

Case study

Integrated data warehouse solution for historic insurance organisation

When specialist insurance Group Ecclesiastical embarked on a project to create a single integrated data warehouse to serve a diverse range of different business areas it turned to outsource IT services specialist ITC Infotech. The new data warehouse provided a single source of information, which reduced non-productive hours spent in data validation as well as the time and effort spent in conducting pricing analysis.

About Ecclesiastical Insurance

Ecclesiastical is not a typical insurance company. With a customer base that today includes properties like St Paul's and Gloucester cathedrals, it was originally established in 1887 to provide insurance cover for Anglican churches. Over the last 125 years, the company has broadened its customer base, and now offers insurance for a wide range of sectors, including charity, education, heritage and faith sectors, as well as home insurance and a range of other financial services products and services.

Background

The client is a specialist insurer with its own unique requirements for its data warehouse. A range of skills and abilities was required for the project, to be supplied in an onsite/offshore model, including business analysis and software development and testing capabilities.

The challenge

Ecclesiastical needed the appropriate level of technical knowledge and skills in place to deal with a number of challenges with its existing database architecture. Being housed in a range of legacy applications, the data was divided between the different product areas forming a complex group of data sets that also had data quality issues. Ecclesiastical had to find a partner that was able to address these issues with a cost effective, efficient and highly focussed solution.

The solution

Outsource IT services specialist ITC Infotech was appointed to provide the necessary in-depth knowledge and experience of the business intelligence space required to complete the complex data integration project. As well as the relevant knowledge and experience, ITC Infotech also had the capacity to be able to ramp-up the size of its dedicated team as and when required to meet the project objectives. In addition, it was able to deliver the solution at a highly competitive price.

From the project's inception, ITC Infotech set to work to understand the customer's applications, tools and architecture. From the outset, supplier and client discussed and agreed best practices, processes and the strategy for engagement. Together they defined the overall process for the delivery and

agreed all the models, review touch points and acceptance criteria in a collaborative outsourced approach.

ITC Infotech business analysts met with users at Ecclesiastical to get a full understanding of the business and to gather and document the functional requirements for the new data warehouse. Technical experts from ITC Infotech analysed Ecclesiastical's architecture and tools to better understand the overall vision and strategy required. It then offered suggestions and made recommendations about the form the new data warehouse architecture should take and provided software development and testing services that enhanced the existing system.

To give Ecclesiastical the confidence that the project was progressing successfully, robust governance processes were put in place. Weekly review meetings were held between ITC Infotech and the client to discuss and address any challenges or issues that had come up during the previous week. In addition, steering meetings were held on a quarterly basis to review progress and align the partnership model for changes. As the relationship matured over the project's duration the two teams and Ecclesiastical's senior management were brought closer together ensuring that the solution was truly fit for purpose.

The results

Now that the project has been delivered and the client's targets have all been achieved, the benefits are being appreciated. A central warehouse was created as a single source of information for the business thus reducing non-productive hours spent in data validation. Users can now receive automated information feeds and the overall time and effort spent in conducting the business-critical pricing analysis by the actuaries has been reduced enabling quick decisions to be made on product pricing. Business teams are now provided with the right data at the right time and manual processes, interventions and errors have all been reduced.

The success of the project has been proven with improvements in defined parameters like quality, productivity, project timelines and defect leakage/density. User feedback from the client has also been overwhelmingly positive with satisfaction levels on deliverables exceeding expectations.

The new data warehouse empowers Ecclesiastical's business teams with the correct and up-to-date business intelligence which helps them meet their corporate goals, but also crucially helps them achieve compliance with Solvency II, an EU directive that codifies and harmonises EU insurance regulation and focuses on good data governance.

The project has also established an on-going partnership between ITC Infotech and Ecclesiastical. The client can now call on a skilled outsource's resource pool with in-depth knowledge of its systems whenever it needs assistance to meet its IT targets.