

CASE STUDY

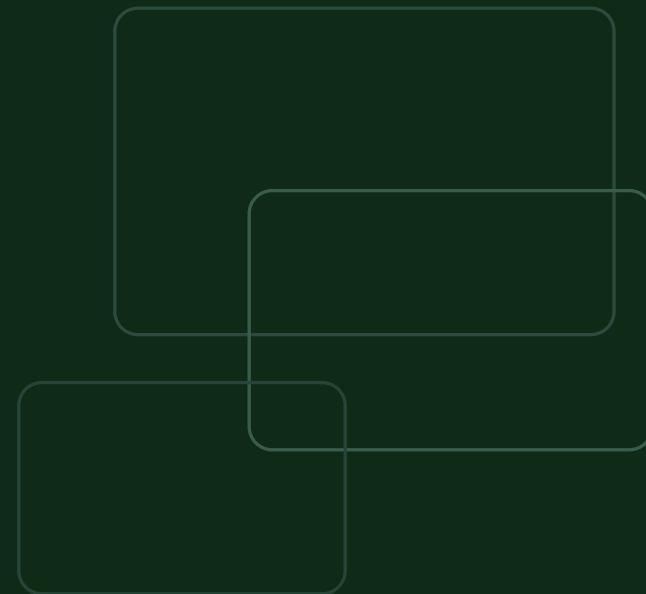
Apollo

Shipping a Five-Year Backlog Item

Turning fragmented, manual pricing decisions into a trusted, scalable decision-support platform — with no handover, and a team I had to rebuild from the ground up.

Pablo Martin · Product Manager, bp Global Pricing · 2025–present

Product Strategy · Stakeholder Leadership · Team Rebuild · Pricing Systems



At a glance

 ROLE

Product Manager, Global Pricing

 DURATION

Live since 2025 — five years on the roadmap before delivery

 SCOPE

Fuels pricing execution, launched in Spain, rollout underway to additional markets

 TEAM

Rebuilt engineering leadership mid-project, plus data engineering and a commercial pricing SME

 TOOLS

Power BI, SQL, Figma, Azure DevOps — integrated with SAP and the PROS pricing engine

 KEY OUTCOME

~£1.5m annual value, built bottom-up by the pricing SME; hundreds of analyst hours reclaimed

Impact at a glance

The headline numbers, and why each one is more credible than it looks.

£1.5m

annual value, built bottom-up by the pricing SME — activity by activity, not a modelling assumption

3 months

delay to the full PROS integration, committed to publicly and delivered exactly on the revised date

Hundreds

of analyst hours reclaimed from manual work, freed up directly for the analysis Apollo now enables

THE SITUATION

Five years of promises, nothing shipped

Apollo had been on bp's Global Pricing roadmap for five years without shipping. Pricing decisions for fuels contracts were made manually, from scattered spreadsheets, pulling data from systems never designed to work together.

Spain had always been the intended first market — the original idea came from the Spanish pricing team, who had been waiting five years to see it real. Apollo was not a blank canvas. It came with five years of accumulated expectation, and people who had heard promises before.

The handover was effectively nothing. My predecessor tracked dates and status — without shaping direction, discovery, or the underlying product decisions.

5 YEARS

on the roadmap. Zero markets live.

What I actually had to work with came from my line manager and directly from the engineering team — piecing together five years of decisions after the fact, rather than reading them anywhere.

Rebuilding the foundations first

Before I could make real progress on Apollo itself, I had to fix two things that should already have existed.

1

No documentation

The previous lead engineer — a contractor with informal backing from a senior technical stakeholder — left the architecture and decision history almost entirely undocumented. We reverse-engineered it from the system itself before we could confidently change anything.

2

A stakeholder map that was too narrow

Nobody had brought in Customer Support or Digital Security for a tool about to sit at the centre of live commercial pricing decisions. Neither had been consulted before I arrived.



Five years of a product not shipping usually means five years of undocumented decisions and an incomplete stakeholder map. Half the early work was not building anything new — it was making the invisible visible again.

A difficult call on the team itself

The lead engineer — a contractor — was genuinely not equipped for the role. He held it through an informal relationship with a senior technical stakeholder, not because he was the strongest person for it. A permanent bp data engineer already embedded in the project was clearly the stronger technical lead.

THE RISK

Change technical leadership mid-flight, on a project already carrying five years of pressure to deliver.

THE CALL

Did not renew the contractor. Moved the permanent engineer into the lead position instead.

