Appian

CASE STUDY:
United Matbouli Group

A Journey towards Digital Transformation and Operational Excellence

Founded in 1982 in Jeddah, United Matbouli Group (UMG) is the largest and one of the oldest distributors and retailers of home appliances and consumer electronics, and the sole distributor of Samsung products, in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. UMG consists of 5 companies, including a retail operation, Business-to-Business distribution to other retailers, and aftermarket servicing of all products. With more than 30 retail stores, more than 20 service centers, 500 resellers and more than 1,300 employees, UMG is a leader in most Home Appliance and Consumer Electronics segments across the Middle-East. The company's strategy to support continued growth is to contribute to society through quality activities tailored to customer wants, build strong ties in the local communities it serves, and respond positively to future challenges.

THE SITUATION

For UMG, everything comes down to the customer experience—whether that customer is a consumer or a retailer. The company has been on an unprecedented growth streak for the last few years, adding more stores, more warehouses, more service centers and more employees. As it further-scaled what was already a very large business, UMG leadership looked to preserve and enhance operational excellence through digital transformation. The pillars of UMG's business—supply chain operations and aftermarket services—were being run on a combination of heavily-customized ERP systems, SharePoint workflows and in-house development to fill in all the white spaces in between. As UMG grew, those systems were simply not sufficient to support its unique and competitively-differentiating processes. Monitoring and auditing the business was difficult because the underlying systems didn't provide enough transparency. Standardization of process and policies across the business was hard to enforce. End-users had to deal with too many systems, which slowed down the pace of work and increased the potential for error as people entered and re-entered data across various applications.

As the complexity of the business increased, the underlying IT architecture could not ensure the visibility, speed and responsiveness needed to deliver both operational and customer experience excellence. The company wanted to eliminate silos and mobilize its data and processes broadly across the organization—but was concerned about the development resources that would be required to build and maintain a host of new multi-platform business applications.

THE APPROACH

United Matbouli Group sought a solution along multiple dimensions. UMG leadership wanted to optimize the efficiency of business processes, increase automation and enforce standardization. They wanted a better way to manage, see and interact with enterprise

Our vision is to be known for being a leader; providing 5 star service to our customers. We realized that we needed a modern IT platform in order to remain at the forefront of service excellence.

Khaled Jezani, General Manager of Service and Maintenance, United Matbouli Group

data so employees, managers and executives could all make smarter, faster decisions. They wanted to reduce the number of systems employees needed to use to do their jobs, and wanted to enable broad enterprise mobility.

Traditional in-house development of all of these new customized capabilities would take far too long and require far too much investment of scarce developer resources. UMG sought a technology that would minimize coding to enable greater development speed, while also supporting an Agile methodology of iterative delivery. Their dual goal was to accelerate delivery of new business capabilities while also increasing the long-term flexibility and adaptability of the company's IT environment.

UMG built an evaluation criteria catalogue heavily-predicated on Business Process Management (BPM) capabilities. They weighed that catalogue of needs against published industry analyst research and selected three vendors to participate in a proof-of-concept. In a matter of days, Appian completed all of the POC requirements thanks to its integration of industrial-strength BPM and data management in a Low-Code Development Platform environment. Based on Appian's superior performance in the POC, and the strength if its customer references, UMG selected Appian as its platform for customer-focused digital transformation.

THE IMPLEMENTATION

UMG identified Product Returns and Supply Chain Procurement as its first to areas for Appian deployment. Working in Appian's Agile methodology, a collaborative team representing UMG IT and business were able to create and deploy both solutions in only 4 months. Appian's low-code development approach—where applications are visually composed rather than coded—enabled this impressive time-to-market.

Appian's industrial-strength power gave UMG everything it needed in one integrated platform, including data management capabilities (called Appian Records), comprehensive process optimization features, business rules, content management, collaboration, detailed reporting and analytics, and a unique write once, run everywhere architecture that makes every app a mobile app with zero additional development.

After the rapid success of its two initial deployments, UMG established its formal Appian Program, including creation of a Center of Excellence, creation of a defined Process/Application Repository, establishment of policies, procedures and best practices, and the formation of a Steering Committee to guide future projects and prioritizations.

One of the next Appian deployments was Customer Case Management. This application reduced the numbers of systems Call Center Agents were required to use from four to one, while also providing a 360-degree view of a case with automated assignments and escalations. Shortly after that, UMG deployed its Appian-based Technician App, which allows service techs to see and complete their daily work schedule in a mobile app that requires no manual entry of service details.

THE SOLUTION

Transforming Customer Service and Supply Chain Operations with Low-Code

United Matbouli Group ultimately used the Appian Platform to provide a unifying layer across its entire legacy architecture, and a single point of user interface (simple and consistent across platforms and devices) to make it easier for UMG employees to do their work.

Today, more than 600 UMG employees use Appian across more than 40 processes that touch 14 departments across the enterprise. Appian has transformed how UMG interacts with its customers in the call center and in the field. 63 percent of those users are accessing Appian

on their mobile devices—out in the retail stores, on field service calls, or to review something and make an approval while on a flight. In addition to its front-line customer service, Appian has also transformed UMG's supply chain management operations. For example, product returns from retailer partners were previously handled through email and phone calls, followed by manual re-entry of data into various back-end systems. Appian has automated those processes, so that work is now done faster, with less chance of human error. Even better, now UMG managers can see the full picture of a retailer customer in that customer's Record and can see the total ratio of returned products in order to determine the overall profitability of that customer. This is an example of how Appian has helped UMG make previously-opaque processes and customer relationships fully visible for better analysis.

Appian integrates to UMG's underlying multiple ERP systems and SharePoint sites, field service systems, a packaged rebates system, MSFT Dynamics, Active Directory and more across Customer Service and Case Management, Supply Chain Procurement, Returns (both Retail and Wholesale), Rebate Management and Stock Distribution. Appian surfaces data from those systems to provide a 360-degree view of a customer, a product and a transaction or service request in the context of the business moment. This makes the company and its employees more knowledgeable and responsive at any point of customer interaction, supporting a better and more seamless customer journey.

THE RESULTS

The results of UMG's Appian program have been staggering:

- Appian accelerated resolution of customer issues by 300 percent

- Appian reduced average call center call times from 5 minutes to 3 minutes.

- Appian has cut the time needed for a UMG employee to create a new customer service case by 50%

We are keenly focused on the needs of our customers. That is the source of UMG's market leadership. Appian gives us the ability to see all of the data we need to make smarter decisions, and execute the processes required for faster action, allowing us to stay ahead of the competition.

Fahad Al-Zomaia, Chief Executive Officer of United Matbouli Group