



A CASE STUDY

Kuraray

How Kuraray Turns
Data into Decisions

More Than a Cliché

“Turning data into decisions.”

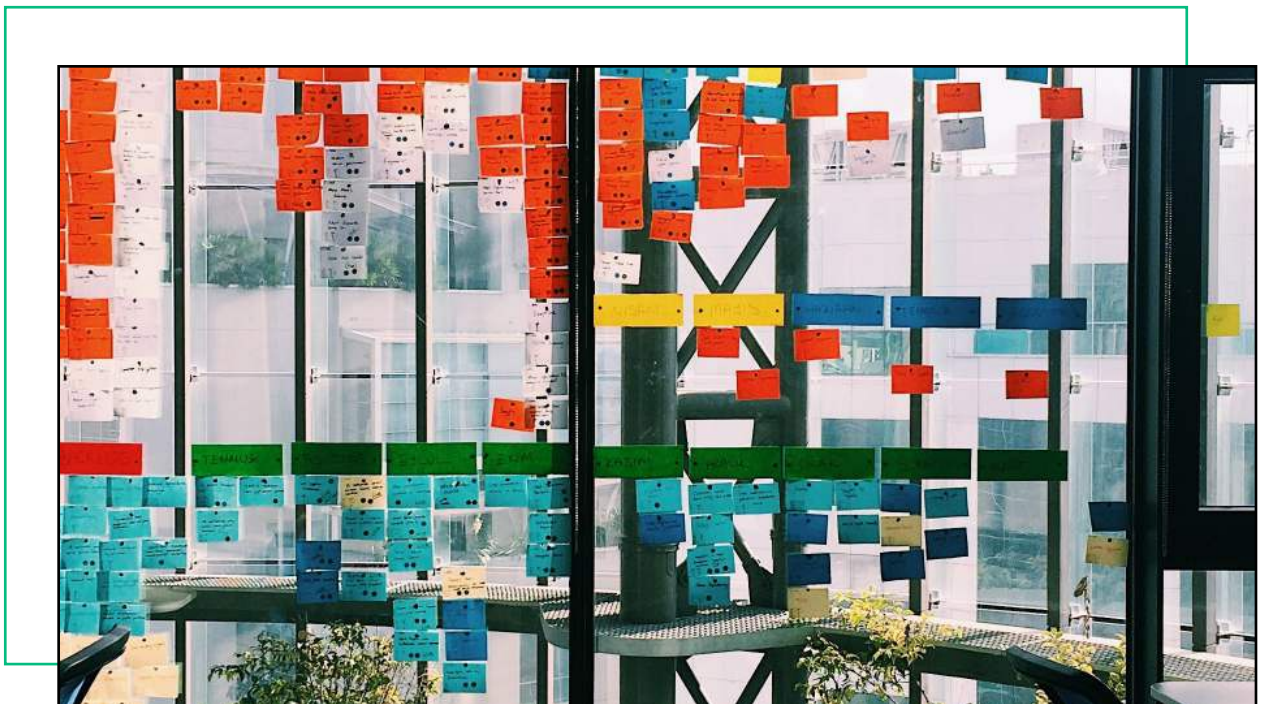
This rallying cry has become the mantra for Kuraray’s PVB Division, a division of global chemical manufacturer, Kuraray. For some, it sounds like a cliché, but senior director of global operations, John Siepeling, would be the first to tell anyone otherwise.

Recognizing the untapped potential of Kuraray’s data, Siepeling searched for solutions that could integrate the company’s global operations data silos. The division has seven manufacturing locations around the world, each with different production systems, the company captured valuable performance analytics every day but did not have a way to see all of the data in one place. Instead, the team had to manually compile diverse data from each location to create performance and trend reports. The process was tedious, costing hundreds of hours to build each report.

