Data Analytics
CASE STUDY

Entertainment business improve their game with the help of WARDY IT Solutions and Power BI

About Ardent Bowling and Entertainment

The Ardent Bowling and Entertainment Division portfolio is made up of three entertainment brands; Kingpin Bowling, AMF Bowling and Playtime Arcades. Together, the three brands epitomise the essence of fun, championing fun as its cause, and helping to make people of all ages and demographics feel alive. There are over 50 entertainment venues across Australia and New Zealand with more on the horizon.

www.amfbowling.com.au

www.kingpinbowling.com.au

www.playtime.com.au

With roughly 100 users relying on heavy duty and detailed reporting that was in dire need of an efficiency upgrade, Ardent Bowling and Entertainment took action. Working with WARDY IT Solutions, the company automated the reporting process and gave its stakeholders in-depth business insights at their fingertips.

Objective: Bring the 'Team First' initiative alive and simplify the 365-day reporting process

Ardent Bowling and Entertainment's financial analysts were working around the clock to produce the daily, weekly and monthly reports the business needed. Staff had to cover each other when on leave and work public holidays to ensure delivery.

The situation was reaching a tipping point. With more data being gathered and processed and the business requiring in-depth insights, the manual processing was becoming untenable. The business needed an alternative and IT Manager Munish Mahindru was determined to find it.

"We were in danger of missing out on critical insights that our business needs to stay competitive and provide great experiences for both customers and staff," said Munish Mahindru, IT Manager, AMF Bowling / Kingpin / Playtime.

"Our CEO took a 'team first' initiative, deciding to modernise the team's working environment and provide them with better tools. Reporting software was a key part of this change,"

> We will definitely be staying with WARDY IT for all future developments. Their service is outstanding from the top down. No hidden agendas, they keep you posted and they're highly flexible.

Munish Mahindru
IT Manager
AMF Bowling / Kingpin / Playtime

The search for an advanced data analytics tool paid off

The team knew they needed a sophisticated data analytics tool that could cope with processing increasing amounts of data while also providing constant and customised insights to other business teams.

"Our internal digital team was already using Tableau for some specific reporting dashboard needs," explained Munish. "And we considered rolling this out further. But we are predominantly a Microsoft house, so with the help of WARDY IT Solutions, we decided to bring Microsoft Power BI into the decision-making process. When we analysed the features of the two solutions and considered the commercial arrangements, Power BI was the clear winner."

Being an existing technology partner of the Ardent parent group, WARDY IT Solutions was the natural point of contact: "We value them and trust their expertise. We never felt the need to look elsewhere for a partner in this project," said Munish Mahindru.

The implementation process was delivered in three phases – prioritised in line with the greatest business impact and commenced with the regular financial reports. The transition of ad-hoc reporting followed and the team is in the midst of moving the existing Tableau reporting to Power BI. Due to the significant load of change the project required comprehensive stakeholder management.

"You have to remember that we were replacing reports that had been built and tweaked over years and years. They had a lot of business logic built into them and we had to replicate it all. Understandably there were some concerns about whether we could do it or not," said Munish Mahindru.

"We persisted and worked with the business to make sure they felt comfortable throughout the transition. WARDY IT Solutions were outstanding in supporting us- so thorough and professional. We refer to them our Power BI gurus."

Better reporting supports a data driven business

Since the transition the senior leadership team has been delighted with the quality and speed of reporting, and the analytics team feel empowered, with job satisfaction notably improving. Key benefits include:

- **Better use of time and skills**
  Financial analysts are saving hours of time that used to be spent collating and sorting information. Munish Mahindru pointed out that: "They can now leverage their considerable skill-sets and focus on value-added analysis that is so crucial to our business."

- **The technology helps to make the 'Team First' initiative a reality**
  The issuing of the daily sales report is no longer an unwelcome intrusion on the lives of the business analysis team. "As the reports are now automatically generated and available online, there is no need for my team to work during weekends and public holidays," says Emma Ding, Senior Commercial Analyst at AMF Bowling / Kingpin / Playtime.

- **Automation provides better accuracy and always-on insights**
  Reports are no longer dependent on human resources (e.g. compromised when a person is away or sick), tied up with issues that might delay manual reporting or result in occasional (but inevitable) errors. Reports are now available at any point in time for immediate access to critical insights.

About Wardy IT Solutions

- 65 employees
- Information Technology
- Australia & USA
- 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

- **Improved visibility leads to better business decisions**
  "Not only are the reports always available," observed Munish Mahindru, "they are also now more interactive. For example, a user can click on a venue and drill down to get a focused view of specific figures, rather than getting lost wading through rows and columns of numbers."

"We are able to visualize things better but we are also simplifying our business which is a key objective. The future is exciting. Power BI helps us make data-driven decisions as well as to better influence training programs, KPI setting, reward and recognition initiatives and much more," adds Ross Hoier, Head of Digital and Customer Contact at AMF Bowling / Kingpin / Playtime.

- **Benefits across three departments**
  The new technology has delivered tangible benefits to operations / finance, HR and of course, the digital team. "As an example, it used to take two days to consolidate monthly HR reporting, including leave information, staff retention and turnover. Now it takes an hour at the most," said Munish Mahindru.

- **Teams have the tools they need, where they need them**
  Power BI has become an essential business tool and available from any location. "Daily sales are the heartbeat of the business. We used to have a lot of dependencies to get this information. Now it is at the fingertips of those who need it every day, where they need it says Munish Mahindru.

" Having a such easy access to deep insights allows me move quicker on trends or pick up on areas for improvement," adds Jason Foxman, Operations Manager, NSW South / ACT & SA, at AMF Bowling / Kingpin / Playtime.

"In a regional role I'm not always in front of a computer and the ability to navigate the detail of the reports via mobile phone and tablet has given me increased visibility and tracking whilst remaining mobile."

Words of advice from the team

Getting stakeholder endorsement, by starting with a simple report and showing what was possible, was a key element in the success of this transition.

"Make sure you involve the C-Level executives & key stakeholders early", said Munish Mahindru, "and release the first imperfect version of report/dashboard quickly. Then continuously evolve this imperfect version by working through prioritised list of enhancements. In other words, do quick release of minimal viable product and then evolve the product through continuous feedback of key stakeholders."

Successful start to a much bigger transition project

This project mostly focussed on migrating existing reports and adding only one new one. The company sees it as 'first phase' with a lot more to come, including potentially incorporating the machine learning feature of Power BI to help with predictive analytics and more detailed customer segmentation.

"We will definitely be staying with WARDY IT for all future developments. Their service is outstanding from the top down. No hidden agendas, they keep you posted and they're highly flexible," said Munish Mahindru.

Wardy it solutions

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