



Analytics8

Case Study

World Nomads Group

World Nomads' data walks the walk

Analytics8's innovative data-warehousing solution has delivered the possibility of greatly increased speed to market for the products of an insurance company that thinks and behaves more like a lean technology start-up than a member of its own industry.

When World Nomads Group Program Manager Nick Payne began working with Analytics8, he had a clear goal of using the consultancy's skills to build his organisation's own business intelligence (BI) and data warehousing (DW) capability, rather than to outsource the development of its warehouse to a third party.

Payne says, "The hard benefits are that we've ended up with a robust working system, with the capability to develop it further ourselves and the capability to maintain it.

"Working with [Analytics8 project lead] Hung Le, our guys pulled up a framework that mirrored what Analytics8 had used elsewhere.

"We were able to build on top of the lessons it had learnt, and tap in to take advantage of a whole wealth of knowledge and experience, without having to make things up from scratch."

Quest for consolidation

In 2010, World Nomads engaged Analytics8 to construct its enterprise-wide data warehouse architecture. As sales growth accelerated, the company's need to get a better handle on its data became crucial.

With the web being its primary source

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of business data, it was in the process of moving everything over to a web-based reporting model.

It had built an internal database system to track sales in Microsoft's Access database, Payne says, "But, basically, we had a bunch of brands, and each had its own independent system with its own data structure."

World Nomads, "lacked a consolidated view of its financials and profitability"

Brand power

Payne says, "The initial engagement with Analytics8 was based on saying, let's come up with a data model that will support these existing brands.

"We needed to take the data, consolidate it into a single data store, from which we would be able to build a data warehouse and generate finance reporting to operate the business.

"One fundamental problem was that we had a team of two database guys, who knew the business very well in terms of working with finance, but had very limited knowledge and capability around ETLs, around data warehouses and that suite of technologies.

"We needed to build something, and it was quite specific and sophisticated, but we didn't have the capability to do it, and we needed to create that."

Of the choices facing him, Payne says, "Others might find a developer, scope their project, get a price, start developing, realise what's missing and then get the missing elements built for an extra fee that keeps on growing.

"That sort of relationship can work for simple, independent, isolated systems, but for a complex architecture, it ends up costing a lot more because

Client profile

World Nomads Group began life in 2002 and specialises in selling travel insurance under multiple individual brands via the web. Its global travel insurance covers residents in over 150 countries, and its experienced team brings together high levels of customer service, international underwriting expertise and excellent technical delivery.

The challenge

With over 200 employees, fast sales growth exacerbated World Nomads Group's need to consolidate multiple data sources into a single warehouse. It needed also to develop an independent in-house BI capability to support and develop it.

Benefits

World Nomads Group now has:

- Data integrity and processes which facilitate rapid speed to market for new, branded insurance products, and quick entry into new global markets
- A solid web-based reporting system underpinning its financial data control
- A robust platform for mining customer data

Technologies

- Microsoft SQL Server
- Microsoft SSIS
- Microsoft SSRS
- Analytics8 ETL framework





“Through Analytics8, we’ve certainly ended up with a much more robust system than I had expected.”

there are lots of dependencies, and management time goes up.”

Instead, Payne says, “We’ve taken a much more lightweight, agile approach, and more important than building the thing was building the capability internally, but it took six to nine months to find somebody.”

Hung drawn

“It was at this point that Analytics8 provided us with Hung, who had knowledge and capability, and he was great in just slotting straight in and working as a team member, sharing all his experience and knowledge.

“It allowed us to very rapidly get a solution in place that was solid, and use all the knowledge and expertise of Analytics8, so that at the engagement’s end we could support it.

“We had the initial phase where we built the ODS (operational data store) with Hung, but before we built the ODS, our senior architects produced their own design document. As they are smart guys but not BI guys, [Analytics8 Partner] Alex Brown reviewed it, showed it to everybody inside Analytics8 asking for input, to review it, and to challenge our guys.”

A platform for innovation

Analytics8’s work with World Nomads has facilitated the creation of a more innovative and expanded BI structure.

Payne says, “Through our brands, we have a strong presence in many market segments, but there are certainly opportunities to create new markets.

“Essentially, we have a common insurance engine, and the goal is to say, let’s go into another market and set up a presence there. We want to be able to run up that web site very

quickly, and then plug it into the ODS to just suck in the data.”

He says, “The new platform is generating a whole lot of really useful data about our customers, but we haven’t really started to mine that data yet for what we can learn from it, so that’s exciting from a BI point of view.”

Return on investment

With ROI being of paramount importance, Payne refers to Analytics8’s involvement as being, “absolutely the best and cheapest way to go, bringing someone in, having them work with the team.

“There is knowledge exchange and they are all learning, and whilst having, say, Hung in on a daily rate for six to nine months is more expensive than a permanent employee, it is much cheaper than outsourcing the building of the whole thing.”

Of his satisfaction with Analytics8, he says, “This feels much more like a relationship with an organisation and not just an individual, and Anthony [Larratt, Analytics8 Country Manager] was totally flexible and managed the handovers [between consultants] without any real slowing down of velocity, so we could take out wastage and turn the tap off if we needed to.

“But the knowledge-sharing Analytics8’s guys did within its team prior to someone coming on site with us was exceptional, and [all the Analytics8 people we’ve worked with] hit the ground running. We are really happy with the flexibility this gave us.”

And the unexpected benefits? Payne says, “Through Analytics8, we’ve certainly ended up with a much more robust system than I had expected.”

About Analytics8

Analytics8 is a Business Intelligence (BI) and Data Warehouse (DW) enablement and optimisation consulting firm with over 85 consultants in Australia and the United States. Analytics8 provides consulting services covering the end-to-end BI life cycle, from strategy to design, development, implementation, support, and training.

Though we are experts with many tools and technologies, we never lose sight of the business reasons for implementing technology.

Let us show you how to make the most of your data.

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