Corporate
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Group

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Martin Pitson, Director, MIS

Telesat

Overview

Telesat is a leading global satellite operator, providing reliable and secure satellite-delivered communications solutions worldwide to broadcast, telecom, corporate and government customers. Headquartered in Ottawa, Canada, with offices and facilities around the world, the company's state-of-the-art fleet consists of 15 satellites, including the newly launched Telstar 12 VANTAGE, plus the Canadian payload on ViaSat-1 with two other satellites under construction.

Galaxies of Data

Telesat has been a leader in satellite communications since the start of the industry and has built a strong record of technical innovation and achievement for over 50 years. Like many companies, Telesat tends to focus more on serving its customers than updating its internal data resources. By 2013, Telesat was housing decades of data in various "siloed" business systems. Company staff had become skilled in mining and manipulating this data. Teams were accessing and uncovering insight from different data repositories and running a myriad of spreadsheets. The Director of M.I.S. at Telesat, Martin Pitson, discussed the challenges with his team and concluded: "We were driven by a need to replace our existing business intelligence systems. Our legacy software had reached end-of-life, so we realized we had an enormous opportunity to identify requirements for a modern BI/CPM solution. Rather than simply replace our existing business models, we wanted a new solution that could help us deliver much more than we used to." .

Exploring the Infinite Possibilities

Pitson and his team began the hunt for a new BI/CPM solution by looking at the Gartner Magic Quadrant for Business Intelligence and Analytics Platforms and for Corporate Performance Management Suites.* From these reports, they created a shortlist of solutions to examine further and then undertook a deep-dive analysis with their top three choices.

Using live data as part of an in-depth technical analysis, Pitson and his team realized that two of the solutions under consideration presented technical challenges, while the BOARD Management Toolkit offered greater flexibility and customization. Interestingly, BOARD was also the only solution that had been listed in both Gartner Magic Quadrants – for Business Intelligence and Analytics and for Corporate Performance Management.

"During the proof of concept phase, it became clear that the capabilities provided by BOARD Software were the best choice for Telesat," said Pitson. "At the end of the eight-month analysis process, we became confident that BOARD could address all of Telesat's data challenges."

Rather than engage directly with BOARD, Telesat elected to work with local business solutions provider Corporate Renaissance Group (CRGroup), the Canadian reseller and implementer of the BOARD solution. This relationship helped ensure that the launch of the data management and reporting project would go smoothly. Based in Ottawa, CRGroup is a global firm with experts in business, finance and IT systems who specialize in improving enterprise performance through innovative technology-driven solutions including BOARD.

"As a business partner, CRGroup shared industry best practices gained through their work with other clients. By acting as our point of contact for all communication, CRGroup allowed us to fast-track the project compressing our implementation time. Their in-depth experience with BOARD Software ensured detailed technical success," explains Pitson.

Lifting Enterprise Performance into Orbit

In the first stage of the BOARD Software rollout at Telesat, the M.I.S. team worked with the finance department to deploy multi-currency management reporting with budget-to-actual and period-over-period variance analyses and foreign exchange impact. The Telesat specialists quickly realized that BOARD offered them a great deal of flexibility in terms of configuration. Pitson explained that, "The other solutions we looked at put us in a box and required a lot of workarounds. BOARD allowed us to build the box."

CRGroup helped Telesat leverage BOARD's highly configurable business modeling toolkit and front-end design capabilities to provide a solution that felt like it was customized specifically for Telesat's business needs.

After completing the management reporting phase of the project, the Telesat team implemented an operating expense budget model with quarterly reforecasting and multiple foreign exchange scenarios using BOARD. This involved the finance department as well as top Telesat decision-makers in marketing, sales and operations and resulted in a model built to accommodate 7 currencies within 5 companies.

Both reporting and budgeting had previously been, and in some cases continue to be, performed through Excel and legacy programs. BOARD provides more flexibility with multi-currency reporting and budgeting, allowing the team to design a workflow that is tailored specifically to the needs of their business processes. The Telesat team continues to review the reporting and budgeting processes still outside of BOARD and expects to expand the BOARD footprint in the future.

The Sky's the Limit

As Pitson and his team complete new phases of the project, new opportunities present themselves. CRGroup continues to provide its analytics, budgeting and costing expertise to Telesat as the project evolves.

"The more we worked with BOARD and the more guidance we received from the CRGroup, the more potential we discovered. The system and its many capabilities actually became a catalyst for business change and innovation at Telesat," explains Pitson.

The M.I.S. team is currently extending the use of BOARD to implement dashboards for satellite capacity and human resources analytics.

Previously, satellite capacity reporting was accomplished through management and manipulation of spreadsheets. Once this data moved to BOARD, much of the manual process vanished and data accuracy improved.

Human resources historically kept its data in a number of different spreadsheets and management of their information was labor-intensive and prone to error. "By moving all of that data into BOARD, we are realizing employee efficiencies. The exposure and improved speed to reporting for HR and satellite capacity data has also prompted a great amount of data cleanup," explains Pitson.

Pitson and his team continue to find new ways they can improve the speed of service to their end-users, while also making data management and reporting the responsibility of those employees through the self-serve potential that BOARD provides.

Throughout the process, Pitson and his team have continued to receive ongoing training and support from CRGroup. "Working with CRGroup brought a broader perspective to the project at both a technical and a strategic level," says Pitson.

*Gartner Magic Quadrant is the brand name for a series of market research reports published by Gartner Inc., a US-based research and advisory firm. According to Gartner, the Magic Quadrant aims to provide a qualitative analysis into a market and its direction, maturity and participants. Using a methodology which Gartner does not disclose, it rates vendors upon two criteria: completeness of vision and ability to execute. (Source: Magic Quadrants and MarketScopes: How Gartner Evaluates Vendors Within a Market)

About Corporate Renaissance Group

Corporate Renaissance Group is a global provider of innovative solutions that improve business management and performance. With over 4000 customers, Corporate Renaissance Group has established itself with expertise in business management applications. Corporate Renaissance Group delivers solutions by leveraging their expertise in Microsoft Dynamics, SharePoint, business intelligence, financial and costing principles, shared services and employee performance management. Corporate Renaissance Group is a part of the Microsoft Partner Network, headquartered in Ottawa, Canada, with offices throughout Canada, South Africa, India and the United States.