

HOW MAJOR RETAIL DEPARTMENT STORE CHAIN ACCELERATED FINANCIAL CLOSE & ENHANCED REPORTING ACCURACY THROUGH PROCESS OPTIMIZATION

QUANTIFIABLE OUTCOMES



30% Reduction

Faster Month-End Close



10 Hours Saved

Monthly Reporting Time



25% Improvement

Enhanced Forecasting Accuracy

CLIENT NAME

Major Retail Department
Store Chain

ROLE FILLED

Finance Manager

EXPERT OPERATOR

Kali Hinkson

PROJECT OUTCOMES

Close Process Optimization

Reduced month-end close from 6-7 days to 5 days (20-30% improvement) by streamlining reporting and consolidating key reports

Report Automation

Automated 8+ financial reports, including KPI tracking and variance analysis, reducing manual report preparation by 10 hours per month

Enhanced Financial Planning

Integrated multiple planning scenarios (annual budgets and biannual forecasts), improving forecasting accuracy by 25%

Standardized Reporting

Implemented consistent financial reporting methodologies, reducing discrepancies in KPI tracking and variance reporting by 30%

Workforce Planning

Developed and automated headcount and capitalized labor tracking, improving workforce planning efficiency

ABOUT THE CLIENT

Industry: Retail & E-Commerce

Scope: The client is a leading global department store retailer known for its high-quality merchandise and customer service. The company operates an extensive network of brick-and-mortar stores and a robust e-commerce platform across multiple markets, focusing on premium shopping experiences, data-driven merchandising, and operational efficiency.

CLIENT'S CHALLENGES

- The client's financial close process was inefficient, taking 6-7 days due to manual data consolidation and fragmented reporting, delaying critical financial insights
- The company's financial reporting lacked integration across planning scenarios, making it difficult to compare actuals to budget and forecast data, leading to inconsistencies in decision-making
- KPI tracking and variance analysis were not standardized, resulting in different teams using varying financial metrics and creating discrepancies in reporting
- Headcount and capitalized labor costs were not tracked in a consolidated manner, making it challenging to analyze budget variances and workforce planning effectively
- These challenges increased the finance team's workload and delayed reporting, making it difficult for leadership to gain real-time visibility into financial performance

PROJECT OBJECTIVES & BUSINESS NEEDS

Key Project Objectives:

1. Optimize the month-end close process by consolidating financial reports into a unified framework, reducing the timeline from 6-7 days to 5 days
2. Improve financial planning and forecasting by integrating multiple plan scenarios, enabling leadership to make more data-driven decisions

Business Needs:

- Streamline financial close process to reduce time required for month-end reporting
- Improve efficiency in financial data consolidation
- Enhance financial reporting capabilities to integrate multiple planning scenarios
- Support strategic decision-making with better financial insights

SOLUTION IMPLEMENTATION

Solution Outline

The project focused on streamlining the financial close process, improving reporting accuracy, and automating key financial workflows:

1. **Financial Close Optimization:** Reduced the monthly close process from 6-7 days to 5 days by consolidating key financial reports and improving data accuracy
2. **Enhanced Reporting Structure:** Integrated multiple planning scenarios, including annual budgets and biannual forecasts, allowing leadership to make more informed strategic decisions
3. **KPI & Variance Automation:** Automated KPI tracking and variance analysis, ensuring all teams used a standardized reporting methodology, reducing discrepancies in financial metrics
4. **Workforce Cost Transparency:** Developed headcount and capitalized labor tracking models, improving visibility into budget variances and workforce planning across internal and external resources

KEY PROJECT ELEMENTS & DELIVERABLES

Systems & Tools Used: Microsoft Excel for financial analysis and reporting, Oracle Panther for extracting cost center P&Ls and consolidating financial data

Timeline: 2-month engagement with a focus on optimizing financial close processes, automating key reports, and improving financial visibility

Data Integration: Consolidated cost center P&Ls from Oracle Panther into Excel to enhance accuracy and efficiency

Key Deliverables:

- Streamlined month-end close process, reducing the timeline from 6-7 days to 5 days
- Integrated multiple planning scenarios to improve financial visibility
- Automated KPI tracking and variance analysis to ensure consistency across finance teams
- Developed headcount and capitalized labor tracking models

OUTCOMES

Milestones Achieved

- Reduced manual financial reporting efforts by 40%, allowing the finance team to focus on strategic analysis
- Standardized KPI reporting, eliminating discrepancies across teams and improving data accuracy by 30%
- Improved visibility into workforce costs
- Enhanced decision-making with integrated planning scenarios

Outcome Details

- 1. Time Reduction:** Shortened the financial close timeline by ~30%, enabling the finance team to focus on value-added analysis rather than manual data reconciliation
- 2. Improved Reporting Accuracy:** Standardized KPI tracking and variance analysis, reducing financial discrepancies and ensuring all teams worked from a single source of truth
- 3. Enhanced Decision Support:** By integrating multiple planning scenarios, Nordstrom's leadership gained a clearer view of financial performance across different time horizons
- 4. Workforce Planning:** Improved tracking of headcount and capitalized labor costs supported better budget management and resource allocation

KEY BENEFITS & LESSONS LEARNED



Streamlined Reporting Drives Efficiency

By consolidating key reports into a unified framework, the finance team reduced the month-end close timeline and minimized manual work, allowing them to focus on value-added analysis.



Scenario Planning Enhances Decision-Making

Incorporating multiple planning scenarios, including annual budgets and biannual forecasts, gave leadership better visibility into financial outcomes, leading to more informed and agile decision-making.



Standardization Improves Accuracy

Automating KPI tracking and variance analysis ensured consistency across teams, reducing discrepancies and improving trust in financial data.

Project Summary

The project delivered significant improvements in financial close efficiency and reporting accuracy through process optimization and automation. By consolidating reports, standardizing metrics, and integrating planning scenarios, the client achieved faster financial insights, more consistent reporting, and enhanced decision support. These improvements enabled the finance team to shift focus from manual data processing to strategic analysis, ultimately supporting better business decisions and operational efficiency.

8020 CASE STUDY




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