Appian

CASE STUDY:
NBTY

NBTY is the largest vertically integrated source of nutritional supplements in the US. The company manufactures, wholesales, and retails more than 22,000 products including vitamins, minerals, herbs, and sports drinks.

NBTY has manufacturing facilities in Canada, China, the UK, and the US, offering products at popular retail outlet chains such as Vitamin World in the US and Holland and Barrett in the UK and around the world. NTBY's products are marketed and sold in approximately 90 countries. NBTY embraces the core values of Teamwork, Integrity, Accountability, Respect and Agility.

CHALLENGE

Key to NBTY's business roadmap is the sale and distribution of supplements through both company-owned retail outlets and third-party wholesalers. As a leading name in the nutritional supplement and product industry, NBTY puts equal focus on maintaining a stellar in-store customer experience and optimizing internal efficiency and operational excellence as key drivers of business growth.

For programs across the organization, including store remodels, legal document review and product analytical testing, monitoring and approval, NBTY determined it was time to transform operations for a digital world and retire manual operating procedures. Cumbersome, paper-based processes created delays for critical areas of the business, possibly slowing the pace at which products reached the shelves. The organization recognized that it needed to modernize its IT infrastructure to keep up with consumer demand and quickly roll out high quality products to the market. Additionally, the company needed a means to track and monitor business activity for the areas where an opportunity for value generation existed.

APPROACH

As the business required an operating system that would accelerate performance across multiple departments, NBTY examined a number of custom software solutions. According to Karen Matijak, Vice President of Business Process Improvement at NBTY, off-the shelf solutions the organizations considered were too limited in capability.

"We looked at pre-packaged software, but most systems were geared towards solving a single issue or a particular component of the business," said Matijak. "We needed something that would allow for multiple applications to integrate with each other, accessible from a single user entry point. We wanted a platform to infuse the entire organization with a digital approach to enterprise technology."

NBTY selected Appian's Business Process Management Application Platform to drive program definition across its entire scope of work and enhance visibility and management. According to Matijak, Appian was deemed the optimal Platform-as-a-Service (PaaS) to incorporate defined business rules and automation for rapid acceleration of internal processes and increased sales throughout the organization.

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NBTY used Appian Cloud to allow the organization to rapidly develop a series of applications in an agile and integrated environment that could support continuous change and adaptation. Speed to implementation was identified as a key success factor for the agile approach NBTY chose to follow.

SOLUTION

NBTY first identified specific areas of operations in which to leverage the Appian platform. According to Matijak, establishing a quick win through a successful business application would help the organization realize the value of using Appian as an enterprise platform to develop additional apps united on the common platform.

"When we first developed Appian, we assessed the business and looked to deploy the software where we could establish a quick win with something that had real relevance to the business and our strategic goals," said Matijak.

NBTY's first application revamped the Store Remodel Process for Vitamin World retail outlets. The initial phase of this project was conducted by Matijak's BPI team in a Lean process transformation. The decision was made that a system approach was the best way to maintain the success of the lean project. Using Appian's process automation, business rules, and the Appian Records enterprise data management features, all previously manual and paper-based data collection is uploaded directly into Appian. This application provides all key stakeholders with the accurate status updates and milestones for the store projects in flight.

Following the Store Remodel Process application, NBTY developed an extension to the procurement process application to handle all legal contract reviews and approvals. This application creates a dynamic and streamlined data management system for review and approval of all legal documents, including contract creation, approvals, and procurement management.

For ensuring quality and compliance of product formulation, NBTY rolled out the Advanced Lab Samples Tracking Project. The application creates a highly-visible, end-to-end process management cycle for the review and approval of tested supplements before they are put into production for retail and wholesale distribution. Tasks are routed to specific associates within the lab testing department, along with approval notifications for senior leadership. The application is implemented in labs across the United States and allows for the quick exchange and update of information on production lots.

RESULTS

Through Appian's agile development approach, NBTY has accelerated operations for critical programs across the entire organization. Appian's process automation and data management has helped to reduce time-consuming steps critical to NBTY core business objectives, allowing the organization to maintain and grow its distribution of nutritional products worldwide. The Vitamin World Store Remodel Process reduced the remodel time for Vitamin World retail outlets from 35 days to 13 days. In addition, the Lab Sample Tracking project will allow for higher efficiency in testing, setting of business priorities electronically (eliminating phone calls and email) and better coordination with third party vendors.

Moving forward, NBTY will implement Appian in the Regulatory, International and US Wholesale departments. Appian will expand in those areas that are underserved by existing legacy systems or corporate ERP applications.