

Chick-fil-A improves speed to insight with ThoughtSpot and AWS



Executive Summary

As part of rebuilding its analytics journey on a modern stack, Chick-fil-A invested in Amazon Redshift and Amazon Simple Storage Service (Amazon S3). Yet, many of the company's data analysts were still fulfilling numerous requests for data from the business rather than analyzing data to improve business outcomes. To address this issue, Chick-fil-A turned to ThoughtSpot. With ThoughtSpot, business users easily search and analyze data, which allows them to make better decisions and frees up Chick-fil-A's analysts to focus on adding value.

Taking a bite out of data search—with scalability

Although Chick-fil-A had been making serious inroads into modernizing its analytics stack, many of its business and data analysts were still spending their time as “data gophers.” Chick-fil-A estimated that their data searches resulted in a loss of 100,000 hours of productivity in 2019. Chick-fil-A knew there were several tools in the industry that offered data search capabilities. They decided to partner with ThoughtSpot as a solution because of its unique ability to process such large quantities of data without having to resort to averaging or waiting for data sync and ingestion times.

“It was an easy decision for us to go with ThoughtSpot, which enables people to find data as if they were Googling it.”—Callie Cobbs, Senior Lead Analyst, Enterprise Analytics, Chick-fil-A

To the supply chain and beyond

Chick-fil-A decided to start small and roll out ThoughtSpot one business group at a time. Chick-fil-A already invested significant amounts of money and time to build a Supply Chain Data Mart with Amazon Redshift, centralizing data, and cleaning it up. Chick-fil-A's goal was to implement a better way of exposing that supply chain data to end users. The first use case was onboarding business users to uncover insights on their own without having to ask analysts for help which had previously been impossible. Business users were suddenly able to not just view invoices for different products but also answer their “next question” on delivery information for products, case quantities, and more.

About Chick-fil-A

Headquartered in Atlanta, Georgia, Chick-fil-A is one of the largest American fast-food restaurant chains, specializing in fast and efficient chicken sandwich ordering and delivery.

CHALLENGE

Chick-fil-A's Enterprise Analytics team wanted to get data into the hands of end users at the speed of business for ad hoc data needs.

SOLUTION

ThoughtSpot makes it easy for all Chick-fil-A end business users to search data and uncover the insights needed to adapt quickly to business changes.

RESULTS

- Improved data visibility
- End users answer questions vs. relying on analysts
- Moved business process from monthly to daily after eliminating exporting and manually combining data
- Analysts can focus on higher value-add analytics
- Key component of legacy tool retirement

Moving and loading data from Redshift to ThoughtSpot

Chick-fil-A used Alteryx's custom ThoughtSpot connector to move supply chain data from Redshift to ThoughtSpot. "We had all this supply chain data that we'd spent some time curating and was already in Amazon Redshift. With Alteryx, we quickly took what we'd done in Redshift and used the custom connectors to schedule workflows to write the data to ThoughtSpot," said Callie Cobbs, Senior Lead Analyst at Chick-fil-A.

This solution also enabled Chick-fil-A to schedule the data loading at a frequency dictated by the data, a capability that helped overcome a substantial hurdle. "There was a table that didn't have a primary key. Finding the records to update was a challenge," said Cobbs. However, with the connector and Alteryx, the team was able to do a delete and rewrite for a specific period to make sure all the changes were captured. "It kept the integrity of that data," added Cobbs.

A major timesaver for analysts

Before ThoughtSpot, analysts had a tracker full of requests from the business. "It could take 3–8 days to come back with a response," said Cobbs. Since implementing this combination of Redshift, Amazon S3, and ThoughtSpot, Chick-fil-A analysts now train their users to go to ThoughtSpot to find information.

"The analysts push users to ThoughtSpot, telling them they can find answers there. When we bring in transactional data, we'll have 20,000 users."—Callie Cobbs, Senior Lead Analyst, Enterprise Analytics, Chick-fil-A

"ThoughtSpot makes it easy to connect to data where it sits, freeing up data analysts to focus on adding value, not data prep."

Callie Cobbs, Senior Lead Analyst, Enterprise Analytics, Chick-fil-A

About ThoughtSpot

The world's most innovative enterprises use [ThoughtSpot](#) to empower every person in their organization, from C-suite executive to front-line employees to quickly uncover data-driven insights. ThoughtSpot combines a search-engine-like interface with an AI-driven analytics engine, to make finding anomaly and pattern-matching as simple as it can be.

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