

Turning data into competitive advantage

How consumer products companies can unlock more
value from their SAP investment



Introduction

Consumer products organisations generate more data today than at any point in their history. Sales transactions. Customer insights. Retail performance. Inventory levels. Supply chain activity. Production data. Supplier information. Promotional results. The challenge isn't a lack of data. It's knowing how to use it.

Many businesses invest heavily in technology, analytics tools, and reporting platforms, yet decision-makers still struggle to answer fundamental questions quickly and confidently.

Which products are driving growth?

Where are margins under pressure?

Which customers are generating the greatest value?

Where are supply chain inefficiencies impacting performance?

What is likely to happen next?

In an increasingly competitive market, access to information alone is no longer enough. What separates leading consumer products companies from their competitors is their ability to turn data into actionable insight.

This guide explores how organisations can unlock greater value from their data, improve decision-making, and create a stronger foundation for growth through SAP-enabled transformation.

The consumer products data challenge

Most organisations are surrounded by information. Over time, however, data often becomes fragmented across systems, departments, geographies, and business functions.

Sales teams maintain their own reports.

Operations teams rely on different performance metrics.

Finance produces separate management information.

Supply chain teams use their own planning tools.

As a result, leaders can find themselves spending more time debating the accuracy of information than making decisions based on it.

Common challenges include:

Multiple versions of the truth

Inconsistent reporting

Limited visibility across the business

Poor data quality

Delayed decision-making

Siloed information sources

In fast-moving consumer products markets, these issues can create a significant competitive disadvantage.

Why data has become a strategic asset

Historically, many organisations viewed data as a by-product of business activity. Today, it is increasingly viewed as a strategic asset.

The most successful consumer products businesses use data to:

Anticipate customer demand

Improve operational performance

Optimise inventory

Strengthen supplier relationships

Identify growth opportunities

Improve profitability

Support faster decision-making

The ability to transform information into meaningful insight has become a key differentiator. In many sectors, companies are competing as much on intelligence as they are on products.

The five foundations of a data-driven organisation

1. Establish a single source of truth

One of the biggest obstacles to effective decision-making is inconsistency. When different teams rely on different numbers, confidence quickly erodes. Questions become difficult to answer. Decisions take longer. Alignment becomes harder to achieve.

High-performing organisations focus on creating a trusted source of information across the business. This ensures everyone is working from the same data and measuring performance consistently.

The goal is simple. One business. One version of the truth.

2. Improve data quality

Even the most sophisticated analytics tools struggle when the underlying data is inaccurate.

Common challenges include:

Duplicate records

Incomplete information

Outdated data

Inconsistent classifications

Manual data entry errors

Poor data quality often drives:

Reporting inaccuracies

Operational inefficiencies

Lost productivity

Reduced confidence

Organisations that prioritise data quality create a stronger foundation for every decision that follows.

3. Focus on insight rather than reporting

Many businesses have no shortage of reports. The challenge is extracting meaningful insight from them. It's not enough to know what happened.

Leaders also need to understand:

Why it happened

What it means

What actions should be taken next

Successful organisations move beyond historical reporting and use data to support operational and strategic decision-making. The emphasis shifts from information gathering to value creation.

4. Connect data across the value chain

One of the greatest opportunities available to consumer products businesses is the ability to connect information across the entire organisation. When sales, supply chain, manufacturing, procurement, and finance data are viewed together, a much richer picture begins to emerge. This can help organisations:

- Identify trends earlier
- Improve planning accuracy
- Understand profitability more clearly
- Resolve issues faster
- Improve collaboration

Connected data enables connected decision-making.

5. Build a data-driven culture

Technology alone doesn't create a data-driven organisation. People do. Successful organisations encourage teams to:

- Challenge assumptions
- Use evidence to support decisions
- Monitor performance regularly
- Share information openly
- Focus on measurable outcomes

Creating this culture often delivers greater long-term value than any individual technology investment.

Unlocking visibility across the business

Visibility remains one of the most significant benefits of modern SAP-enabled environments. Consumer products leaders often need immediate answers to questions such as:

- Where is inventory at risk?
- Which products are underperforming?
- How are promotions impacting demand?
- Which suppliers require attention?
- Where are operational bottlenecks emerging?

