



CUSTOMER STORY

Streamlining retail staff scheduling

Target Australia leaders gained granular visibility into and control over in-store personnel, including new-store and special event staffing, with Anaplan. Their solution connects data from legacy workforce planning systems with feeds from in-store point-of-sale systems.



Company

Target Australia is one of the nation's largest department store chains, operating more than 305 stores across the country. The stores appeal to a broad range of consumers and stock everything from clothing and cosmetics to homewares and electrical items.

Use cases

- Workforce planning
- Workforce optimization
- Planning, budgeting, and forecasting (PB&F)

Challenges

- Legacy software and manual processes unable to scale with growing company
- Lack of staffing budget visibility at store level
- Difficulty tracking individual store performance
- Stock shrinkage due to staffing imbalances

Solution

- Anaplan for Workforce Planning
- Integration with existing workforce management solution
- Connected to data feeds from store-based point-of-sale systems

Results

- Automated visibility into in-store staffing allocation and spending
- Better management reporting for strategic and event planning

Why Anaplan

- Cloud solution is fast to set up, provides access anywhere
- Shared platform for all planning use cases
- "What-if" analysis powers a variety of planning activities

Since it was established in 1926 as a single store in Geelong, Victoria, Target Australia has expanded to serve more than 300 communities across the country. The increasing number of stores has, naturally, resulted in a growing staff, and the company now employs more than 14,000 people in its stores, distribution centers, and offices.

As the company's employee base expanded, the systems and processes it used to manage staffing in stores could no longer meet the growing need. The big issue was granularity: While wage budgets could be set at a store level, management at the head office had no way to determine how salary dollars were actually being spent within individual stores.

The company had a legacy workforce planning system that provided a central data store, but planners had to export data into multiple spreadsheets to manipulate and analyze wages in detail.

"We knew where money was being allocated by head office, but we could not determine what was actually happening on the store floor," says Zeeshan Shams, Workforce Planning Coach at Target Australia. "This made it difficult to track store performance and plan for change and expansion. We knew we needed to find a smarter way of working."

The company's transformation team, called "Simpler Stores," selected Anaplan because it could be readily integrated with data sources already in place at the company, including the legacy workforce application and point of sale (POS) systems in each store. They also liked how easily they could get started. "One of the most appealing features of Anaplan is that it is a cloud-based platform," Shams says. "This means that we aren't required to deploy and manage new servers to support another application." Implementation began in January 2016.

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Streamlining the planning process

The business benefits of the Anaplan platform became apparent soon after deployment. Users were quickly able to generate reports showing exactly what was happening within each store without manually extracting data from the legacy workforce planning application. The team created a model showing what individual stores spent on wages, on what categories of staff, and at what times. They also created store profiles that quantified staffing needs at store entrances and in particular departments. These store profiles provided a detailed breakdown of the number of staff, store trading hours, and the cost-per-hour involved.

“We now have a powerful validation tool that allows us to see what each of our stores should be spending versus what they are actually spending,” Shams says. “This makes formulating budgets and tracking performance against those budgets much easier.”

Taking a proactive approach

The Simpler Stores team then applied the Anaplan platform to determine where the company should allocate extra staff in stores. “We can quickly determine which stores need attention, and perhaps need to change their rosters or where in the store people are positioned,” Shams explains. This type of proactive approach, he says, would not have been possible with spreadsheet-based workflows.

Shams says that Anaplan also helps with staffing when the company plans special in-store events.

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The workforce team can estimate the extra staff resources they will need and balance those needs against both existing budgets and expected increases in revenue to forecast the net value of such events.

Anaplan’s modelling capability also helps the Simpler Stores team establish workforce needs for new outlets as Target Australia expands. “Anaplan is pivotal when it comes to planning how many people will be required when we open a new store,” says Shams. “We can readily examine data from nearby stores and forecast the staffing levels that a new facility will require.”

Supporting strategic planning

Based on these successes, management at Target Australia plans to put the Anaplan platform to work on use cases outside of workforce planning. For example, the company will use the platform to generate business cases for changes to the inventory mix and decide whether they should deploy more fixtures in stores.

“Anaplan will help us with our forward planning across the company,” says Shams. “Anaplan is a very powerful tool that supports operations across all our stores. We anticipate it will become even more valuable as we continue our growth and improve our levels of customer service in the future.”

About Anaplan

Anaplan is driving a new age of connected planning. Large and fast-growing organizations use Anaplan's cloud platform in every business function to make better-informed plans and decisions to drive faster, more efficient planning processes. Anaplan also provides support, training, and planning advisory services.

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