

MultiChoice enhances channel management with Microsoft BI

Premium digital media entertainment company, MultiChoice, has expanded its Microsoft-based Business Intelligence platform to include channel reports for improved management of its various television channels and viewer statistics.

The solution, implemented by Microsoft Gold Certified partner, IS Partners, offered rapid deployment of a new database and BI stack, giving MultiChoice the ability to more easily address the dynamic nature of its operations. It has also allowed the company to gain a larger BI footprint within the business, and integrates with existing business tools such as Microsoft Word and Excel.

Business situation

MultiChoice has coverage across Africa via a number of satellites, including IS7, W4 and SESAT. Information needs to be accurately identified and consolidated in terms of which programmes are being viewed by which users, and the number of viewers on each platform.

MultiChoice has rights to broadcast certain programmes in some countries but not others, and further needed to manage these country blocks. Prior to the implementation of channel reports, the company faced a challenge in consolidating information and optimising visibility into what is being viewed where, and the number of subscribers on each of its platforms.

In the past, information was reported separately from each country. MultiChoice relied on information supplied by in-country managers, with operational validation also taking place in-country.

Solution implementation

“Channel reports have given us an accurate, up-to-date indication of what is being viewed on each of our platforms,” says Leonard Kgoadi, BI Manager at MultiChoice. The project made use of the Microsoft BI platform as well as Microsoft Integration Services and Reporting Services.

Data validation presented a number of challenges as information was based on what people knew, in particular people who had accumulated knowledge over the time they have been with the business. The final system was the result of eight iterations through which reports could be delivered to internal BI customers, such as in-country managers. The methodology allowed for error correcting and report validation on a continual basis.

MultiChoice also had to ensure the solution integrated with the interface system to the satellite and billing systems. This presented a challenge as these systems operate in real-time. Broadcast information from satellite systems is recorded in PISYS. The billing system provides an indication of the services customers subscribe to, and those which they are allowed to access. MultiChoice optimised this situation through a

weekly cycle of obtaining data, and then validating this information between the various systems as well as its operational systems.

Solution Benefits

Channel reports are critical to ensure correct payments are made to content providers, while also ensuring optimum management of bouquets and entitlements across MultiChoice's platforms, and to segment this information by subscribers.

"The solution has ensured an increase in the accuracy of reports. We can now more effectively gauge the popularity of each platform and make more informed business decisions, such as those regarding the discontinuation of channels, for example," says [].

MultiChoice has been able to consolidate information and automate output to other systems, such as finance for example, for reporting and analysis purposes. These processes were done manually in the past and are now completely seamless.

"Automation has further meant to one individual now manages the process, which has resulted in cost savings. Data validations and exception reports also ensure timely delivery of information and a more streamlined, cost-effective process. Delivery and operations are significantly more efficient. In-country stakeholders are able to obtain data rapidly and make decisions on marketing promotions or react quickly to market developments based on information they are governing," Kgoadi adds.

About IS Partners

Established in 2001, IS Partners addresses the need for quality implementations of Microsoft solutions. As a Microsoft Gold Certified Partner for Performance Management, Business Intelligence and Customer Relationship Management, IS Partners specialises in empowering sales, marketing, financial and management in its customer base. This includes various industries such as retail, distribution, finance and IT.

IS Partners uses its own proven, streamlined methodology for all implementations. It also specialises in bringing bottom line value to CRM and BI systems, providing business analysis, technical design, application architecture, implementation, training and performance tuning of CRM and BI implementations on the Microsoft platform and Microsoft's own CRM solution.