Without visibility, organisations are often forced into reactive management. With visibility, they can move towards proactive decision-making. The ability to identify trends before they become problems provides a meaningful advantage.

Turning data into better commercial decisions

Understanding customer and product performance has never been more important. Consumer products businesses operate in highly competitive markets where margins can be influenced by numerous factors.

Data can help organisations understand:

- Product profitability
- Customer buying behaviour
- Retail performance
- Market trends
- Promotional effectiveness

The organisations that can quickly identify opportunities and respond accordingly are often better positioned to outperform their competitors. Commercial success increasingly depends on the quality of information available to decision-makers.

Improving supply chain performance through data

Supply chains generate vast quantities of information every day. The challenge is making that information useful.

By improving visibility and analysis, organisations can gain a better understanding of:

- Inventory levels
- Supplier performance
- Demand fluctuations
- Capacity constraints
- Fulfilment performance

This helps supply chain teams move from reactive firefighting to proactive planning. In many cases, improved insight leads directly to lower costs, improved service levels, and stronger operational performance.

Why data quality matters more than ever

Many transformation programmes focus heavily on reporting and analytics while overlooking data quality. This can be a costly mistake.

Even the most advanced dashboards become ineffective if the underlying information cannot be trusted. Strong data quality helps organisations:

- Improve confidence in decision-making
- Reduce manual intervention
- Increase reporting accuracy
- Support compliance requirements
- Improve operational efficiency

In many organisations, data quality is one of the most overlooked drivers of business performance.

Using data to support growth

Growth often introduces complexity.

New products
New customers
New channels
New markets

As businesses expand, leaders require greater visibility and control. Data provides the foundation for understanding where growth opportunities exist and how resources should be allocated.

It supports:

Market expansion decisions
Product portfolio optimisation
Customer strategy development
Investment planning

The businesses that grow most effectively are often those that understand their data best.

The role of SAP in modern data management

For many consumer products organisations, SAP acts as the backbone that connects data across the enterprise. When implemented effectively, it provides greater consistency, visibility, and control over core business information. This enables organisations to:

Standardise reporting
Improve transparency
Strengthen governance
Accelerate decision-making
Support future growth

The value, however, comes not from the technology itself but from how organisations use the information it provides. The objective should always be improved business outcomes, not simply better reporting.

Common barriers to becoming data-driven

Many organisations recognise the value of data but encounter challenges along the way.

Common obstacles include:

Data silos

Information exists across multiple systems and teams.

Poor data quality

Inaccurate information undermines trust.

Limited visibility

Decision-makers struggle to access relevant insights quickly.

Lack of ownership

No clear accountability for data governance.

Cultural resistance

Decisions continue to rely on experience and instinct alone.

Recognising these barriers is the first step towards overcoming them.

What leading consumer products organisations do differently

Organisations that consistently extract value from their data often share several characteristics. They:

Prioritise data quality.

Create a single source of truth.

Connect information across business functions.

Invest in governance.

Encourage evidence-based decision-making.

Focus on business outcomes rather than reporting outputs.

Most importantly, they understand that data is not simply an IT asset. It is a business asset.

Looking ahead

The volume of data available to consumer products organisations will continue to increase. Customer expectations will continue to evolve. Markets will become more competitive.

The ability to interpret information and act quickly will become even more important. Businesses that develop strong data capabilities today will be better positioned to respond to future challenges, identify opportunities sooner, and make more confident decisions. The competitive gap between data-driven organisations and their competitors is likely to continue growing.

Final thoughts

Every consumer products business has access to data. Far fewer are successfully turning that data into competitive advantage.



The organisations that thrive in today's market are not necessarily those with the most information. They are the organisations that use information most effectively.

By improving data quality, increasing visibility, connecting information across the value chain, and embedding data-driven decision-making into everyday operations, businesses can unlock significantly greater value from their SAP investment.

Better data does not guarantee better outcomes. But better decisions almost always start with better data.

About TCT

At TCT, we help consumer products organisations unlock greater value from their SAP investments by improving visibility, strengthening data governance, and enabling better business decision-making. From programme assurance and operational readiness to SAP transformation support and business process optimisation, we help organisations turn information into measurable outcomes.

Looking to unlock more value from your SAP investment? Speak to TCT about building a data strategy that supports performance, growth, and long-term competitive advantage.

©TCT



Get in touch today
theconfigteam.com