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ADVERTISING ANALYTICS FOR ACTIONABLE INSIGHTS AT RAMCO CEMENTS LIMITED

A chartered accountant by training, A. V. Dharmakrishnan, Chief Executive Officer of Ramco Cements Limited (RCL), had decades of diverse experience across various business functions. He had a keen interest in information technology (IT), spearheading many innovative IT projects and solutions at RCL. Under his leadership, RCL, which operated in a traditional brick-and-mortar industry, adopted best-in-class IT practices and thereby became one of the leaders in the cement industry with respect to the use of IT. In 2016, he was keen to evaluate other potential areas in which the solutions developed by his IT team could be leveraged successfully to improve business operations.

Ramco Group of companies was a USD 1 billion¹ conglomerate based in southern India with interests ranging from cement, textiles, fiber cement products and surgical cotton to enterprise software. RCL (formerly named Madras Cements) was the flagship company of the Ramco group and primarily sold portland cement. It catered mainly to states in Southern India, although, of late, it had been foraying into other parts of the country as well. RCL sold cement to both trade and institutional customers and mostly depended on its distribution network of cement dealers to cater to the demand emanating from various parts of the country. It was heavily reliant on a strong and competent sales team who were responsible

¹ Retrieved from <http://www.ramco.com/about/>, in February 2017.

Indranil Bose and Debprotim Dutta of the Indian Institute of Management Calcutta developed this case study as the basis for class discussion rather than to illustrate the effective or ineffective running of an organization.

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for liaising, managing and working with various distributors. In order to ensure fairness and candid/constructive feedback to the sales team, RCL revamped its entire set of key performance indicators (KPIs) as a part of a bigger initiative focused on the implementation of business intelligence (BI). These KPIs were tracked at various levels such as the state, zone, region, area and district levels as well as at the individual employee level. Using the latest technology, the KPIs were then superimposed on a map to understand trends and region specific biases, if any. With the introduction of this new system, RCL was able to quantify the performance of salespersons using real-time data, which led to a greater sense of accountability and ownership among its sales force. In addition to the KPIs, RCL also introduced state-of-the-art forecasting techniques that were based on real-time sales data using its advanced IT infrastructure.

Following the success of this initiative, the management wanted to identify various areas in which IT could make a significant business impact using BI and analytics by leveraging advanced IT infrastructure. More specifically, the leadership was looking for ways by which they could improve their marketing initiatives and therefore advised the IT team to explore this area. Of late, the company had focused aggressively on marketing campaigns as it tried to foray into newer regions and states. Could the IT team use the technology infrastructure to positively impact all these marketing decisions and initiatives? Was it possible to have a marriage between two diverse areas such as IT and marketing that could help to grow the business and also improve its efficiency? What sort of actionable insights should the system provide to help RCL's marketing managers?