As he compiled reports manually, Siepeling dreamed of dashboards that could splice together data from the different manufacturing sites and replace dozens of disparate reports. In just a few clicks, he wanted personnel at all levels of Kuraray’s operations to have access to the data they needed when they needed it, rather than searching for reports in their email inboxes.

With the goal in mind, Siepeling began researching BI solutions and consulting with Kuraray’s IT team, who pointed him to Power BI. As Siepeling learned more about the tool, he knew it was what the company needed to synthesize data across the silos and analyze end-to-end performance. Siepeling’s vision of dashboards was getting clearer.

“Data into decisions.” The rallying cry was getting louder.



Seeing Across the Silos

Ready to turn his vision into reality, Siepelinga and his team participated in a three-day Power BI training class offered by BI consulting firm P3 Adaptive. The Kuraray team hoped to learn the basics of the tool, but according to Siepelinga, “we were floored.” The team gained not only a foundational understanding of Power BI, but Siepelinga was able to get a glimpse of possibilities he had not yet imagined.

Siepelinga consulted again with his IT team and kicked off a partnership with P3 Adaptive. Working hand-in-hand with P3 Adaptive consultants, Siepelinga saw the dashboards he had envisioned come to life right before his eyes. By importing data from the various silos into the Power BI data model, the team could centralize the data and quickly access information from across the business division.

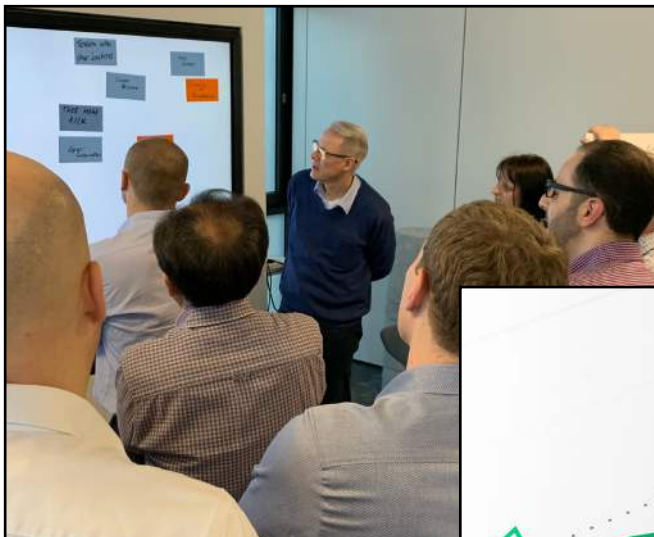
Siepelinga realized immediate changes to his own workflow.

Now in just seven clicks, he could create a report for his leadership team that previously took half a day just to gather information across the manufacturing sites.

That was Siepelinga’s first of many aha moments, as he realized how many people were doing the same type of manual work.

As Siepelinga and his team worked to weed out manual reports and reclaim that time for data analysis, “data into decisions” began echoing throughout the organization. Seeing the power of the tool and the potential to have all of their data in one place, leaders from supply chain, sales and finance reached out to Siepelinga. They worked together to integrate more data from other operational systems across the business division. Now when analyzing changes in sales data, the team could also understand impacts and actions for supply chain and operations.

As it would turn out, that capability came not a moment too soon.



Changing Plans on a Global Scale

Throughout early 2020, Kuraray continued to work closely with P3 Adaptive to refine and customize the dashboards. While the Kuraray team continued mastering their new BI capabilities, the world around them began to change as COVID-19 spread across global markets. Kuraray's leadership team quickly understood the threat that the pandemic posed to not only their business, but to the global economy as well. Like many businesses, Kuraray braced for impact and decided to take action. In a proactive approach, the leadership team established aggressive cash flow targets.

Siepelinga and his team turned to their dashboards to analyze cash flow and determine next steps. With the ability to see data across the business division, they were able to establish their goal quickly: reduce inventory by 18% by the end of the year. As Q2 was already in full swing, the team got to work and set a cadence of twice-weekly meetings to review and analyze sales data.

