GUESS?, Inc. is one of the most widely recognizable apparel companies across the globe, with over 1,421 GUESS and GUESS Accessory retail stores in over 90 countries worldwide. A company known for its innovative style, GUESS continues to dress and accessorize the world with fashion-forward apparel, handbags, watches, shoes, and more.

The importance of being an early adopter

At the start of 2008, the GUESS BI team wanted to support its mobile workforce by delivering timely information to their RIM BlackBerry devices. Officials at GUESS wanted to be sure that its executives and corporate directors at headquarters, and regional directors in the field were receiving critical information, regardless of their location.

To this end, GUESS selected MicroStrategy to develop a mobile business intelligence initiative that delivered operational information to end users’ smartphones. Instead of receiving cumbersome Excel spreadsheets, the sales force could open up a PDF document on their BlackBerry devices, get a quick snapshot of the business, and make immediate decisions that impact sales and revenue growth. But, GUESS knew it wasn’t going to stop there, and decided to deliver that insight to the iPad.

Seizing opportunities

In 2010, GUESS chose MicroStrategy Mobile to develop an iPad app that allows its executives, designers, and merchants to analyze sales performance. The iPad app helps GUESS users perform additional analysis than they currently do via BlackBerry and MicroStrategy Web.

Today, GUESS users, including executives, merchants, regional directors, visual merchandisers, buyers, and planners, have access to 13 dashboards captured in one, easy-to-use app that highlights prevalent sales trends. For example, executives at the company’s Los Angeles-based headquarters can tap on summarized information such as sales performance by region (e.g., U.S. stores vs. Canadian stores), tap and swipe on margins (e.g., Are they up or down?), see trend information, and resolve pain points.

“We view ourselves as early adopters of mobile technology, and realized in 2010 the business value of delivering instant productivity to our executives’ iPads,” said Bruce Yen, Director of Business Intelligence at GUESS. “On the iPad, the information decision makers need is easily accessed in a way that encourages them to use it.”
One app with multiple business workflows

GUESS has outfitted its iPad users with multiple windows into its data: Merchant and Sales. The app allows both a high-level and detailed view of the data, depending on the user.

Executives are quickly briefed about the state of the business with a few swipes and taps. They are able to view graphs and charts on the business as well as view the weekly, monthly, and yearly sales at the company level or drill down to the store level.

Merchants can access the app and look at the data in multiple ways. They can see best sellers across multiple levels of detail and drill down into a specific store; view inventory or sales on a map; and look at detailed information by style, down to the size level with over four months of history. The power of being able to walk into a meeting and have information for any style or best selling item allows merchants to be able to make quick and informed decisions based on current trends.

The merchants can analyze this information while traveling, at home, or more importantly, when visiting stores. The app allows the merchants to perform a virtual store visit before visiting the store—viewing product mix, sales penetration by category, sales trends and best sellers from total store best sellers down to very specific category levels. They are also able to compare the sales of each style to the sales at other stores. Additionally, while at the store, they can pull up any style and view its selling history, for instance, if they are trying to compare a current selling style to a style sold in the past.

“Allowing users to have a clear view of financials and sales in addition to best sellers gives everyone a better view of what’s driving the business,” added Yen.

Mobile BI meets high fashion

GUESS is unique in that they are a very design-focused company. Even in adopting a new technology, Yen believed the iPad screens had to reflect the GUESS fashion-forward, corporate culture. Some members of the design staff aren’t used to grids and charts, so the GUESS graphic designer worked with MicroStrategy Mobile consultants to incorporate more visual elements into the screens that a typical GUESS employee would relate to.

Once the apps went live, feedback was tremendous and positive, according to Yen. “I got a lot of comments like, ‘The iPad apps are stunning. Can we get more of these?’ and ‘I can’t believe how easy it is to use.’ The apps simplify everyday decisions for GUESS executives meeting in conference rooms, designers checking in on their designs, and the merchants and planners analyzing store performance.

Yen is pleased with the cohesive design and overall results, and credits his onsite team as well as MicroStrategy Professional Services.