

## SAMRO fine tunes processes with Data Management solution

The Southern African Music Rights Organisation (SAMRO) has implemented a bespoke data management solution to optimise the distribution of Mechanical Rights royalties to its members. The solution was designed and implemented by Microsoft Gold Certified partner, IS Partners.

SAMRO represents composers, authors and publishers and administers for their members' benefit the performing, broadcasting and transmission rights as well as the reproduction rights of their copyrighted works.

### **Business Situation**

SAMRO established a separate business unit in 2008 to deal exclusively with mechanical (i.e. reproduction) rights collection and the subsequent distribution of royalties that have been accrued by members from CD, DVD and related sales. Royalties are paid by licensees to SAMRO who, in turn, ensures timely payments are made to its members.

SAMRO receives sales files twice a year from recording companies. This data needs to be validated before a distribution run can be created.

SAMRO did not have systems in place that could (without significant amendment) effectively handle the administrative processes to identify and match rights holders with royalties collected. The organisation receives files in different formats from the various recording companies. Information was previously taken from the mainframe and "dumped" into a format that could be read in Excel. Matching and linking of composers to music titles was then done manually.

"The process of extracting data from Excel took between six and eight staff members four weeks to achieve a 50% distribution," explains Greg Peach, Manager: Project Office at SAMRO.

Automation of the manual system would create better distribution for royalties to go out to rights holders in the quickest possible time.

### **Solutions implementation**

Due to the complex nature of the business, no off-the-shelf solutions were available and the need for a bespoke solution originated. "SAMRO first decided to develop an in-house solution but realised that the scope of the project was far larger than expected. The sheer volume of data meant that the manual process resulted in capacity problems and an inefficient percentage of distributable amounts.

"Our frustrations included the lengthy time spent on the exercise of matching payments to rights holders as well as the low distributable percentage," Peach says. "We needed a solution that would automate the process to ensure a more cost-effective approach in terms of human resources and time."

SAMRO required the implementation of a Microsoft SQL Server database to ensure that



information could be extracted from the mainframe for automatic matching of mechanical reproductions to composers and facilitate royalty distribution.

Once collated, reports are created to match data from the recording companies prior to royalty distribution.

### **Business Benefits**

The solution has ensured a 20% increase in the number of matches being created. “We are matching more artists than before, with an overall improvement on what was being done before in much quicker timeframe with far fewer people,” says Peach.

Based on statistics from the previous period, he says that there has been a marked increase from 48% to 76% in distribution.

“In terms of our distribution data, auto-matching ensures a more accurate result with less human intervention and more checks and balances in place. This ultimately ensures greater, measurable quality.”

Productivity improvements and a reduced requirement for human resources translate into a direct cost saving for SAMRO. “We needed to deploy a solution rapidly, but it also had to be flexible and manageable. The solution, developed by IS Partners, offered us this capability. SQL Server ensures flexibility as well as the ability to create and extract line-of-management reports more quickly. Reports allow us to determine which payments need to be distributed, what has been matched as well as obtain payment approvals from senior management,” he adds.

“IS Partners further demonstrated leading expertise in working with data sourced from our proprietary mainframe environment, and delivered on-time and within budget.”