



# Digital transformation in a nutshell

Cracking the supply chain strategy in the cloud

Accenture helped Blue Diamond Growers improve forecast accuracy during the pandemic with SAP® Integrated Business Planning (IBP) platform





Call for change

# A smarter solution for growth

Blue Diamond Growers, the world's largest almond supplier and processing company, provides more than 80% of the world's almonds. As a co-operative representing more than 3,000 almond growers in California, the company strives to realize the best return on its growers' investments while delivering a quality, consistent product.

To ensure its members' success, Blue Diamond Growers innovates to open new markets, forge new relationships and develop new products to stimulate demand. This proactive strategy has led to a shift in its operating model, from pure supply of raw materials for integration into other products, to packaging products directly for the consumer market. In parallel, it is also moving into ecommerce.

As a result of these innovations, together with volatile market conditions, Blue Diamond Growers' supply chain became increasingly complex.

Forged over many years, its supply chain systems were disjointed and, because of an inability to scale, relied heavily on Excel spreadsheets. Accurately forecasting supply and demand was a challenge. The company realized that its growth, and that of its members, depended on a smarter, customer-centric supply chain solution and set about creating one with Accenture. During this journey, the global pandemic would exert additional pressure on Blue Diamond Growers' supply chain, forcing adjustments to cope with shifting demand.

When tech meets human ingenuity

# Pivoting in a pandemic

Pre-pandemic, during the first phase of work to create a new supply chain solution, Blue Diamond Growers closely collaborated with Accenture to completely transform and optimize its legacy supply chain management approach. Accenture collaborated with Blue Diamond Growers to design, build, and launch a globally scalable, customer-centric and flexible supply chain planning solution for the entire enterprise on SAP® Integrated Business Planning (IBP) platform.

This intelligent solution was designed to accomplish several core objectives. Principal among them was the ability to reduce the amount of time and effort required to consolidate, validate and analyze supply chain data, especially contract data and other crucial metrics such as forecast accuracy, inventory optimization and plan

adherence. The solution would also deliver end-to-end visibility into the process and centralized data for real-time visibility for planning purposes. Other objectives included reduction in inventory levels, delivering to customer demand on time and in full, and achieving distribution optimally across the complex supply chain.

When the global pandemic struck, Blue Diamond Growers asked Accenture to assess the resilience of its supply chain to see where the gaps were. The organization wanted to be able to make the necessary shifts to keep running at its full potential. As a result of changing customer needs during the pandemic, demand for certain products had completely evaporated whereas demand for others had doubled. The company was forced to accelerate from a weekly to a daily,

near real-time, planning cycle, which had huge implications for its technical capacity and ability to get the right products out to the market. Accenture and SAP® deployed Supply Chain Scenario Planning-as-a-Service, a joint solution that uses SAP IBP and Accenture services to provide a fast, pragmatic response to supply chain disruption. Over a two-month period, a collaborative Accenture, SAP IBP, and Blue Diamond Growers team met daily to evaluate the most critical supply chain impacts and iterate simulation scenarios to creatively reallocate its nut supply to satisfy shifting demands. Accenture provided pre-configured templates for fast, easy extraction and upload of the required data from applications and configured and modeled SAP IBP.

Accenture worked in partnership with Blue Diamond Growers'

business and IT experts to ensure a smooth implementation, testing and rollout of the new supply chain solution, as well as its integration with the on-premises SAP system. Teams from both companies consistently shared feedback on weekly progress calls, making adjustments and modifications as needed.

To further facilitate the solution adoption journey, Accenture's change management teams provided virtual training for Blue Diamond Growers' employees before, during and after the supply chain management solution rollout. The agile training brought team members across different functions together to learn how to use the new intelligent planning solution. They trained the team on all aspects of the custom-developed supply chain solution, becoming fully proficient well ahead of the full launch.

A valuable difference

# Forecasting to future-proof

Blue Diamond Growers has successfully transitioned from a disjointed, multi-system spreadsheet supply chain approach to a fully integrated, cloud-based, customized SAP IBP solution that provides a single source of truth for demand and supply planning. Thanks to a reduction in manual processes, supply chain teams now have the time to focus on higher value strategic activities, including creating a more customer-centric supply chain and speeding up its digital transformation with insight-driven supply chain management innovation. Teams can analyze contract and other data from various existing spreadsheets and tools around production, purchasing and deployment and they can more efficiently and transparently facilitate collaboration between supply and demand planners across the company's consumer, ingredients and international business segments.

A single dashboard provides a bird's-eye-view of all supply chain data, enabling supply chain leads to forecast customers' demands more accurately and manage supply and demand in real time. This can be done collaboratively across the enterprise. Equipped with this new, clearer view into changing market conditions and complex logistics, the company can run accurate, future-looking "what if" scenarios and simulations in real time to identify and resolve planning and execution gaps with activities such as increased trade promotions, improved customer delivery metrics (over time, as a result of faster response times), and inventory optimization. Demand planners' forecast accuracy improved by 10% within the first six months of being equipped with this solution, allowing them to deliver as closely as possible to customer expectations.





With Supply Chain Scenario Planning-as-a-Service, Blue Diamond Growers was able to take swift action to protect its members' interests when faced with unprecedented changes to its supply chain brought about by the global pandemic. The company was able to switch from a weekly to daily planning cycle which helped it meet the increased demand, manage additional warehouse capacity, and ultimately overcome the obstacles created by unplanned local lockdowns, lowering supply chain costs over time.

The intelligent SAP IBP solution unifies and strengthens all Blue Diamond Growers' supply chain data, providing insights that will help the company continue to build stronger relationships—not only with its thousands of growers, but also with current and future customers.

SAP S/4HANA® in the cloud is also now live at Blue Diamond Growers, a move that will further advance the company's real time analytics and predictive capabilities. Accenture continues to support Blue Diamond Growers in its digital transformation journey, with upcoming projects including the application of artificial intelligence to predict harvests.