



CASE STUDY



Customer Challenge

Beam Suntory was created in 2014 by combining the world leader in bourbon and the pioneer in Japanese whisky to form a new company with a passion for quality from seed to sip, an ambitious and winning mindset, and a vision of Growing for Good. Jacob Beam produced the first barrel of Jim Beam® in 1795, and Shinjiro Torii founded Suntory with the first whisky to suit Japanese palates in 1899. Other well-known spirits brands have become part of the Beam Suntory family, including Sipsmith Gin and, most recently, On the Rocks Cocktails. As a world leader in premium spirits, embracing its corporate governance responsibility, Beam Suntory required a solution to understand and protect the data collected across its worldwide enterprise.

Spirion Solution

The company turned to Spirion to gain a solid understanding of both current and historical data and its location across the enterprise.

Spirion Results

Within the first year, Beam Suntory saw a massive reduction to its data footprint, with 2.6 million files remediated – and still counting.

Distilling a rich history of data – Beam Suntory embraces Spirion partnership

The Need: Refine data governance in a well-established yet growing company

When a company has actively lived for more than 200 years, it has more than its fair share of data.

As Beam Suntory evolved and expanded to include tequila, vodka, cognac, rum, cordials, ready-to-drink pre-mixed cocktails, while investing in more growth opportunities, data across the company multiplied. When data accumulates over time, data silos per department, area, or region and duplicative or outdated data tend to occur.

“Similar to keeping that ‘just in case’ outfit in the closet that you’ve never worn, and might not even fit into anymore, people tend to want to keep data longer than needed and may even forget everything they’ve stored over the years. As a result, we’re focusing on the data lifecycle, documenting retention periods, and getting to the disposal phase where possible.”

Lex Perryman, Enterprise Data Governance Lead, Beam Suntory

Beam Suntory has offices in North & South America, Asia, Australia, South Africa, and Europe. Because of its broad reach and the highly regulated and taxed alcohol industry, the company must be aware of local privacy laws for every country and comply with all legislation.

Evolving data privacy laws and the ever-looming threat of a data breach created the need for increased data protection efforts. In 2019, Beam Suntory took steps to build a global information security (InfoSec) team and quickly determined that data governance should be part of the process.

The Solution: Understanding the data landscape

The InfoSec team needed to help the organization expand its enterprise-wide data governance efforts, gain awareness of organization data, who has access to it, and its location.

"Spirion was already going through the proof of concept when I joined the company. The goal was to build out enterprise data governance, and Spirion was integrated into our ecosystem to help drive that change. Spirion has dedicated significant support resources to help us achieve our goals."

Joe Suareo, Chief Information Security Officer,
Beam Suntory

Beam Suntory began its journey with Spirion by scanning for unstructured, sensitive data.

"That was eye-opening for the organization. Most companies don't know where all their data is – particularly unstructured data. Spirion helps to give us greater visibility into what we have so we can make sure it's appropriately secured."

Joe Suareo, Chief Information Security Officer,
Beam Suntory

The Benefits: 2.6 million files remediated – and counting

Armed with greater awareness of their sensitive data landscape, the InfoSec team began data cleanup efforts. They reached out to groups to establish ownership over sensitive data and the data-handling process. This outreach provided insight into how the data is used and its transmission. In cases of data redundancy, Spirion provided a means for expediting data cleanup.

Within the first four months after successful program configuration, Beam Suntory saw a massive reduction to its data footprint, with 2.6 million files shredded – and still counting.

Data security classifications also were created as part of the organization's updated (US) Data Protection Policy, and these classifications are now part of the company's required data dictionary fields. Together with the company's Acceptable Use Policy, Data Retention Policy, and (EU specific) Personal Data Protection Policy, alongside mainstream information security efforts such as the latest phishing education campaign, the organization is more aware of sensitive data and its handling.

"Understanding our landscape: our servers, file folders, permissions, and the teams that need access to the data has been extremely beneficial. I work with groups to encourage awareness, promote education, and improve our overall security posture."

Lex Perryman, Enterprise Data Governance Lead,
Beam Suntory

Despite Beam Suntory being a global force with headquarters in Chicago, IL, many employees still remember Jim Beam as a local Kentucky employer. Today the company encourages Yatte Minahare, the spirit of ambition, to dream big, take challenges, and never give up. This entrepreneurial spirit encourages employees to self-start in solving problems.

"We're working to drive a holistic cultural change in viewing data as an enterprise-level asset that everyone has a responsibility to understand and protect, regardless of area or role."

Lex Perryman, Enterprise Data Governance Lead,
Beam Suntory

Today, Beam Suntory is delighting consumers with their quality products in more markets than ever before while protecting what matters most – the data of colleagues, customers, and the community.

Talk to a Spirion data security and compliance expert today: expert@spirion.com

Spirion has relentlessly solved real data protection problems since 2006 with accurate, contextual discovery of structured and unstructured data; purposeful classification; automated real-time risk remediation; and powerful analytics and dashboards to give organizations greater visibility into their most at-risk data and assets. Visit us at spirion.com