

Unit4 drives agility and resilience to ensure its future health



Unit4: In business for people



Founded in 1980, Unit4 is a leading Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) platform provider with 2,600 employees and revenues in excess of 400 million Euros. The organization is on a journey to standardize financial planning, analysis, and reporting with one common instance of its modern cloud technology and processes.

Unit4 Financial Planning and Analysis (FP&A) will ensure that business leaders and key stakeholders have the very best financial information to help them make the right decisions to steer the business in the right direction. It will enable the company to respond to change with agility, grow at scale, and deliver an even more exceptional customer experience.

- Easy-to-maintain solution which can be enriched with additional data
- Dynamic forecasting models facilitate HR and sales reporting
- Budgeting reports, forecasting, and modeling using actual and historical data
- Centralized control dashboard can be easily changed and controlled by users

Guiding the business with intelligent FP&A

Unit4 has grown rapidly in recent years, acquiring businesses such as Scanmarket, Agresso, and Coda to cement its position in the global enterprise software market. However, with growth came the challenge of multiple entities relying on different platforms for data and processes, which resulted in siloed teams and systems.

The organization has a vision to create a single, common version of the truth worldwide with unified systems and simplified processes that will cut out complexity and enable people to be more agile, make better decisions, and improve governance and control.

Establishing a unified source of accurate data was a significant challenge. The goal was to gather information not only from the fully integrated ERP system but also from other data sources to offer a comprehensive overview of the company's financial and operational performance.

Industry

Technology

Location

Headquarters in Dordrecht, Netherlands; operations in more than 100 countries

Size

Approx. 2,600 people; \$400m in revenues

Product

Unit4 Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP); Unit4 Financial Planning and Analysis (FP&A); Unit4 Source-to-Contract by Scanmarket

Challenges

The Unit4 FP&A team faced challenges accessing data, collaborating effectively, and maintaining version control during the annual planning and budgeting process. This was particularly daunting given the dynamic and complex nature of today's business environment, which is characterized by a great deal of uncertainty.

Key metrics



AGILITY

Dashboard functionalities give increased flexibility to the end user in multiple areas.



INTEGRATION

A single point of truth for shared data for forecasting, budgeting, and planning.

“It’s about connecting the people, processes, and all departments with data, therefore allowing us to execute our strategies across the whole organization, whether that be cost reduction, minimizing our customer acquisition cost, or driving overall growth. By having a single connected source of truth, we’re able to act nimbly across the whole organization.”

Matt Bagley

Chief Financial Officer, Unit4

A single version of data truth

Unit4 had the same challenges that many organizations face — FP&A teams struggling with retrieving data, limited collaboration, and version control during annual planning and budgeting while navigating a dynamic and complex business environment with a future characterized by uncertainty.

Laura Gidley, Head of FP&A at Unit4, says, “We were striving as a finance team to find that solution that gives us a streamlined reporting system and a single source of data truth. We were heavily dependent on Excel — not necessarily a bad thing, but it needs to be more supplementary rather than the main model. Within the last couple of years of developing the FP&A solution for us internally, we’ve now got a single source of reliable data that can be updated instantaneously from our reporting structure that we have designed ourselves to fit the business at that point in time.”

Improved agility during uncertainty

The economic and political environments businesses have been operating in over the last few years have seen uncertainty and turbulence in both financial markets and operationally, so the need to be nimble and agile as an organization, and to be able to modify long-term range forecasts, has never been more important. And that’s what the FP&A tools provide.

The FP&A system allows Unit4 to reduce management accounts, not just in actual currency but also on a constant currency basis. For annual budgeting, actual performance can be compared every month against budget performance. And it also allows long-range forecasting and simulations.

With the multiple facets of the products, Unit4 can now act with agility in the current environment, modeling out different scenarios across the business.

Connecting people and processes across departments

Unit4 now has a single, secure, centralized, and reliable version of the truth. It not only connects data from the native integration with the existing ERP system, but it is also able to pull multiple data sources from other systems to provide a consolidated view of the whole organization.

Matt Bagley, Unit4 Chief Financial Officer, says, “It’s about connecting the people, processes, and all departments with data, therefore allowing us to execute our strategies across the whole organization, whether that be cost reduction, minimizing our customer acquisition cost, or driving overall growth. By having a single connected source of truth, we’re able to act nimbly across the whole organization.”

Flexibility in multiple areas

Unit4 FP&A is incredibly flexible and adapts simply to changes in the organization’s structure. A drag and drop no-code interface makes modifications instant and user-friendly. It’s also flexible when it comes to modelling. Any forecast it creates is logic-driven, and that logic can be easily altered without requiring assistance from IT departments or scripting specialists.

There are two powerful options for reporting. Worksheets offer a more dynamic and user-controlled option, allowing users to trigger various events. Dashboard functionality provides ultimate flexibility to the end user, giving the ability to analyze and modify data for specific purposes as they see fit.

Laura Gidley, Head of FP&A, says, “The other great thing about FP&A is the easy filtering capabilities. It can be flexed just to focus on the very lowest level of data at the click of a button. Building something like that on an external solution would take a lot of time and effort, so the combinations are endless. The other great feature is the deep link, which connects to getting to the lowest level of granularity. You can go back to the source data in our ERP system, which is great to get into the detail and take a look at the audit trail of a piece of financial information.”

She adds “I think the biggest impact for us has been to use a solution solely to build and develop our

forecasts and budgets. And that's really game-changing. It makes sure that regardless of how a function is built up or steered within the business, we have this very streamlined way of budgeting and forecasting to ensure that on a group consolidation level, we are in complete autonomy."

Results, benefits, and plans for the future

The FP&A tool was initially implemented to help with monthly management accounts, annual budgeting, and forecasting. Unit4 is now building on those capabilities in other business areas due to the incredibly powerful and highly configurable tool.

- The FP&A team can spend more time being real business partners to their budget owners and delivering more key information that can then set them up to deliver on results for the next period.
- The month-end cycle has been shortened, so the FP&A team has spare capacity to think about the next report that can be automated.
- The FP&A solution provides quality data that doesn't need to be checked every month. It can be trusted as it comes from a single source that supports the organization's future health.
- Unit4 can move forward with agility and resilience despite operating in uncertain and turbulent conditions.

The FP&A team is the primary user of this product internally, but the organization is keen to develop the solution for the wider finance team. The next step is enabling those teams to have visibility on the budget to help them analyze finance numbers at month end.

A project is currently in the pipeline to use the FP&A solution as a new cash flow model and consolidation tool. It will completely replace another tool, and it will mean that FP&A is the sole solution, not just for the FP&A team's forecasting, budgeting, and month-end solutions but also cash flow and consolidation that can be used for external reporting.

