

## Case Study: Financial Report Automation for an Agricultural Supplies Distributor

### Client Background:

Our client, a prominent agricultural supplies distributor in the Pacific Northwest, recently adopted a new Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system. The goal was to gain an integrated view of operational activities and financial outcomes. However, the system's complexity hindered decision-makers from extracting and analyzing essential data.

### Challenges:

1. Lack of Holistic Financial View:
  - Decision-makers were unable to obtain a comprehensive view of financial performance without extensive spreadsheet-based analysis that took countless hours and often has human data entry errors.
  - Operating reviews were infrequent and ineffective due to partial data, or incorrect data which leads to inability to make informed decisions.
2. Reactive Decision-Making:
  - Management spent more time addressing immediate issues ("firefighting") rather than strategic planning based on business insights.

### Root Causes:

1. Captive Data: Data was siloed within the ERP system and could not be easily organized into actionable insights.
2. Dependence on Spreadsheets: Reliance on spreadsheet tools meant analyses were conducted infrequently, often resulting in debates rather than decisive actions.

### Solutions:

1. Data Infrastructure and Engineering: We developed a comprehensive data warehousing and business intelligence solution for ERP data. Technologies Used: Azure SQL Server for the cloud-based data warehouse / Fivetran for the Extract-Transform-Load (ETL) solution / Tableau for reporting.
2. Rapid Decision Support:
  - Collaborated with the CFO and finance team to develop several reports in Tableau, enabling real-time analysis.
  - Created reports to address key management questions, such as "What is the cost-to-serve our top ten customers by revenue?"
3. Break/Fix Support:
  - Labs8 acted as a fractional analytics team, maintaining and improving reports as the executive team requires.
  - Provided ongoing support to ensure the reports remain relevant and up to date with evolving business needs.

### Results:

1. Improved Efficiency: Automated data extraction and transformation reduced the time spent on manual analysis, thus financial performance reviews became more frequent, and data driven.
2. Enhanced Decision-Making: Provided management with up-to-the-minute analysis of financial metrics, customer inventory, and sales management, which allowed the shift in focus from reactive to proactive planning which leads to greater business impact in revenue and cost management.
3. Actionable Insights: Enabled quick identification of cost-to-serve metrics for top customers, facilitating targeted strategies for revenue growth.
4. Ongoing Support: Continuous improvement and maintenance of reports ensured they adapted to the company's changing needs. Fractional analytics support provided the flexibility to address new questions and requirements from the executive team.

### Client Testimonial:

*"Labs8's expertise in data management and analytics has transformed our financial reporting processes. Their solutions have given us the clarity and speed we needed to make informed decisions and plan strategically. We're now able to focus on growth rather than just managing day-to-day operations." — CFO, Agricultural Supplies Distributor.*