Enabling Business Analysts to build Enterprise Dashboards

January 2018

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Agenda

- Who is Ahold/Delhaize?
- Background
- Our Journey to Date
- What We’ve Learned Along the Way
- Where are We Headed Next?
Who is Ahold

- Ahold is now part of Ahold/Delhaize
  - A Global Grocery Retailer with over 6,500 stores worldwide
    - ~2,000 stores in USA
    - Over $40B in annual sales
    - Serving over 30 Million customers a year
    - Operating in East Coast USA from Maine to Georgia
2013
Idea of BACC is born

2014
Business uses MSTR tools. First Dashboards in production

2015
Leadership gets excited with progress. Capital now available for Executive Dashboards and Mobile

2016
Mobile App in production addressing Merchandising and Store Ops. 15 different drill down dashboards all connected in a single App
Pre 2014 Business Intelligence Model

Traditional Development
- Business fills out requirements, IT builds
- Reality – Business abandons IT and develops in Excel, Access and other desktop tools

One Grid Fits All
- Unending rows of data
- Manual updated Excel Reports
- Reality – Business struggles to find insight in their reports

IT Overlord
- Data and MicroStrategy are clean and secure!!
- Reality – IT has no visibility or control over the data and reports being sent to all levels of the company
Our Journey...Not Without Some False Starts

- Planned to build an EDW to address many of the business data needs and added Report Developers to address increased demand for reporting
  - Business loves the idea, but not the price tag and timeframe
  - Initiative dies after 2 years of trying (...we succeeded on the second try!)

- Tried to work with the business to recreate Excel reporting in the Data Warehouse and provide automation and dashboards
  - Still built by IT Report Developers
  - 6 months to recreate one report – which was then rejected by the business...they had moved on to other things)
Finally Some Traction

• **Business Analytics Center of Competency (BACC)**
  – **Established:** 3Q 2013
  – **Mission**
    – Transform Business Intelligence at Ahold by creating a partnership between IT and Business Developers.
    – The successful partnership will empower Business Developers to create dashboards, alerts, and visualizations while IT provides the tools, training, and coaching.
    – The two groups will work to create the community which sustains and grows the capability in the organization.

• **Role of IT**
  – Leadership and coaching for the community
  – Provide/support environment
  – Industrialize business developed apps
  – Marshall data owners/sources

• **Role of Business Power Users**
  – Design and build
  – Respond to their own changing needs
  – Experiment, fail fast, learn, succeed
Ahold BI Timeline

- **2013**: Idea of BACC is born
- **2014**: Business uses MSTR tools. First Dashboards in production
- **2015 - 2016**: Leadership gets excited with progress. Capital now available for Executive Dashboards and Mobile
- **2017**: MSTR 10.4 allows increase in dashboard development by more users. Training and Development become more critical to success
**First Draft**
Business analyst built with no IT help
No previous knowledge of MicroStrategy or report development

**Current Production**
Formatting and advanced links, exports, and smart text done by Southport Services Group

**Version 5**
IT coaching to add selectors and grids as selectors
Improved layouts and navigation

**Future Look**
New Dashboard Wireframes for use in new work.
Consistent look/feel
Clean, Bold, Impactful
Built by Southport Services Group
What’s Worked

• **Just Do It!**
  – Don’t try to build a big project or get all executives on board.
  – Get key proponents (like your CIO or BI VP) who will buy in

• **Start small – One on One**
  – You need a Champion – Someone who can speak business but knows IT
  – Socialize the plan with individual VPs/Directors. They will want to be part of it and will give you names of Business Analysts
  – Work with a few business analysts. Personal training, weekly follow ups

• **Get some quick wins**
  – Show the “wins” to others. They will not want to be left out.
  – Build momentum until you get some good dashboards in a few different areas. Then show the executives.
What We Learned – Part 1

• **There’s still a role for IT led development projects** *

  • Leverage a MicroStrategy development partner
  
  • Beware the enemy within...many in IT will resist the perceived loss of control
  
  • It will get messy...the only clean house is one where no one
  
  • Need to keep the business analysts engaged
  
  • Once you gain popularity, everyone wants in
  
  • Co-ops are a great option to augment to your BACC team
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IT Led Initiatives

• The BACC Community started to change the reporting culture from the bottom up

• IT Led business intelligence initiatives targeted at the top levels of the company will drive cultural change from the top down
  – Single version of the truth
  – Consistency across business process domains
  – Interactive
  – Mobile
  – On-demand

• Utilizing a good MicroStrategy Partner can really accelerate your ambitions
Mobile App Demo
What We Learned – Part 2

• **Security….Security…..Security**
  – Biggest challenge we’ve had. Still evolving. Security needs to be easy for users, but security team focused more on keeping people out.

• **Betcha can’t have just one....**
  – One dashboard is never enough. As soon as we identified the Executive Home page, we got requests for the additional detail and drill downs. This is also still evolving.

• **Me too….Me too...**
  – Now that our Mobile App is out there, everyone wants one. Risk Management, IT Operations, Store Audit group, and others are requesting their own Mobile Apps

• **Thanks for your feedback.....maybe the next release**
  – Once we started showing app to test groups, everyone had an opinion on how to make it better. Need to balance responding to business requests, with getting something in production.
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Microstrategy 10.4 – Double Edge Sword

• **Additional Functionality make is more useable for regular analysts**
  – Dashboards become the primary method of presenting data and reports
  – Analysts are trying new things

• **You Get a Cube, and You get a cube, and You get a cube**
  – Provide Intelligent cubes with metrics and attributes so many users can build dashboards off a single cube.
  – We did this with Daily sales, Cost/Profit data, etc.
  – Allows for end user flexibility because it is hard to get everyone to agree on format.

• **With Growth comes Pain**
  – Analysts begin connecting data (attributes and Metrics) that are not compatible (Cross Joins)
  – Often they don’t realize and bad data can reach decision makers

• **Need for additional training becomes necessary**
  – Training in the data sources more than Microstrategy
• **Ask the Why**
  – We started getting more requests asking for changes to templates, filters, etc. It will drown you unless you ask the REASON and VALUE that it will provide. Often there is no real value, and the request goes away. Or there is an alternative that does not require development work.

• **Too many to train**
  – As our company grew, the need for even basic training exploded. Need to establish user forums and share best practices.

• **It’s not just about the tool**
  – Microstrategy is just a tool for the analysts. Many analysts are thrown into the position with little training on HOW they should do their job. They become report writers instead of analysts who bring insights.