It paid off. We understood each other from the start, worked well together, and stayed on schedule despite the change.

He has since worked with me across several subsequent projects — which tells me the call was right, not just lucky.

DECISION 1

Start with one market, not all of them

The plan I inherited was to build something scalable across multiple European markets from day one. I made the case to focus entirely on Spain first.

There was real pushback — particularly from a senior pricing leader across Europe who had been waiting years and wanted broader progress, not another narrow delivery.

My argument: the instinct to do too much at once, and never get any single market to a state solid enough to trust, was exactly the pattern that had kept Apollo stuck for five years. Once he saw the revised plan and the logic behind it, he backed it.

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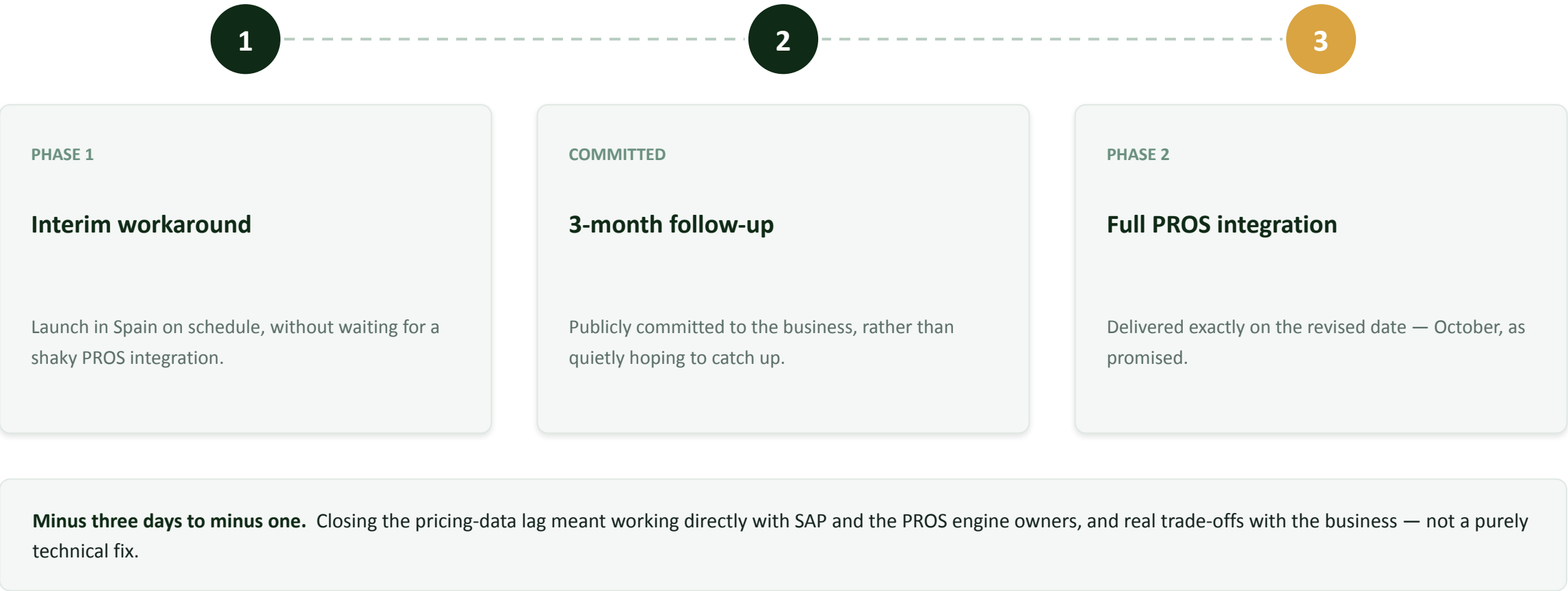
***One market, done properly,
would rebuild credibility faster
than five markets done thinly.***

The pattern that kept Apollo stuck for five years wasn't lack of ambition — it was never landing.

DECISION 2

Split the integration, not just the MVP

The PROS pricing engine integration wasn't in a state to build a launch on with confidence — so it shipped in two honest phases instead of one risky one.



Reframing the problem

Structured discovery with the Spanish pricing analysts who would use Apollo daily surfaced something that reframed the whole product.

WHAT IT LOOKED LIKE

Missing data

The assumed friction — analysts didn't have the numbers they needed.

