

# Unilever

Unilever is the name behind many of the world’s best-known food brands, including Knorr, Hellmans, Flora and Lipton, as well as home and personal care brands such as Persil, Dove, Lynx, Signal and Lux. Formed in 1930 from the merger of Dutch company Margarine Unie and English company Lever Brothers, the group produces and distributes more than 400 leading brands, with operations in 80 countries handled by more than 350 operating companies. Unilever is a major player in the FMCG sector.

 **PROBLEM**

Unilever is focusing resources on global brands in order to greater leverage its world-wide resources. The Path to Growth initiative is a top-level corporate strategy aimed at developing key global brands, building the international customer base, and focusing on challenging procurement savings targets. Path to Growth is supported by the Unilever Information Project (UIP), a joint business/IT initiative to improve the consistency of global-level information and to facilitate its exchange.

UIP is designed to bring together complex, time-variant operational data from a large number of disparate systems across a variety of different operating units. Standardizing this data and making it available to global management teams will allow Unilever to identify global trends and opportunities more quickly, and to use improved financial and brand information to deliver greater efficiency in global procurement. Account managers will also benefit from seeing a full breakdown of sales by brand and by customer for each country.

Chris Broe, Head of Information Applications and Architecture Group at Unilever, says: “Information is the life-blood of the business, and we didn’t want technology to get in the way. We wanted to put the relevant information in front of the business people who needed it, and to keep things as simple as possible. The data we needed to collate and present was only going to be relevant to a relatively small percentage of Unilever employees, but we wanted to make it available wherever those people might be.”

 **SOLUTION**

Unilever selected Kalido as the key enabling technology behind UIP. Kalido is a model-driven data warehouse automation solution that provides corporate agility by releasing

“The ability to manage information from across our organization is fundamental to our growth plans. Kalido has delivered significant improvements in the consistency of information, and has made a major contribution to the benefits that are being accrued through UIP.”

**Chris Broe**  
HEAD OF INFORMATION APPLICATIONS  
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Unilever

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business information locked in operational systems. The solution has the power to bridge the “information disconnect” common in global systems by providing a coherent view of otherwise isolated data. Its business information model driven architecture allows the separation of data from relationships, giving the ability to store, manage and deliver data even in a changing business framework.

Unilever now has commonality across supply chain, brand, customer and financial data, all cross-referenced by the same master reference data warehouse, ensuring greater consistency and accuracy of information. Chris Broe comments: “Despite its complexity, the technical aspect of the solution was less problematic than the business aspect: we had good quality technical guidance and input from Kalido, who had a good understanding of our business needs as a large multinational.”

## **RESULT**

Historically, Unilever has operated a local market model, where local operating companies looked after brands, even global ones. As part of the Path to Growth initiative, Unilever wants to leverage its local presence through global brand management, and has set up a network of global brand directors for 40 of its brands. Thanks to UIP, they have a fast, accurate information system that tells them market share and other key indicators of brand health by country, by brand across the world.

Chris Broe comments: “The UIP system gives us far greater consistency and speed in the performance figures we can produce, whether growth, volume or margins. We can now see far more clearly and quickly how a particular brand is doing in a given country or region, which enables us to respond far better to any challenges. We can also access massively improved data on our biggest international customers, enabling us to focus sales and marketing resources to ensure the best possible efficiency in revenue generation.

“The solution gives us a total picture of our business with major international customers, and has expanded our capability to view the historic and projected performance of our global brands across financial and non-financial measures. Managers had parts of this information before, but it took them far longer to get it, process it, and manage it. The new solution also allows us to get data into familiar technologies such as Excel and web-browsers very easily. This keeps operational costs down and reduces training, because everyone is already familiar with these tools. Managers can get the information they need much more quickly, so they’re able to act more quickly on it too.

“In procurement terms, the solution has also brought improvements. With visibility on a global scale on key raw materials and key suppliers, global buying leaders have better information on opportunities to leverage scale, reduce costs and improve collaboration with key vendors. The Path to Growth initiative has already brought

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savings in purchasing costs, and the sustaining of those savings will be largely down to the improved information provided by UIP.”

“We now have vastly improved information delivered at increased speed: Kalido has made a major contribution to the benefits that are being accrued through Path to Growth. The business is convinced that it has got value from the IT investment; the real challenges are business-related: to ensure compliance and quality from the business units supplying the data, and to encourage business users to learn how best to use the improved information coming out of the system.”



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