



REVAMPING INFORMATION RESOURCES PRODUCTION PLATFORM TO UTILIZE KEY INSIGHTS FOR STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

A state agency deploys a solution to explore internal and external data to gain powerful, impactful insights.

The State of Texas was looking for a way to operate at the pace of the digital era. During the 84th Texas Legislation, House Bill 1890 stated that The Texas Department of Information Resources shall implement a shared data reporting and business analytics service with appropriate security isolation, for state agencies. This platform will be provided as a pilot program with a limited number of state agencies in order to validate a solution before implementing a statewide service.

Catapult and the agency laid the framework for what would be a 6-month-long pilot program. Together, they resolved to create a shared Business Analytics and Reporting (BAR) platform to provide services to five pilot agencies that would offer fourteen capabilities: Dashboarding, Search, Administration Alerting, Self-Service, Text Analytics, Geospatial Analysis, Excel Integration, Forecast and Statistical Analysis, Data Warehouse Automation, Big Data Connections, Portals, Enterprise Service Bus, and Mobile Capability.

THE CHALLENGE:

From years of experience working in the public sector, Catapult knew they would have to meet the public sector's unique set of needs, regulations, and compliance standards. Additionally, Catapult had to execute in spite of a few constraints, the most glaring one being their limited time frame. In just six months, Catapult and the agency would have to prove the pilot's efficacy by delivering a consistent stream of measurable results across five agencies.

Catapult leveraged their ground breaking approach to business intelligence, Agile Analytics (for Government), a methodology specifically designed to quickly gather insight from rich pools of data. Designed within an Agile and SCRUM-based framework, Agile Analytics enables data scientists to rapidly build a user-friendly analytics platform within a secure cloud environment. By delivering measurable solutions incrementally, it accelerates the rate at which agencies can gain business value. In addition, it's scope can easily adapt to process different types of data (various quantities, classifications, and sources) within a limited time frame and budget.

Along with their Agile Analytics methodology, Catapult leveraged the Microsoft Cloud Hosted Cortana Intelligence Suite of data platform services and provided compelling insights and visualizations via Power BI dashboards and reports.

Each pilot agency participated in a jumpstart planning session where Catapult led their leadership and analysts through a series of exercises to review the available data, their specific mission and mandate, and what insights could provide the most business impact. A list of project tasks called "user stories" was compiled and prioritized. Catapult worked with each agency for a two week Sprint and delivered a working prototype at the end. Agencies were surprised by the rapid time to insight compared to the traditional approach to data platform projects.

RESULTS:

Despite many constraints, the agency pilot not only exceeded the agency's pre-defined success parameters, but within a very limited time frame, delivered actionable business insight to each of the five participating agencies.

One pilot agency was able to leverage data to confirm and demonstrate the successful execution of new agency mandates and identify opportunities to partner with other agencies to share data and deliver better services to Texans.

Another agency leveraged the BAR platform to test drive the power of sentiment and topic analysis for a better pulse on constituent attitude. The BAR platform's automation capabilities made it easier for the agency to create, conduct, and evaluate new surveys, which would further enrich their social intelligence. By having the ability to map sentiment patterns, the agency could use data to support initiatives designed to make their practices more efficient, effective, and mutually beneficial.

For the first time, a smaller agency had the opportunity to experience rich business insights through data. Dashboards allowed leadership to see how one of their call centers was achieving higher productivity and customer feedback even though they did not receive as much funding as their other call centers. This insight provided the opportunity to share best practices to deliver a better experience for all their customers.

A separate state agency used the platform as a way to cut down on redundant and manual steps, streamline their heavy spreadsheet usage. Leveraging the BAR platform, the agency experienced the benefits of automation in reducing the time it took for them to complete mandatory Federal Reporting from a manual process taking four days to twenty minutes using automation.

The 6-month pilot left both Catapult and the five participating agencies feeling inspired by the power to illuminate hidden insights within data, and set the stage for a new more efficient way to engage in data platform projects. The BAR platform is now available to Agencies and is helping the State of Texas quickly and more efficiently deliver insight to employees and constituents.