



## Data Platform CASE STUDY

# Retailer AWPL rings up revenue and future proof's systems with SQL Server partner WARDY IT Solutions

### About AWPL

- Established in 1995
- 600+ employees
- Retail
- [www.awpl.com.au](http://www.awpl.com.au)



Specialist retailer AWPL manages more than 60 concept outlets located in airports across Australia and New Zealand. The company provides goods to business and leisure travellers and creates “retail experiences” that highlight artisan merchandise created by local producers. The company is a keen contributor to social causes like the Starlight Foundation, Foodbank and St Kilda Mums and believes in investing in their staff by placing a strong emphasis on skills and career development.

### Executive Summary

It's likely that frequent air travellers have patronised one of AWPL's shops located at airports across Australia and New Zealand. Because the business operates across time-zones and around-the-clock, the retailer's infrastructure comes with an always-on service requirement. As the workloads caused by rapid business expansion increased, greater demands were placed on the finite resources of the technology support team. WARDY IT Solutions were recommended by AWPL's hosting company as the right fit to help AWPL realise increased value from their SQL Server database investment. The two organisations collaborated on translating business and engineering goals into successful, completed projects. Two key overarching deliverables were building a stable, resilient environment and future proofing AWPL's SQL Server investment. WARDY IT Solutions provided ad-hoc consultation and engineering expertise and delivered employee training that enabled team managers to capture data and reveal how their retail supply chain could be optimised. One third of AWPL management are now conversant in using “database queries” and business intelligence tools to analyse structured data and apply this knowledge to improve business productivity and reduce operating costs. This end-to-end re-engineering has delivered operating cost reductions conservatively estimated at 20% and contributed to increasing AWPL's return on costly airport retail rentals.

- AWPL's goal to build a stable, resilient SQL Server database framework has been achieved
- Future proofing AWPL's SQL Server database investment has delivered an adaptable platform that integrates easily with new processes and technology
- WARDY IT's around-the-clock Virtual DBA service instantly alerts AWPL administrators if systems are not operating at peak performance
- Executive training workshops have enabled one third of AWPL's savvy management team to model, analyse and deduce solutions to improve underperforming assets and resources
- The coaching and mentoring provided by WARDY IT Solutions is highly valued by AWPL staff and enables them to manage their digital assets and IP with greater efficacy

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We are glad we have our partnership with WARDY IT Solutions. We trust them to do the job. Absolute trust.

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*Ewan Parker  
Manager - Business Systems  
AWPL*

## Client Challenge

AWPL is a concept retailer who interrogate sales metrics to constantly adjust their products and pricing that maximises revenues per square meter of floorspace. Collating and analysing sales data, tuning ratios and gross margins is critical for modern retailers who face fierce competition from physical and online rivals. The management team went through a business review and identified analytics and back office systems that were not achieving their full potential. Business continuity was at risk if a system outage occurred and AWPL's repository of SQL Server database knowledge was largely untapped. The systems were also facing performance issues that were proving difficult for their incumbent vendor to remedy. The overarching goal to solve these issues was to create a stable SQL Server operating environment and develop a rapid response disaster recovery framework. Macquarie Telecom recommended that AWPL engage with award winning WARDY IT Solutions to review the organisations entire SQL Server infrastructure and help them to realise a greater return from their Microsoft SQL Server investment.

## Solution

WARDY IT's consultants evaluated AWPL's environment and discussed business requirements with management and team leaders. This review defined a clear plan that entailed knowledge exchange, refining AWPL's business continuity systems and consultation services to solve performance problems. Coaching and mentoring of AWPL's leadership team proved highly productive with one in three of the management staff now able to create database queries that reveal insights into every aspect of the retailers supply chain. IT staff also received coaching on advanced query design and system performance optimisation. The other key service provided by WARDY IT Solutions was the Virtual DBA service that provides around-the-clock monitoring of the performance and health status of their mission-critical SQL Server databases.



### About WARDY IT Solutions

- Established in 2005
- 65 employees
- Information Technology
- Australia & USA
- [www.wardyit.com](http://www.wardyit.com)

WARDY IT Solutions are Australia's leading SQL Server and Business Intelligence specialists. The company creates solutions that enable businesses to maximise returns on their investment in knowledge management. Through the extensive use of Business Intelligence, WARDY IT Solutions help their clients to realise the best possible dividend from their data assets.

WARDY IT Solutions have received numerous industry accolades, most notably the prestigious Microsoft Global Data Platform Partner of the Year in 2013. The organisation is recognised internationally for their innovative solutions, training skills and unwavering commitment to education and furthering the interests of the broader Microsoft SQL Server community. WARDY IT Solutions deliver:

- Project Delivery based on time and resources
- Consultation and Gap analysis
- SQL Server database design and programming
- Support services
- Managed Services and Business Intelligence Solutions
- Business Intelligence Consulting, including strategy, review, design and implementation of Business Intelligence Solutions

### Products and Services

- Technical and Executive Training
- Virtual DBA Service
- SQL Server Integration with Retail Directions RMS
- SQL Server Business Analytics
- SQL Server Query Development Techniques
- AdHoc Turnkey Projects

### Outcome

WARDY IT reviewed the operating environment and worked closely with AWPL staff to update older SQL Server software versions to the latest revisions. With this task completed performance and capacity issues were identified and resolved and a disaster recover/business continuity plan developed. WARDY IT Solutions consultants spent time sharing insights, coaching and providing strategic advice to realise the best ROI on AWPL's accumulated knowledge. Training was provided to the leadership team on how to create queries and extract more meaningful information from the structured data contained within the organisation's databases. One third of AWPL's executives can now compose SQL Server queries that enables them to analyse results and monitor performance of numerous company metrics. For the business, this is a competitive fillip and has empowered staff to tune processes, optimise efficiency and ramp up revenues.

### Conclusion

AWPL needed an SQL Server partner who could help them create a robust, resilient and stable commercial platform. To meet business continuity goals, a disaster recovery solution was designed that aligned with AWPL's around-the-clock operating demands. The IT group were willing participants in WARDY IT Solutions coaching and disciplined education that provided one third of the organisation's executives with the skills needed to provide granular reporting and SQL Server analytical skills. The practical implication is that AWPL's accumulated "big data" is being mined and data sets measured and correlated. Using this information a group of employees who were systematically stealing from the company were identified and convicted using the business intelligence skills staff harnessed from these training sessions.

- The advanced training and system redesign has yielded business improvements that have delivered approximate savings of 20% in annual ownership costs
- The added resilience and enhancements to system performance have created a more stable, responsive environment and improved employee productivity
- All missioncritical systems are now futureproofed and ready to adapt to new business demands
- Seamless integration of refreshed revision software with Retail Directions RMS and Prism BI has been achieved