WHAT IT ACTUALLY WAS

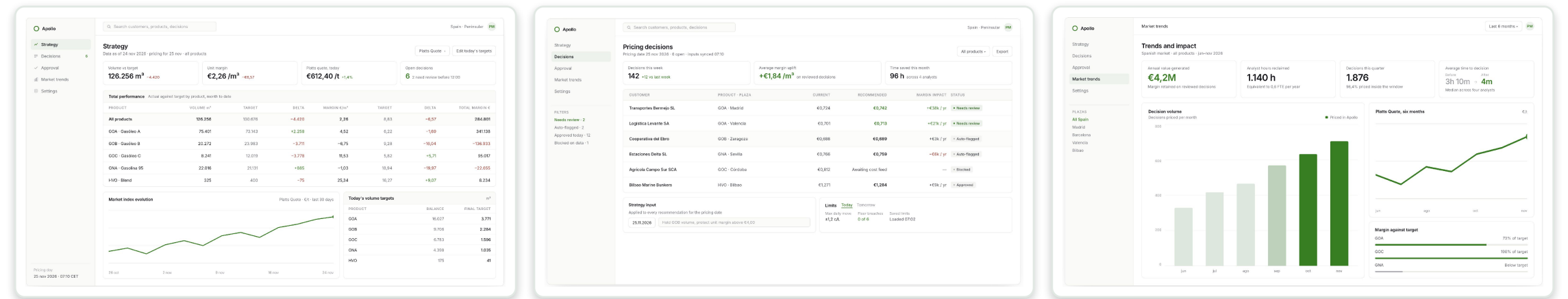
Fragmented trust

The real friction — too many separate places to check and reconcile before feeling confident making a call.

Design and engineering worked in parallel with discovery, not after it. Early prototypes went in front of analysts before anything was built — validating direction, not gathering opinions on a finished screen.

Rebuilt for daily use

Three screens from the Figma redesign — the overview analysts open every morning, the queue they work through, and the impact view leaders check.



