

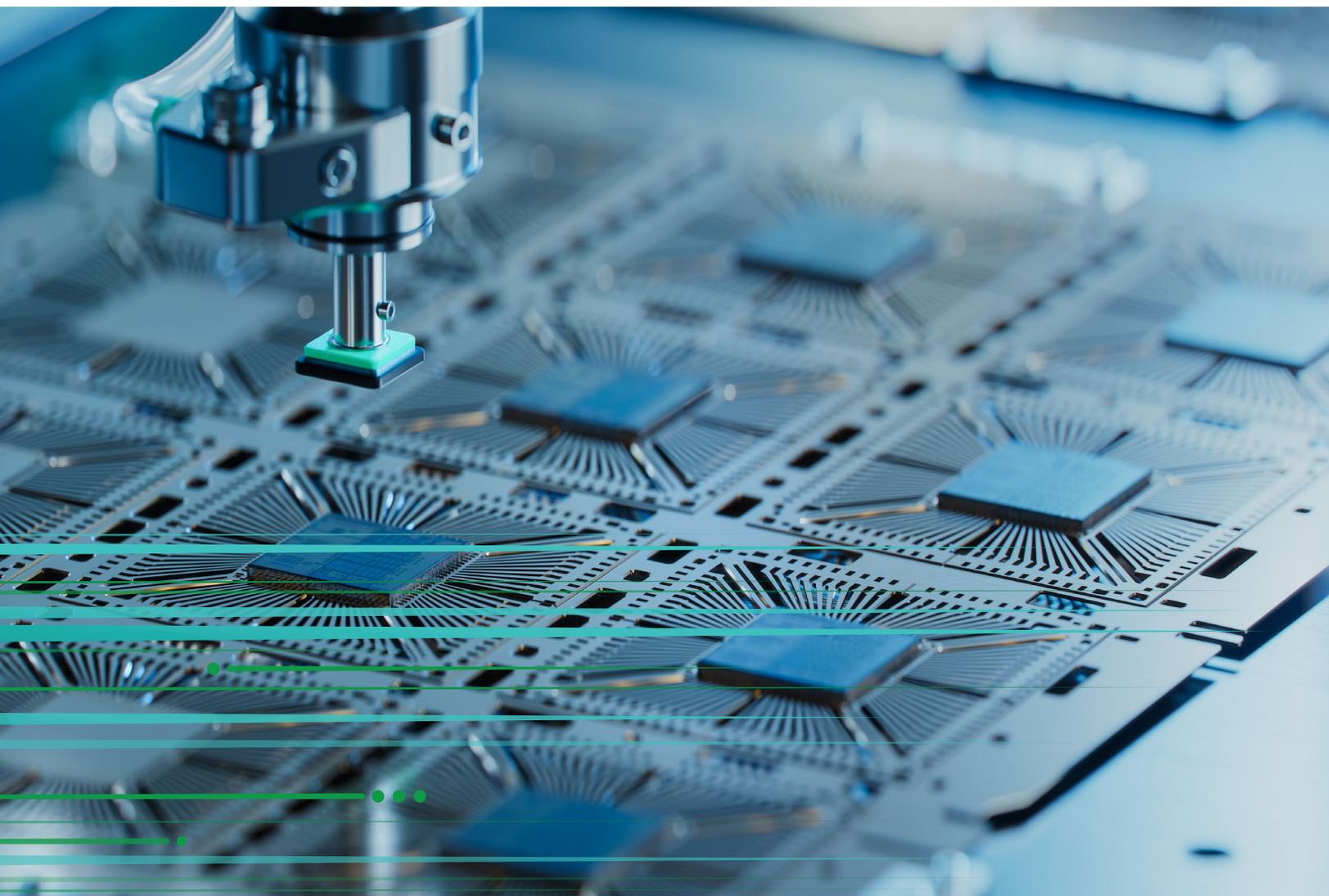


CUSTOMER STORY

DATA INTEGRATION AND ANALYTICS

NEC

Real-time data enables smart inventory management with Replicate + Qlik Compose



“In an era where timeliness of information can make or break a business, Qlik Replicate and Qlik Compose meet our needs for real-time data acquisition and rapid analysis.”

