

**Thorogood case study**  
Consumer Packaged Goods

# Streamlining a Complex Supply Chain with Anaplan and Microsoft Azure

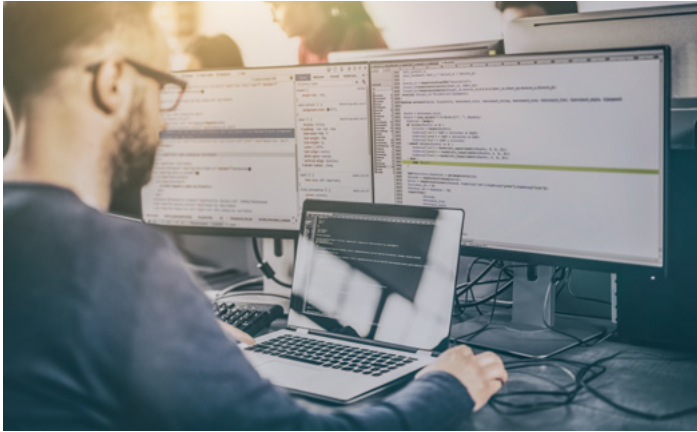
When faced with the need to revamp the workflow of one of their most important business units, executives at a long-time client approached Thorogood to consider how the two organizations might tackle the challenge together.

The client, a major Consumer Goods company, derived a significant portion of their revenue by packaging their products into bulk, variety, and promotional packages for major national retailers to sell. From back-to-school bundles of deodorant to holiday gift packages of tea, the ability to work with retailers effectively to customize and deliver such specialty packages was an important value-add for high-volume players in the competitive Consumer Goods marketplace.

But those benefits were not easily attained. To get a specialty pack produced and onto store shelves required a multi-step process that involved close orchestration of parallel but

interdependent workflows across different business units - sales, finance, and manufacturing.

At the time Thorogood began working with the customer, the process was operating more or less by hand. Order forms were typed up and attached to emails. Emails were forwarded up and down two different workflow chains as elements of the order were approved or adjusted at varying junctures. Sales and pricing information was logged in a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet that stretched to 41 columns across. This often resulted in expansive group emails that could number in the hundreds, along with multiple versions of spreadsheets which were hard to track and manage.



## The way forward: Anaplan, Microsoft Azure, and the power of the cloud

Anaplan, a cloud-based Software as a Service (SaaS) platform, offered functionality that was critical to fulfilling the client's vision. Its intuitive, spreadsheet-like interface allowed for the user-friendly data entry capabilities that the customer desired. Meanwhile, the software's flexibility enabled Thorogood consultants to create data models that were similar to the Excel-based versions that were already in use throughout the supply chain, but with an interconnectedness that would enable the various departments to share real-time read-and-write access to the data that was common to their work functions.

### Shaping a vision for seamless collaboration

The goal was to turn this disjointed operation into an interconnected whole. That required not only an intimate knowledge of the current business intelligence landscape, but also a keen understanding of the intricacies of the Consumer Goods business, and the specific demands of the client's business operation.

During a three-day planning seminar at the client's North American headquarters, a team of Thorogood consultants helped to develop a vision, identifying a list of concrete objectives that could be achieved via the smart implementation of the latest BI platforms. By increasing collaboration between departments, the client could reduce the time it took to complete each order, improve the speed and accuracy of the financial calculations involved, and utilize data to identify inefficiencies and sources of unrealized value. In doing so, the company would be able to increase margins and strengthen relationships with retailers, while also freeing up man hours to devote to other endeavors.

After the initial planning workshop, Thorogood led the client through a series of visioning sessions that featured a showcase of potential solutions. Ultimately, they settled on a phased approach, which used a combination of Anaplan and Microsoft Azure.

Thorogood used the Anaplan platform to build a series of models to connect aspects of the process. This included an application for tracking and managing each order from sale through to fulfilment, an application that assisted with the negotiation of third party packaging contracts, and another that allowed Finance managers to quickly assess the financial viability of each order that was placed. The solution allowed for a high degree of transparency, so that users could see a history of changes that had been made, and provided a shared and up to date view of changes, eliminating the confusion that once existed when multiple versions of a spreadsheet existed.

The solution also leveraged Microsoft Azure's robust, cloud platform to store historical snapshots of the information entered in Anaplan in a SQL Server database, which allowed the company to connect a variety of tools to the data in order to perform valuable analyses. This enabled the client to continuously monitor key performance indicators and improve the efficiency and financial performance of its specialty and promotional pack operation.

Thanks to the new solution, a process that once required 10-12 weeks to unfold can now be completed on a much shorter timeline, freeing up man hours to be spent on real value-driving activities. The new solution also enables the client to better serve some of its most important customers, giving it an advantage over competing manufacturers and solidifying confidence in an important aspect of its bottom line.



#### Find out more:

Interested to know more about Thorogood's experience with Consumer Goods, Anaplan, or Azure?  
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