



Data Analytics CASE STUDY

WARDY IT Solutions work with MDA to help Australia's newest citizens

About MDA

- Established in 1998
- 150 employees
- Non-profit
- mdaltd.org.au



Since 1998, MDA (Multicultural Development Australia) has been at the forefront of helping refugees and migrants settle in Queensland. Working in Brisbane, Toowoomba and Rockhampton, MDA provides individuals and families with practical and emotional support including employment and settlement services.

Executive Summary

Independent, forward-thinking NGO, 'MDA' (Multicultural Development Australia) is at the forefront of the effort to settle newly arrived Queenslanders.

- Every year around 12000 to 15000 refugees are accepted into Australia with 13,750 in 2016.
- MDA worked with 4587 clients in 2016, from 68 countries, speaking 83 languages and amounting to some 50,000 separate client interactions.
- MDA were using little more than a web of sophisticated, but complex, Excel spreadsheets, manual processes and separate systems to manage this Herculean task.
- The MDA team wanted to begin a journey towards hyper-process-efficiency and actionable data insights in order to empower their amazing army of staff and volunteers to do the best job possible for Australia and its newest arrivals.
- As Microsoft Data Analytics specialists, WARDY IT Solutions were a natural choice of Partner and were proud to play a part in the story of such a great Australian business.

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We knew that getting a good, transparent understanding of client demographics and how we were performing in each program could present huge opportunities to improve the service we provide for our customers and ensure that we were directing our resources in the most optimal way possible.

”

*Colin Chan
IT Manager
MDA*

Client Challenge

In managing the many languages, personal stories, cultural sensitivities, events and interactions between case workers, MDA knew that there were huge efficiency opportunities beyond the reach of their existing processes. The reliance on staff to make sense of the data could never be expected to achieve consistently optimal decision-making for the business.

Like so many businesses MDA wanted to tear down the artificial barriers generated by siloed systems.

The drive to creating ever-better settlement experiences for clients means that MDA is continually striving to measure outcomes more effectively. Doing so allows them to be more accountable to the high standards they set for themselves. Any wastage or inefficiency directly impacts their ability to deliver services. One area that they knew there was huge room for efficiency gains was within the housing space: MDA manages housing properties all over the region, but without a single pane view to provide immediate oversight over housing cost, availability and needs; responsive decisions could not be derived without lengthy analysis of various data sources.

The flexibility to drill into granular information on things like occupancy, expected arrival dates and expected moving out dates, they could end up spending more money reacting to immediate housing needs rather than ensuring there was sufficient housing in the pipeline to accommodate client movements.

Solution

WARDY IT Solutions were able to assist in two key areas that underpinned a series of great outcomes:

Painting the possible

MDA knew there was room to improve their business, but with their data separated across siloes, it was difficult to highlight where that improvement could happen or what it might look like in practice.

WARDY IT Solutions' Power BI Quickstart program allowed MDA to prototype its vision of consolidating its various sources of truth into Power BI to standardise reporting and apply visualised modelling of that data as trending patterns over time.

The rapid execution from WARDY IT Solutions to deliver a prototype using Power BI during the Quickstart program, opened MDA's eyes on the low cost and low barriers to entry of using this platform to deliver its vision for greater business transparency and business insight.

Consolidating and integrating information

MDA was able to work with WARDY IT Solutions to bring to life its vision of consolidation its key data sources across Finance, Risk, HR, Clients and Client Housing. Considerations and work-arounds were made for historical data and specialised integration work centralised the data into a SQL Server database. The collection of new geographical data in relation to Client Housing was an example of one of many key success factors highlighted by the MDA and WARDY IT Solutions project team.

About WARDY IT Solutions

- 65 employees
- Information Technology
- Australia & USA
- www.wardyit.com

WARDY IT Solutions was founded in 2004 by Microsoft Valued Professional (MVP), Peter Ward. Today, WARDY IT Solutions is recognised as Australia's leading provider of Microsoft Data Platform consultants, trainers and Data Analytics specialists.

Data Platform Services

- Licensing reviews
- Consolidation & virtualisation
- Environment architecture & design
- Upgrades & migrations
- Performance optimisation
- Azure services

Data Analytics Services

- Dashboard development
- Data modelling
- Integration services
- Process automation
- Machine learning

Virtual DBA Service

Award-winning 24/7 remote database administration service.

Training

Microsoft Data Platform and Data Analytics training – public, private and remote courses.

Bringing the Power!

By querying the database and setting up a series of dashboards in Microsoft Power BI, suddenly organisation-wide data was readily available to the MDA team. The visualisation of data transformed the way MDA envisioned traditional reporting. This was the strength of working with a partner like WARDY IT. They were able to synthesise the business requirements, challenge traditional ideas of data representation and bring MDA back to its core missions with the reflective question of “now that you have the information, what are you going to do with it?”

Outcome

There have been many benefits to the solution, and already there has been a significant drop in the amount MDA spends on motels as a result of their team being able to quickly see what properties are available in particular areas at particular times.

“ Having a single pane view where we can zoom in and out on a particular suburb and overlay filtered data from across the organisation has opened up a new world to us. More broadly, from a strategic standpoint the project with WARDY IT Solutions means we can analyse trends that were hidden to us before. The additional insights allow us to participate in more community engagement programs, provide better transport services, better find and allocate facilities and more excitingly, spot opportunities for how to evolve and improve the services we deliver. ”

– Colin Chan, IT Manager, MDA

MDA have a competitive edge in being able to provide a better understanding of the people they work so hard to help. This means they can bid for grants and funding with evidence-based applications and build ever-increasing transparency and accountability in to their business model.

“ Ultimately working with WARDY IT Solutions has given us the power to better evaluate the quality of service we're delivering and therefore identify areas for improvements - we found that when you start representing information in different ways, it changes the way you see opportunities – people start to see things they didn't before. ”

– Colin Chan, IT Manager, MDA