„Data Automation was the Biggest Milestone"

Atlas Copco

From manual sample analytics to automated full evaluations for the entire company group - auditing at Atlas Copco has developed into an innovative business enabler in just four years. With the support of dab: Daten – Analysen & Beratung GmbH (dab) and Bizcon, Atlas Copco has reached a more efficient way to use data analytics in group internal audit and assurance functions.

Atlas Copco is the home of industrial ideas. We develop smart, sustainable and highly efficient solutions that empower our customers to grow and drive society forward. We do it with people, profit, and planet in mind, and with the highest business integrity. Our innovative products, solutions, and services are demanded by every type of industry. They enable everything from industrial automation to reliable medical air solutions.

in 1873	40 tsd.	in 180	10 bil.
founded	employees	countries represented	annual turnover (2021)

Changing auditors with limited IT know-how

Atlas Copco, like many Scandinavian companies, works with a comparatively small team of eight internal auditors. Most audits are performed with the support of guest auditors from other business units. More than 200 of these work for the internal audit each year.

In 2017 Atlas Copco decided to introduce analytics software in internal audit as part of its digitalisation strategy. The processes were to become more efficient, the analytics more meaningful. "Previously, we could only perform sample audits. With the software, we wanted to be able to check all the group's data for abnormalities to gain insights that we did not have before," Joris Cuppens recalls, Group Internal Auditor at Atlas Copco. The team wanted to use more automation and prepare technologically for the future.

New times with ACL Analytics on-premise

When choosing the analytic solution, it was important to consider the character of the organisation: Many external auditors for just one assignment per year. Therefore, the software must be intuitive and self-explanatory, even for sporadic use.

Atlas Copco opted for ACL Analytics from Diligent in the standalone version. Initially, individual analytics were created for key questions and the annual report was produced using the application.

The success was visible from day 1. Regular audits took significantly less time, full analytics were possible, and the gain of insight knowledge increased. "The analytics provided clear added value compared to the previous standard, but the application was not yet optimal for our way of working and for processes."

However, ACL Analytics only ran as an on-premise version on a few computers. Therefore, analytics were often carried out according to order. Divisions and auditors worked in different time zones generating a problem of delays. In some cases, data was not included in final reports because it did not reach the processor in time.

Another shortcoming was that employees who used ACL Analytics needed advanced IT skills to take full advantage of the application. This made the tool unfit for guest auditors.

> "When we work with our partners at dab and Bizcon, it feels like we are talking to colleagues."
>
> Joris Cuppens

Server solution and standard analytics increase flexibility and performance

In 2019, therefore, the switch to the server version Analytics Exchange Server followed. "This allowed us to achieve a significant leap in performance," Joris Cuppens emphasises. Instead of waiting for licensees to run required analytics, every member of the team could now access the tool regardless of their location. The analytics are now run overnight and do no longer block local computing capacity. To reach this point data sources had to be linked, and analytics and automations created.

Starting with independent script development, Atlas Copco decided in 2019 to outsource this task. With the predefined analytics from the dab:AnalyticSuite, not only a considerable amount of work was eliminated, analytics could now be deployed comprehensively and for specific audits. The team used the time savings and a wide range of questions to analyse not only individual divisions, but the entire company - which provided a much clearer picture of inefficiencies and problematic processes.

For Joris Cuppens, the investment has paid off: "According to our experience, we save an average of 50 to 60% of working time for the data analytics - and the dab:AnalyticSuite is expanded every year with up-to-date analytics."

Automated analytics without IT background

Finally, the introduction of Diligent's HighBond platform with the ACL Robotics Server ensured even more efficiency in performing data analytics. Thanks to the intuitive usability, even employees without IT experience can now create important reports by the push of a button. Auditors can find results clearly visualised in dashboards at any time. Instead of generating analytics manually each time, the latest statistics are only a few clicks away.

Looking back, Joris Cuppens rates the introduction of the Diligent software as one of the most important milestones in recent years. "The HighBond platform has taken the audit team's contribution to the company's value creation to a new level."

The partnership with Bizcon as Diligent Nordic Channel Partner and dab: Daten - Analysen & Beratung GmbH has paved the way, he says. "The cooperation has proven itself over the years. We always had the feeling that dab and Bizcon prioritized our interests over their own revenue."

More automation and a higher value contribution

How effective is the newly established analytics ecosystem? Atlas Copco put it to a stress test with the demanding trade compliance audit. Result: The system performed well, and not just in technical terms. "The speed and simplicity with which we can deliver results is now optimal," Joris Cuppens points out. He is already planning the next digital changes.

"We want to use even more automation in the future and create better integration of the analyses in our IT infrastructure." As a result, Atlas Copco is currently working on implementing the audit management module from Diligent, which allows the entire audit process from planning to reporting to be centrally mapped on one platform (*Implementation was completed in spring 2022). There are no limits as to digital transformation. Joris Cuppens: "There is always room for improvement."

Key outcomes

Time savings

50-60% less effort for using data analytics

Wide group of users

Data analytics at the push of a button and without IT support

Automation

Automated report generation and flexible access to the latest results data