After tweaking operations across the division for a few months, it was clear that they were not moving the needle quickly enough: inventory was down only 4% after two months. The team returned to the data and built dashboards that provided real-time analysis by business area. Now stakeholders across production, sales, supply chain and more were empowered with data insights they needed to implement immediate changes. With improved communication and coordination across the operational silos, the team changed tactics and made some big decisions to curtail production.

The results were immediate: within the next month, the team achieved their goal of reducing inventory by 18%.

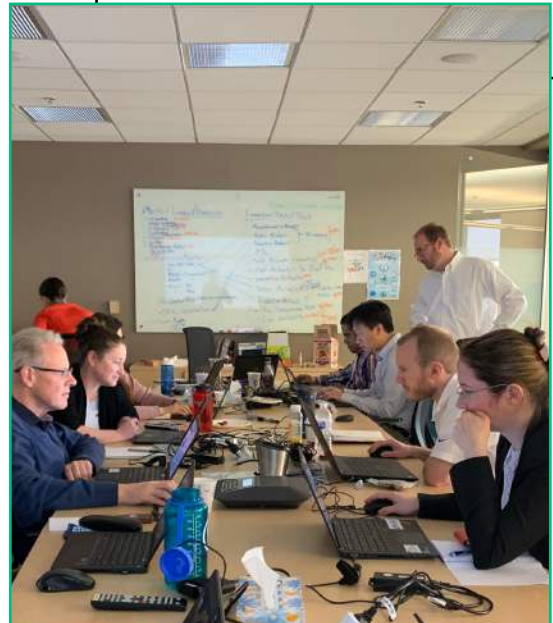
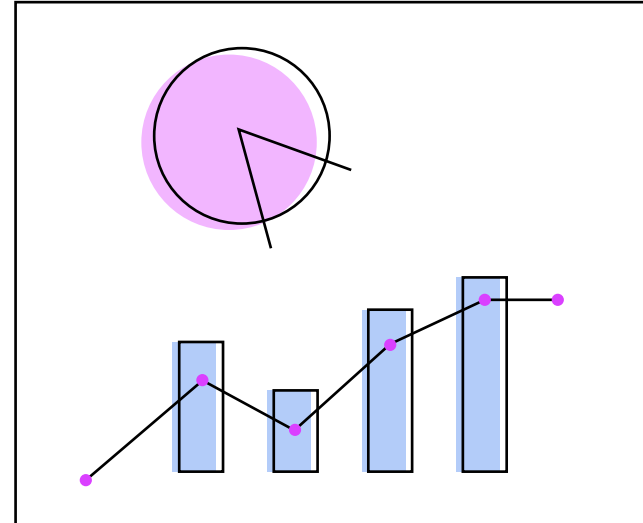
It was an eye-opening moment for Siepelinga and the leadership team. In a time when many businesses, particularly those in the manufacturing industry, were experiencing direct impacts of COVID-19, Kuraray had been able to respond rapidly to changing business conditions.

"It went beyond what we ever thought possible." Siepelinga credited Power BI with not only the ability to achieve their inventory goals quickly and efficiently, but in changing how they would operate for the future. "It turned our data into decisions," said Siepelinga. "That's what Power BI does. It gives you the tools and techniques to drill down, look at the data in different ways, and get what you need to make decisions."

Transforming Operations

Motivated by their successes to date, the Kuraray team continues elevating their expectations about how Power BI can be integrated across the company's global operations. Siepeling recognizes that they have only scratched the surface of the tool's capabilities. "We ask P3 Adaptive, can we do this in Power BI?" says Siepeling. "And the answer is always yes. Whether different sources of data or different technologies, we have always found a way to get it to work in Power BI."

As they continue searching for a limit to Power BI's capabilities, Siepeling's team has now set an ambitious goal: to eliminate all manual reports and use Power BI as the only source of information.



“Data into decisions.”

Can you hear the rallying cry?

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