Tomohisa Nakajima, Senior Manager, ICT Strategy Department, NEC Personal Computer Corporation

The quest to accelerate development

NEC Personal Computer Corporation (NECPC) is part of the NEC Lenovo Japan Group and provides PC-related services that include planning, development and manufacturing. Combining NEC's brand power with Lenovo's global capacity for parts procurement, NECPC has boosted its competitiveness and now boasts the highest share of PC shipments in Japan.

One of NECPC's key strengths is its ability to adapt to changing markets. For example, it developed new devices in response to the Global and Innovation Gateway for All (GIGA) school concept launched in 2019 and designed new tablet products to meet the requirements of telecommunications carriers.

Since the foundation of the NEC Lenovo Japan Group, NECPC has made steady progress, but building ongoing success on the basis of outstanding technology and talent alone is increasingly challenging.

“For a company like ours that provides integrated services, from product planning to manufacturing, sales and support, it is important to ensure that the upstream-to-downstream flow never stops,” says Tomohisa Nakajima, Senior Manager at NECPC's ICT Strategy Department. “To avoid bottlenecks, information has to be fresh and systems need to continuously utilize the latest data. As digital transformation accelerates, ICT departments face a major challenge in providing and maintaining analytics platforms and tools that enable businesses to make better decisions.”

In 2019, Mr. Nakajima and other members of the ICT Strategy Department began to look at building a new system that would address current issues and provide an effective, future-ready data analytics platform.

Solution Overview

Customer Name

NEC Personal Computer Corporation

Industry

Manufacturing

Geography

Tokyo

Function

IT

Challenges

- Accelerate access to batch-processed SAP data
- Improve data accuracy and timeliness
- Inform situational decisions across the business

Solution

NECPC used Qlik Replicate and Qlik Compose to eliminate latency and bring SAP data into Qlik Sense® in real time.

Results

- Allowed more accurate decision-making and faster action
- Smoothed workflow and reduced the burden of creating reports
- Increased the number of employees actively working to improve data literacy

Creating a real-time data acquisition and analytics platform

NECPC had implemented SAP ECC as its core system and was using SAP connectors to bring data into QlikView. However, users began to see issues that needed to be addressed.

“We needed to solve the issue of ‘immediacy’ first,” says Mr. Nakajima. “We were batch-processing SAP data and reloading it into QlikView once a day, but the delay meant data wasn’t useable for finance and material requirements planning. We saw that if we could provide data in real time, we would enable better situational decisions.”

Another issue was that while the company was using QlikView to develop various services, users were not using it as hoped.

“We had an environment where we could use BI tools, but many users would download data and process it in Excel,” Mr. Nakajima recalls. “We also provided SAP queries, but users were downloading and creating Excel pivot tables from them too. You can’t call it a true analytics platform unless everyone can see the same data in the same way, and that motivated us to find a better solution.”

With some people using QlikView for analysis and others relying on more familiar spreadsheets, it was not easy for the company to create an environment where everyone could use BI tools easily.

“We looked at a variety of options to find the best way forward,” Mr. Nakajima recalls.

Building a proof of concept

NECPC staff had used Qlik since the company’s inception and understood its benefits. However, when the time came to rebuild its data analytics platform, Mr. Nakajima and other members of the ICT Strategy Department looked at a wider range of products. Qlik Replicate caught their eye.

“At the time, Qlik was working on a framework to provide an integration and analytics platform that could grasp the current state of dynamically changing data,” recalls Mr. Nakajima.

He and his colleagues quickly developed a proof of concept for one key function using Qlik Replicate and Qlik Compose.

“We compared productivity with other products in the proof of concept and found that Qlik Replicate and Qlik Compose significantly reduced IT man-hours,” Mr. Nakajima explains. “We also tested response times with Qlik Replicate and Qlik Compose. It took a little while to get all the data at first, but acquiring the differential data thereafter went smoothly with no delays. I was confident it would work well in a production environment.”

Mr. Nakajima then asked each business unit to evaluate the proof of concept, deploying SAP data to Qlik Sense agentless using Qlik Replicate and conducting interviews while checking the screen.

“Qlik Replicate, the real-time reloading of SAP data using Qlik Compose and the ease of use of Qlik Sense were highly rated not only by our ICT Department, but also by each business unit,” Mr. Nakajima says. “We could then start building out the system with confidence.”

