## Business challenge

Travis Perkins' need to develop a mobile and web-based buying experience for a new generation of customers exposed deficiencies in its data governance processes

## Transformation

As part of its omni-channel journey Travis Perkins uses IBM® Business Process Manager on Cloud to control essential data processes—without approval processes that prove too restrictive

## Business benefits

### Institutes

multiple high-level data governance processes

### Improves

data collection, quality and validation

### Accesses

actionable customer behavioral data and market intelligence

# Travis Perkins

## Building effective data governance with IBM business process software

Travis Perkins plc is a British builders' merchant and home improvement retailer based in Northampton. Structured as 21 distinct businesses, the Group operates over 2,000 outlets and has more than 28,000 employees in the United Kingdom & Ireland. Its product lines include general building materials, kitchens and bathrooms, hand and power tools, heating and plumbing, landscaping materials, painting and decorating materials, timber and joists. For more information, please visit www.travisperkinsplc.co.uk

*"We needed to control the process of data entry, and that's where IBM BPM on Cloud comes in. It's a very important tool for building that process, to assuring adherence and to formalizing approvals."*

—David Todd, group data director at Travis Perkins

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## Exposing data governance deficiencies

The digital revolution has finally reached one of the UK's last bastions of traditional brick-and-mortar retail - the builders' merchants market.

Gone are the days when builders selected materials and negotiated price with a Travis Perkins branch manager over a cup of coffee. For the new generation of customers mobile devices and the web are replacing coffee and conversation as the way to do business.

According to David Todd, group data director at Travis Perkins, when most sales were generated in-store, Travis Perkins was able to "get away" with collecting minimal data on its customer's buying behaviors and the product mix and inventory available at any of its branches. That has changed as customers have come to expect a multi-channel experience.

"The last few years we've invested a lot of time and money improving our websites and building a mobile channel. We need to offer our customers a great experience with their mobile phone so they can find the products that they want, ensure that that product is in stock, order it and select whether they want that product delivered to the work site or ready for pick-up at the branch. It forced us to reexamine our view of data. In the past, we saw it as an inconvenience of sorts, now we realize that data is key to being a successful 21st-century company."

Adopting mobile and web strategies, however, exposed some critical data management process issues. As Todd began to make product data available to customers he noticed problems with data quality and completeness, symptoms of two greater issues. First, some of the systems in the company's builders' merchant branches are 25 years old and not equipped to follow validation standards for data entry. Second, data silos—a consequence of Travis Perkins' growth-through-acquisition strategy - resulted in multiple sets of product information in different systems with no interconnectivity.

"We needed a tool to effectively govern processes related to data collection, entry and change, but it couldn't be too restrictive," says Todd. "We wanted to get lots of information through a process into our systems but without requiring approvals for every change."

## Gaining control with business process software

As part of its omni-channel journey Travis Perkins uses business processes management software to control some of their essential data process. With IBM Business Process Manager (IBM BPM) on Cloud Todd has instituted multiple new high-level data governance processes, including data collection, data change and approval.

"There are a number of elements we needed to improve. The first was data quality, and now we've got some rules and validations in place to make sure that as we move forward we're collecting the right type of information and not letting bad quality data through to our systems," says Todd. "We needed to control the process of data entry, and that's where IBM BPM on Cloud comes in. It's a very important tool for building that process, to assuring adherence and to formalizing approvals."

"What's been very interesting is that IBM BPM on Cloud has sparked a lot of interest across the business as a whole. Everyone's realizing how valuable a business processes management tool can be to some of our other processes," he says.

Complementing his business process management software, Todd has embarked on a Master Data Management (MDM) program in a drive to eliminate data silos and consolidate data into a single version of the truth. He infuses IBM BPM on Cloud with timely, trusted data from MDM while utilizing IBM BPM on Cloud to implement and enforce policies and optimize workflows for the data.

Being a SaaS solution, the IBM business process software aligns with a Travis Perkins initiative called, 'Path to the Cloud', which envisions moving all key applications to the cloud and making the company virtually data center- free within the next 10 years.

"As we move forward, we need to be able to scale efficiently and dynamically and provide performance solutions to our key applications. The cloud is a good way for us to be able to achieve that," Todd says. "We've already done some work to move our websites into Cloud and we're looking to move most of the newer software applications we're purchasing to SaaS. The cloud gives us much better scalability and performance options and essentially gives us and our customers better solutions."

## Exploiting data as an asset

As Travis Perkins continues to improve data collection, quality and validation the company seeks out ways to exploit data as an asset. Todd leads conversations at every level of the organization—up to the executive board - about extracting more value from it and being at the leading edge of what he sees as an oncoming data revolution.

Data's rising profile has fundamentally changed the relationship between IT and business. Rather than being perceived as more or less an order-taker for the business, Todd's department now works closely with the business to shape requirements. "We ask questions to understand why the business wants to do what they want do, and not only help them achieve it but help them achieve it in a more efficient and better way through our processes."

Todd sees his role evolving as well, into one increasingly forward-looking. As group data director he'll be less focused on master data elements than on working hand-in-hand with the business to plot Travis Perkins' course based on market and customer intelligence. In fact, less than a year into that business process management journey, the company is already utilizing data and a basic set of analytics to learn more about customer behaviors and to spot trends in their spending. Such customer intelligence forms the foundation of marketing campaigns across all of Travis Perkins' businesses and is vital to exposing new market opportunities.

"I think cognitive data investigations and analysis is inevitable. Every company's going to have to start using that in the next few years because the sheer amount of data that will be available will be just too great to use any other techniques. So I certainly see us going down that path," he says. "For us right now, it's about doing the best as we can to provide what our customers want, keeping an eye on how the market is changing and understanding how technology is driving change with the market. I think we have the potential to be a game-changer in our industry."
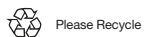
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