

## How Marshall Fleet shifted the role of FP&A from basic budgeting & forecasting to true financial performance management.

### Solution

Fast Financials powered by IBM Planning Analytics

### Services

Consultancy

### About Marshall Fleet Solutions

Marshall's is the UK's largest independent refrigeration, tail lift & commercial vehicle fleet service & support organisation. The company has a diverse business model, including the sale, installation & maintenance of refrigeration & tail lift units & parts, & fleet management for over 2,500 vehicles.

During the pandemic, Marshall's technology & expertise played a vital role in helping supermarkets & logistics companies deliver food & medical supplies to people who were isolating or shielding.



### Challenges Overview

Marshall's multifaceted business model means that financial planning and analysis (FP&A) was increasingly complex. As the business expanded into new areas, it wanted to take a more sophisticated approach to financial planning and performance management.

Lewis Bryan, Marshall's FP&A Manager, realised that the spreadsheet-based processes supporting its annual budget and quarterly forecasts were becoming an obstacle. Marshall's budget model had more than 50 tabs, with hundreds of columns in each tab and even opening the spreadsheet took several minutes. Making quick changes was almost impossible, because information had to be copy-pasted into multiple places on each tab. And the whole process of getting the data into the spreadsheets took so long that as soon as one quarter's forecast was complete, Bryan had to start work on the next one almost immediately.



### Results

We provided Marshalls with a demo of Fast Financials, our out-of-the-box solution for budgeting, forecasting, planning, and reporting built on the IBM Planning Analytics platform. They saw it's potential and asked us to make some customisations to align the solution with their IT security and GDPR policies. We also provided several days of modelling training for the FP&A team, to enable them to become self-sufficient quickly. Since then, Bryan and his team have been working to port even more spreadsheet-based processes and calculations into Fast Financials, laying the groundwork for significant automation of budgeting and forecasting.

When Fast Financials had been up and running for two months, Marshall felt confident enough to switch over and create its 9+3 forecast in the new system, and were pleased with the results.

The initial objective of the project was to port the existing spreadsheet model into IBM Planning Analytics without significant changes, but the company has been able to introduce new functionality too, such as a gross margin cube, which has enabled rapid analysis of sales.

**"Beyond the time savings that we expect to see through automation, what we're really excited about is the ability to provide visibility of targets, budgets and actuals to the business at speed," says Bryan**