Data-driven insights enable cross-departmental collaboration

Restructuring the data analytics platform using Qlik products went smoothly, with deployment completed significantly ahead of schedule in just 27 man-months compared to the originally expected 40.

“The entire set of Qlik products responded consistently to our vision,” Mr. Nakajima says. “We involved various business units in the process, from the proof of concept and into the building process; that had a big impact on how quickly we could put it together.”

While each unit took different approaches to building the analytics platform, they also created integrated environments using common dashboards in Qlik Sense. This was not something Mr. Nakajima and his team had originally anticipated, but the dashboard built for the finance department was so easy to use that it soon became clear that it would benefit other business units.

“The finance department announced that shipment data should be viewed across the company in Qlik Sense,” he notes. “There was no need for each department to create its own reports, so the entire company could effectively converse in a common language. Qlik Sense’s ease of use and intuitive operation made this effortless.”

Excess inventory risk reduced by 30%

While NECPC achieved its goal of real-time data acquisition, it also succeeded in developing new management tools to reduce excess inventory risk.

“The SAP Inventory Requirements List only has one screen for each item in a component,” Mr. Nakajima explains. “With Qlik Sense we can list multiple items. Buyers can see inventories of all the items they are responsible for on a single screen and can even view future demand.”

Previously, buyers had to rely on intuition and experience to forecast future demand based on inventory data. With the new analytics platform, however, it is now possible to obtain SAP data in real time and plan supply and demand almost automatically. As a result, NECPC has reduced the risk of excess inventory by 30%. In addition, by automating previously manual data-creation processes, each business unit has saved nearly 160 man-hours a year.

“We plan to continue to actively pursue automation and make it more effective in collaboration with each business unit,” Mr. Nakajima says.

He notes that one reason for the many early successes of the new analytics platform was Qlik Sense’s ease of use.

“In the past, users who wanted the latest updates would check the original SAP data, download it via a query and process it,” Mr. Nakajima explains.

“With Qlik Replicate, data can be acquired in real time and Qlik Sense makes data searches and processing so much easier.”

Mr. Nakajima now sees Qlik Sense as an exciting opportunity to improve data literacy across NECPC.

“We mainly train people with already-high levels of data literacy, but we’re looking to be more flexible,” he explains. “When we introduced the new platform, we ran intensive training for all our staff. We also contracted Qlik support, which included a variety of resources.”

Accelerating integration and taking on new challenges

Since launching the new platform, cooperation between NECPC’s ICT department and various other business units has become even closer.

“We make regular checks on how staff are using the system and have received good responses,” says Mr. Nakajima. “We are also seeing more specific requests about things like adding new data and fewer inquiries about how the platform works.”

In response to requests for improvements, NECPC has further polished the system and improved ease of use. Plans are also underway for more data integrations.

“Some business units have built their own systems and combine databases with SAP data,” says Mr. Nakajima. “In future, we want to ingest and combine this data automatically for presentation in Qlik Sense. We have also finished data acquisition for our Manufacturing Execution System, which acts as a cockpit for production status in Japan, allowing vendors to check production and quality status globally.”

Mr. Nakajima adds that he is looking forward to learning more about new developments from Qlik, in particular about machine learning and how AutoML can help NECPC staff develop new ideas.

“Qlik products are constantly growing and adding features,” he concludes. “There are always opportunities for it to take on new challenges for us.”

**The
keys to
success**



30%
excess inventory
risk reduced



160
man-hours a year saved in each
business unit by automation

“Since we started using SAP data in Qlik Sense, users have praised the system’s ease of use. This has led to positive commitments to data integration and data literacy.”

Tomohisa Nakajima, Senior Manager, ICT Strategy Department, NEC Personal Computer Corporation



About Qlik

Qlik transforms complex data landscapes into actionable insights, driving strategic business outcomes. Serving over 40,000 global customers, our portfolio leverages advanced, enterprise-grade AI/ML and pervasive data quality. We excel in data integration and governance, offering comprehensive solutions that work with diverse data sources. Intuitive and real-time analytics from Qlik uncover hidden patterns, empowering teams to address complex challenges and seize new opportunities. Our AI/ML tools, both practical and scalable, lead to better decisions, faster. As strategic partners, our platform-agnostic technology and expertise make our customers more competitive.

qlik.com