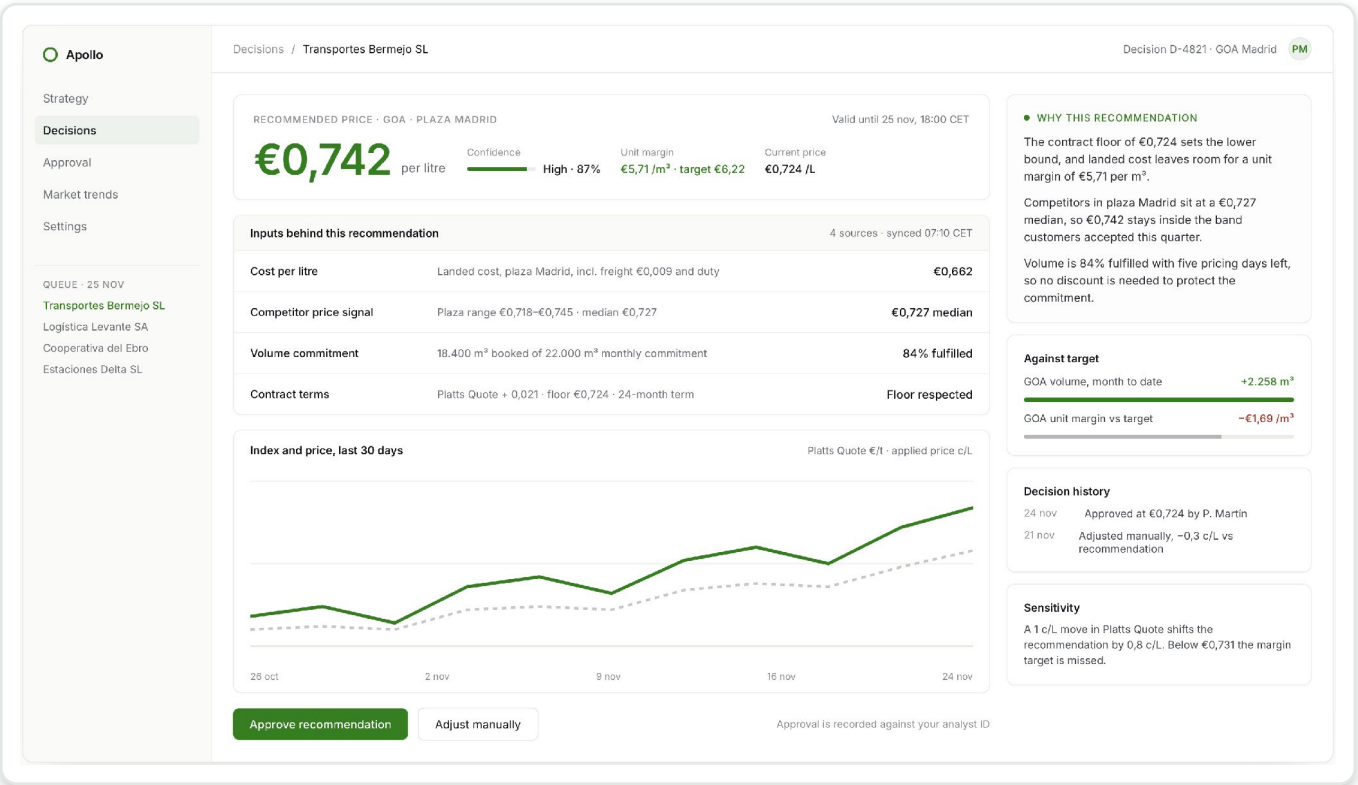
Strategy — the daily overview

Decisions — the queue analysts work

Market trends — impact over time

One consistent system. Same recommendation logic, same reasoning, same record of who decided — whether you're scanning the queue or reviewing one contract.

Inside a single decision



Apollo — decision detail, redesigned

Apollo brings together contract terms, cost data, competitor pricing signals and volume commitments through purpose-built pipelines, instead of manual extraction.

Every recommendation ships with its reasoning attached — cost floor, competitor signal, volume commitment — so analysts see why, not just what.

DECISION SUPPORT, NOT AUTOMATION

Analysts approve or adjust manually — every choice recorded against their analyst ID. Apollo removes the hours of manual assembly before a decision could be made, not the judgement itself.

The launch had to prove something

Apollo carried five years of unmet expectation, so the launch mattered as much as the build. I planned and edited a launch video myself, with reflections from the pricing SME and the product sponsor — a proper showcase, not a quiet release.



The reaction that mattered most was not about the interface. It was people telling us they finally felt heard, after five years of being told Apollo was coming.

The consistent theme: people felt genuinely listened to, and that prototyping early — bringing them in before anything was finished — felt organised in a way previous attempts never had.

THE OUTCOME

How the £1.5m was actually built

Apollo launched successfully in Spain. The headline number was not a top-down estimate — it was assembled bottom-up, activity by activity.

1

Catalogue

Every new analytical activity the team could now do, that manual work had previously made impossible.

2

Cost

Each activity costed per litre, by the pricing SME herself — not handed down as a modelling assumption.

3

Consolidate

Totals consolidated by month across the team's new analytical activity.

4

Normalise

Seasonality and one-off shocks — such as the war in Iran — normalised out before annualising the figure.

The analyst hours were more straightforward. A large share of previously manual processes were removed entirely, freeing that time directly for the analysis Apollo now makes possible.

WHAT'S NEXT

Scaling beyond one market

The product challenge in this phase is different to the one that shaped version one — and it's the next real test of whether Spain's foundation was solid enough to build on.

THE EASY PATH

A near-identical, market-specific instance for each new country.

Effectively repeats the manual, bespoke pattern Apollo was meant to replace — just one level up. Each instance needs separate maintenance forever.

WHAT'S BEING BUILT

A genuinely reusable core, with configurable business rules per market.

Scalability treated as a design problem in its own right, not a family of near-duplicate applications each needing separate upkeep.

REFLECTION

What I learned

1

A missing handover is a discovery problem

When there's no documentation, the first job is archaeology. That work is invisible on a roadmap, but it's where the real risk usually gets found.

2

Difficult people decisions are sometimes the highest-leverage ones

Changing technical leadership mid-project was uncomfortable and risky. It was also probably the single decision that made hitting our commitments possible.

3

Honest delay builds more trust than a broken launch

Telling stakeholders we needed three more months was a hard conversation. Delivering exactly on that date, after five years of missed dates, is what rebuilt confidence.

4

The most credible numbers are built by the people closest to the work

The £1.5m means more because the pricing SME assembled it herself, activity by activity — not as a modelling assumption handed down.

5

How you launch is part of the product, not a wrapper around it

After five years of promises, the launch had to prove something. Involving the team early and showing that visibly did more for adoption than any single feature.

CLOSING THOUGHT

Apollo didn't need a better idea. It needed someone to close five years of open loops — the documentation, the stakeholders, the team, the integration — one at a time, and deliver exactly what was promised.

Live in Spain. Scaling now — the same discipline, applied to the harder problem of doing it without repeating the pattern that kept it stuck for five years.