Sub-optimal production planning

Without visibility into secondary sales data, our client was unable to perform production planning accurately, leaving stock lying cold in warehouses, even as more beers were being brewed for the same market. Distributors had the option of returning expired stock, which led to direct financial losses for our client.

Inability to optimally manage stock

On the other hand, our client was also unable to provide/replenish stock at the right place at the right time. This led to increasing stock-outs.

Non-performance of promotions

Without clear data on the preferences of consumers, our client rolled out promotions

by instinct. This made the effectiveness of promotions unpredictable.

To optimise production, improve stock management and increase effectiveness of promotions, our client sought a globally scalable data exchange platform for its fast-growing Africa markets. They needed a platform that can:

- Receive data in a timely manner from distributor operations and third party data consolidators
- Perform data validations and transformation, for seamless integration with our client's global dashboards
- Generate actionable insights

Near real-time visibility into secondary sales with TradeEdge DMS and Market Connect

The TradeEdge team began by understanding the market landscape and the technology maturity of each stakeholder. While we had many successes in the past with TradeEdge Market Connect, this client's market posed unique challenges.

- Technology adoption among our client's distributors was minimal. Most of their distributors did not use any digital devices in their warehouses — pen-and-paper was still their system of use.
- Even when they had some digitization, there was low internet connectivity or low-speed internet, which made information sharing difficult.

Our technology solution needed to be low-tech to enable adoption, while also being high-tech to enable accurate and real-time insights.

Based on this knowledge, we built a three-pronged solution: Distributor Management Solution (DMS), Distributor Management App (DMA) and TradeEdge Market Connect.

Solution approach

Distributor Management Solution

DMS is a cloud-based integrated management system that performs sales, inventory, order and invoice management functions for the distributors.

Distributor Management App

DMA is a mobile application, designed uniquely for the African markets, to enable distributors in areas without internet connectivity still capture information through their mobile devices. This solution is also available on a browser for tablet users.

TradeEdge Market Connect

Market Connect, along with the distributor data portal captures, cleans, harmonizes and feeds the data into the reporting system to build actionable dashboards.

Solution landscape



Solution implementation

We implemented this solution on the cloud, enabling ease of access to data and insights to not only the local operating companies, but also the headquarters in Europe. We implemented it on a multi-tenant, shared-services model optimizing costs.

However, considering the lower tech maturity and internet penetration in Africa, we customized the solution in such a way that it didn't need high-speed or always-on internet connectivity.

We also ensured that the solution easily integrated with our client's existing ERP and supply chain management systems, minimizing the need for large-scale change management programs.

Distributor onboarding and roll out

Beginning with Rwanda and Congo markets, over the course of three years, EdgeVerve has rolled out this solution at 218 distributors across the African continent. We onboarded every distributor into the TradeEdge platform, handholding

them through the initial acquaintance phase. We created training material and support documents that enabled operating companies educate their distributors towards rapid adoption.

We also offered 8x5 managed service to ensure high partner compliance and closer relationship with distributors.

TradeEdge's solution empowered our client with cohesive distributor engagement and access to timely and accurate data.

Near real-time visibility into secondary data

Until just a few months ago, our client needed to physically go into warehouses to check stock levels, which is now available to them at the click of a button.

Proactive management of production and inventory

In fact, one of our client's distributors had a large quantity of stock in their warehouse. Given our client allows their distributors to return unsold / expired products, the

Outcomes

40-50%

improvement in distributor data accuracy

90%

reduction in manual reports generation — powered by automation and the platform's in-built BI tool

15-20%

reduction in stockout scenarios

8-10%

improvement in case-fill rates that directly translates to corresponding increase in distributor sales

distributor wasn't incentivised to sell them in a hurry. With TradeEdge's solution, our client noticed that there is no data of consumer sales for the stock sold to the distributor. They used this insight as an opportunity, ran a promotional campaign to sell these products, that would otherwise have just been returned.

Effective promotions

As a corollary, our client was able to improve the effectiveness of their promotions as well. By knowing what sells at what quantity in what location, our client was able to optimise their promotional strategies for maximum profitability.

Collaborative and profitable partnerships

Such stories encouraged all their operating companies to monitor and collaborate

closely with their distributors to keep the stock moving. Our client could also closely monitor sales of products across their brand portfolio and design their incentive programs accordingly.

Way forward

Our immediate vision for this solution is to democratize the use of data. We would like to bring all stakeholders on to the analytics platform to gain visibility into their areas of business. We've begun this by integrating the various systems used by stakeholders. We're taking it further by leveraging the artificial intelligence capabilities of TradeEdge to harmonize the data we receive. As we make the solution deeper and its impact wider, we look forward to delivering significant business results!

About TradeEdge

TradeEdge provides insights from distributors and retailers across the demand value chain to accelerate growth in emerging as well as developed markets. TradeEdge is a cloud based solution that enables brands gain maximum channel visibility, new distributors, improve retail execution and reach new markets faster.

About EdgeVerve

EdgeVerve Systems Limited, a wholly owned subsidiary of Infosys Limited; defines, develops and licenses innovative software products and cloud hosted business platforms. We focus on driving revenue growth, cost effectiveness and profitability for global corporations and their business ecosystems across the world. Visit www.edgeverve.com to know more about our innovations in financial services, insurance, retail, CPG, life sciences, manufacturing and telecom.



For more information, write to us at contact@edgeverve.com

www.edgeverve.com

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