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Pravine Balkaran,
Global Head of IT, Spin Master



CASE STUDY

Hitachi Helps Spin Master Make a Play for Digitally Transforming Business With an Innovative Data Strategy

Challenge: Strategically evolve IT to globally support innovation, mergers and acquisitions, evergreen brands and business expansion.

Solution: Holistic approach to creating actionable data capture and business analytics amid continually changing industry.

Outcome: IT enables revenue generation, innovation and customer loyalty with responsive, secure, integrated data ecosystem.

Challenge: Move at the Speed of Business

Spin Master makes toys to delight kids and inspire play. The Canada-based company owns popular toy and entertainment brands, including PAW Patrol, Bakugan Battle Brawlers, Zoomer Dino and the recently acquired Etch A Sketch. Spin Master has become a global conglomerate with a vibrant TV and media division. Now the fourth largest toy company in the world, Spin Master focuses on products that “wow” consumers and disrupt the traditional toy market. With 63 Toy of the Year nominations and broadcasts in 160 countries, the company has innovation in its DNA.

Playmaking is hard work. Acquisitions and industry changes brought new challenges for Spin Master, particularly around data. The toy and entertainment industry is evolving from shifting play patterns and product trends to ongoing consolidations and technologies shaping

culture. At Spin Master, growth and change are rapid. “We’re centered on innovation, mergers and acquisitions, evergreen brands and business expansion. IT must move at the speed of the business, and that means capturing and using data streams from every avenue,” says the Global Head of IT for Spin Master, Pravine Balkaran.

IT challenges at the company were centered around how to collect, aggregate, search and analyze data and how to manage SAP instances across time zones. Spin Master handles enterprise resource planning (ERP) and point-of-sale (POS) systems, production and manufacturing, online click streams, intellectual property, application development and other data-intensive processes. Data searches could be tedious, especially in litigation-hold tasks where staff recently spent 3,600 hours scouring 900 Microsoft® Office 365® accounts during a single case.



Spin Master

INDUSTRY

Entertainment, Children’s Toy Manufacturing

SOLUTIONS

Business and Data Transformation

HARDWARE

Hitachi Content Platform 500XL, Hitachi Unified Compute Platform for the SAP HANA Platform, Hitachi Data Ingestor, Pentaho Data Integration and Business Analytics Platform

SOFTWARE

Hitachi Content Platform Anywhere

SERVICES

Provided by Hitachi Consulting and oXya, a Hitachi Group Company

Outcomes

- Reduced jobs processing from days to hours or real-time, to improve customer experience and time-to-market.
- Saved CA\$1.3 million annually by reducing compliance-related legal costs.
- Gained a 360-view of the customer to respond rapidly to needs, drive loyalty and encourage new revenue.
- Automated and stabilized IT, to promote agile business operations across time zones.

"The business strategically looks at market data, what competitors are doing and potential acquisitions. We look to build the right IT foundation with the right partners and tools to capitalize on disparate data streams," Balkaran adds.

Solution: Transformation With the Right Data Strategy

Data is the foundation for accelerating digital transformation. Changing the data culture requires integrating internal and external sources for a consistent single view and seamless flow of information. Spin Master worked with Hitachi to develop this cohesive data analytics environment.

Hitachi Consulting helped define how data would move, and be managed, governed and analyzed. To improve cost efficiencies and supply chain forecasts, Spin Master migrated its traditional SAP environment to Hitachi Unified Compute Platform for the SAP HANA Platform (UCP for SAP HANA). Designed for real-time reporting and analytics, UCP for SAP HANA is a reliable, scalable and performance-driven platform that optimizes data processes. oXya, a Hitachi Group Company, provided the Hitachi Redesign and Migration Service for SAP Clients and Hitachi Run Management Service for SAP Clients.

Spin Master deployed Hitachi Content Platform (HCP) to unify and manage unstructured data and simplify backup tasks. Using Hitachi Data Ingestor (HDI) and Hitachi Content Platform Anywhere (HCP Anywhere) to accelerate productivity, HCP delivers business insights and governance from any cloud, device or location.

Hitachi Consulting chose Hitachi Group Company, Pentaho, and their Data Integration and Business Analytics Platform to integrate, blend and analyze all pipeline data. For Spin Master, once fully implemented, the platform will mean understanding click-stream data and reaching across datasets, applications and even Amazon reviews to shape a 360-view of the customer.

"With Pentaho, we gained nimble end-to-end integration and accelerated how we process jobs and provide service across time zones. We automated and standardized core procedures. And we have a trust factor with Hitachi. The knowledge and willingness of Hitachi folks to listen and help us devise a plan that addresses any challenge we might encounter – that is what a partnership is all about," Balkaran notes.

Outcome: Generate Revenues, Toys and Smiles

Balkaran describes digital transformation as automation that repeats. "It's about being able to apply standardization and automation to the entire ecosystem to bring value and move the business forward," he says.

Spin Master has already realized tangible benefits. "From the beginning, we're able to save over CA\$1million annually by reducing compliance-related expenses with HCP's search, audit and data classification features. We've cut batch run times by 50% to best service time zones like Australia, which is 14 hours ahead. And, we don't have to develop in-house expertise for SAP HANA because our Hitachi partners

are the experts on SAP HANA, on the technologies we need, on analytics and business intelligence," Balkaran furthers.

Spin Master will, for example, soon be able to assess click-stream data for an online game, to determine if users will purchase on the internet or in retail stores. The IT department calls out better internal controls and security as another win. The HCP portfolio provides anywhere access and scalability while ensuring data is protected.

"What got us here will not get us there. We continue to evolve and now have a foundation that works, that we can layer upon without having to rip and redo. We have agility to deploy new initiatives quickly," Balkaran explains. "The breadth and depth of Hitachi technologies and services are what get us out of fire-fighting mode and into enablement so we can foster revenue generation. At the end of the day, it's really about putting big smiles on kids' faces."

About HDS

Digital transformation improves enterprises' cost-efficiency, time to market, customer experience, and revenue through better data management. Hitachi Data Systems uses data to power the digital enterprise. HDS.com.



Corporate Headquarters
2845 Lafayette Street
Santa Clara, CA 95050-2639 USA
www.HDS.com | community.HDS.com

Regional Contact Information
Americas: +1 866 374 5822 or info@hds.com
Europe, Middle East and Africa: +44 (0) 1753 618000 or info.emea@hds.com
Asia Pacific: +852 3189 7900 or hds.marketing.apac@hds.com

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