

SOLUTION OVERVIEW



Warehousing, Distribution, and Transportation

Langham Logistics' Journey toward Business Intelligence

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The Challenge

Founded in 1988, Langham Logistics specializes in supply chain management solutions. The company offers warehousing, distribution, and transportation services to a range of industries, with a particular focus on pharmaceuticals and life sciences. In addition to helping companies move their products around the world quickly, efficiently, and accurately, Langham offers supply chain visibility and engages in strategic review discussion to help their customers operate at peak performance.

To achieve peak performance for themselves and their customers, Langham's executive team set out to improve their visibility to data across the enterprise. The company uses a range of different applications for accounting, CRM, warehouse management, and transportation. Each of those systems operates on a different data model, making it difficult to view and analyze information holistically.

Prior to working with Flexware Innovation, Langham was already a highly data-driven organization. Having implemented a data warehouse in the early 2000s, many of the company's employees developed the capabilities warranted for extracting and manipulating data from that system to produce reports. The process was labor intensive and manual, consuming large amounts of employees' time and producing output that was only moderately helpful.

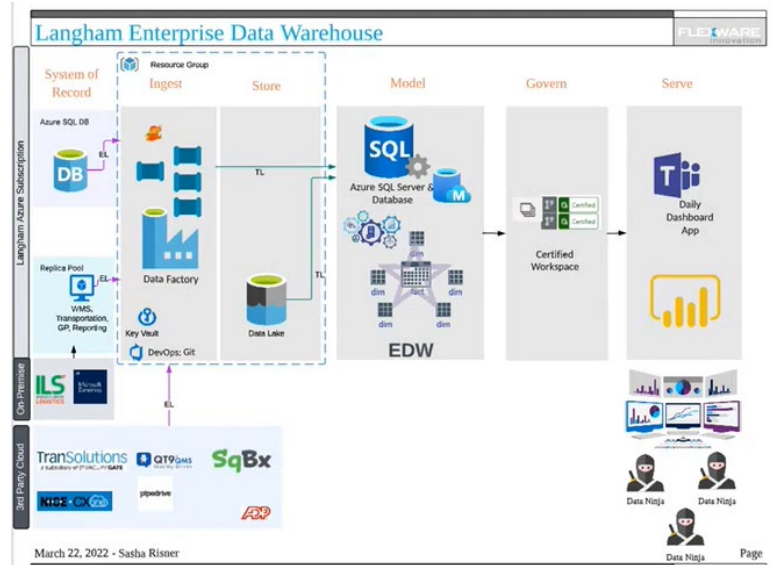
For instance, warehouse operations had limited visibility to incoming inventory. Accurate capacity planning relied on having timely information about sales, which was often time-consuming and required significant effort to acquire.

As business intelligence tools matured, executives at Langham seized the opportunity to generate faster, more impactful data analytics with considerably less effort. The objective was to establish a unified and reliable "single source of truth" that would ensure leaders in the organization were operating from the same set of facts. By shoring up the data architecture, company leaders believed they could empower their employees to drive higher levels of performance using data-driven decisions.

The Solution

Recognizing the potential benefits of modern business intelligence (BI) tools, Langham understood the importance of engaging an expert team to design and implement the most suitable system. They enlisted the support of Flexware Innovation to initiate the project and set the plan in motion.

Flexware recommended an enterprise data warehouse to consolidate and normalize data from multiple systems of record, including on-premise ERP software and warehouse management systems, as well as six different cloud-based solutions with some hosted in Microsoft Azure. Those SaaS solutions provide payroll, sales/CRM, phone, transportation & logistics, and quality management functionality.



The proposed architecture includes data transformation and normalization, allowing business users at Langham to gain a comprehensive holistic view of the organization’s activities and operations. For example, each distinct system has its own unique nomenclature to describe customers, products, and locations. Flexware’s architecture unifies that information so that users have a consistent, comprehensive view of the business.

Flexware worked with key business users throughout the organization to determine how the new BI system could help them work more efficiently, improve customer service, and increase revenue. Custom “daily dashboard” applications were created to support each business function, enabling instant access and visibility to information that previously required hours of compilation.

The Results

Today, business users throughout Langham Logistics have immediate access to the information they need. Operations personnel have the capability to monitor the rates of on-time delivery and on-time pickup, drilling down to specific customers or modes of transportation such as truckload, LTL, or parcel service. This ability allows them to identify trends, promptly address issues, and restore operations to an optimal state when necessary.

Sales account managers leverage the shared data to provide customers with updates on the company’s performance. During quarterly business reviews, the sales managers utilize the organization’s new BI capabilities to swiftly access each customer’s data. This enables them to present comprehensive supply chain metrics, offering clients tangible proof of Langham’s ability to deliver exceptional value.

The CFO recognizes the benefits of utilizing BI to analyze financial data instead of solely relying on the accounting system for reports. The ease and flexibility of extracting data from the BI system have proven to be a significant advantage for the team. With a unified system, the finance team now has visibility into both the financial and the operational aspects of the business. This enables trend analysis and the ability to delve into financial implications of operational decisions.

Langham’s new BI capabilities also support better strategic planning. The Director of Warehousing now possesses a comprehensive overview of capacity across the company’s eight facilities. With a deeper understanding of capacity, utilization, and forecasted demand, Langham’s leadership team is able to proactively plan for future warehouse space. Furthermore, it enables well-informed decisions regarding the optimal location for new facilities based on this knowledge.

John Huybers, Langham’s Director of Information Technology, describes the transformational nature of the BI project: “We’ve only just begun to take advantage of these new capabilities, but they’re already changing the way we operate. Executive managers have been enthusiastic early adopters, but as we build out new dashboards and reports, we see front-line users throughout the organization embrace

this as a fundamentally new way of doing business. It’s like taking the blinders off and seeing aspects of the business that were simply not visible to us in the past. We’re democratizing data and empowering people to deliver high-performance results.”

Executive leaders see the new BI system as a way to drive competitive advantage as well. “We’re seeing account managers use these kinds of reports and dashboards in the sales process now,” said Huybers. “For new customers, it shows that we’re committed to delivering measurable value. We’re also looking to expand our business with existing customers and our new BI capabilities enable us to communicate tangible value in a way that wasn’t possible before.”

