

**HOUSE OF FRASER**  
SINCE 1849**Company:**

House of Fraser

**Applications:**

- Customer flow and footfall analysis
- Returns analysis
- Store performance and operations



*"MicroStrategy has enabled us to achieve a much clearer picture of the entire business; and an understanding of the dynamics between people and space in stores. By visualising data from IoT and other sources we can optimise these dimensions, improve the customer journey and ultimately drive growth."*

– Julian Burnett  
CIO and Executive Director,  
House of Fraser

**House of Fraser** is a British department store group with over 60 stores across the UK and Ireland. Founded in Glasgow in 1849, the company has grown steadily into one of the UK's biggest retailers, with revenues of over £1.3 billion and a workforce of more than 5,000 employees. House of Fraser sells everything you need to make a house a home, from clothes to fill your closets to décor to outfit your flat.

**Background**

House of Fraser has relied on MicroStrategy as their system of record for enterprise reporting since 2013. The company had a large, complex reporting environment that required running more than 18,000 reports on a daily basis. By and large, they relied on simple grid reports for data analysis—fostering a corporate culture around data that can best be characterised as “retail is detail.”

That all changed in January 2017, when House of Fraser embarked on their nGenBI program. The goal: to radically transform the way people consume and interact with data by simplifying, visualising, and modernising their analytics environment

**nGenBI**

Prior to 2017, analytics at House of Fraser was restricted to large volumes of grid reports that were often printed and physically brought to meetings. In addition to the sizable printing costs, this approach frequently resulted in wasted time and inaccurate or conflicting data. The nGenBI initiative sought to bring House of Fraser's BI and analytics efforts into the 21st century. Their goal was to simplify their environment, make greater use of visualisations for analysis, and modernise their approach to analytics in order to provide users with actionable insight.

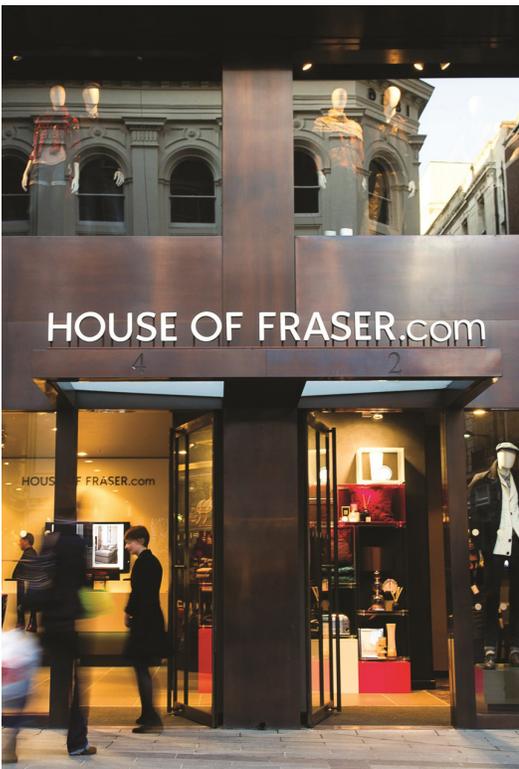
In January 2017, the BI team at House of Fraser kicked off the initiative by launching the first in a series of high-end interactive dashboards, aimed at transforming the way employees interact with and consume data. Their aim was to roll out the full functionality of the MicroStrategy platform over the course of 2017, including: pixel-perfect documents, self-service data discovery, advanced analytics, mobile reporting, and MicroStrategy Office.

**Simplify**

Through nGenBI, House of Fraser has been able to vastly simplify their analytics environment, reducing the total number of reports in their repository from 19,450 to 10,000 (a reduction of 48.59%). This simplification has enabled the BI team to place their focus on higher-value reports and eliminate redundant reports that previously resulted in performance bottlenecks.

**Visualise**

The nGenBI initiative has completely changed the way that employees at House of Fraser consume and interact with data. Self-service data discovery enables House



## Before nGenBI

- Limited visualisation capabilities
- Over-reliance on printed reports
- Lack of data governance

## Goals

- Simplify the enterprise analytics environment
- Arm employees with access to critical business information
- Roll out the full breadth of MicroStrategy functionality

## After nGenBI

- Simplified, efficient BI environment
- Reduced time spent on report development
- Greater use of advanced analytics and data science techniques

of Fraser's advanced business users to take analytics into their own hands—quickly answering complex business questions by building on-the-fly reports and dashboards.

Before the rollout of nGenBI, the BI team would spend weeks, or even months, acquiring and validating data and gathering business requirements in order to build a single dashboard. Today, they can use MicroStrategy data discovery tools to build user-friendly, interactive dashboards in as little as 20 minutes — completely changing the way that dashboards are designed, built, and used across the organisation.

## Modernise

House of Fraser has also been able to modernise their BI environment, expanding their community of users into the hundreds and leveraging data science techniques to deliver tangible value to the business. As a result, they can now visualise real-time customer flow data to see how customers physically move through their stores—a critical tool for improving the in-store customer experience.

A second area that House of Fraser has been able to improve with analytics is their returns process. With increasing online transactions, House of Fraser has seen a significant uptick in product returns — upwards of 40% for some product categories. In order to understand the impact of this behaviour on their profitability, House of Fraser analyses every aspect of the returns process. This insight helps them work to improve each step of the returns process on a cost-optimised basis.

House of Fraser has also been able to modernise the way that they leverage analytics in business presentations. By using MicroStrategy Office, the operations team has been able to greatly reduce the time required to produce their weekly reports (in some cases up to 60%). This equates to two hours a week per report writer, or nearly 1,000 hours a week across 500 active BI users. Now, these users can focus their attention on analysing data and uncovering new insights, rather than just gathering data and refreshing it.

## What's Next

Analytics is set to play a key role in House of Fraser's continued business transformation. As the company seeks to change their business culture, they are striving towards establishing a single version of the truth for their enterprise data, and looking to become a truly data-driven enterprise. To do this, they need to tap into unexploited sources of data, become more analytical in their day-to-day operations, and continue to expand their community of engaged business users.

They plan to roll out the latest MicroStrategy features, including the R Analytics bundle and load balancing, and are looking to use analytics to improve stock management, reduce returns, optimise store layouts, and enhance the overall customer experience.

House of Fraser is also looking to expand their use of mobile analytics, arming their in-store team with real-time access to customer footfall analysis and their warehouse team with information on stock handling. As an additional benefit, they expect that rolling out mobile analytics will help them significantly reduce costs associated with the printing of paper reports.