StatSlice
strategic data services

StatSlice Helps DLR Create a Business Intelligence Roadmap as a Low Cost Integration Platform

The Background – Outsourcing Applications but Lacking Integrated Business Reporting

Digital Realty Trust (DLR), a Real Estate Investment Trust (REIT), is the largest wholesale builder and manager of technology-related real estate, specifically data centers. They own, acquire, develop, redevelop, and manage eighty four properties in twenty seven markets throughout North America and Europe for over 50 of the Fortune 500 companies.

DLR's growth has been partially fueled through the use of hosted applications that they use to manage their business (e.g. CRM, property accounting, construction management, and so on). By outsourcing these applications, DLR was able to leverage other resources at acceptable prices, but the cost was steep when it came to their ability to consolidate and review operational data. This situation reflected several painful circumstances:

- The outsourced applications had limited reporting capabilities "out of the box"

- Integration among data sources was severely limited

- Data access was tightly controlled in order to maintain integrity of the hosted applications

- Knowledge sharing across the organization was prohibitively expensive because of high user license costs

In order to overcome these issues and provide a robust reporting system, DLR decided to build strategic "analytical reporting assets." StatSlice was contacted to plan, design, and implement the new reporting system.

The Challenge
At DLR, outsourced applications meant that data integration to see the big picture of the company was severely limited. Data access across systems was tightly controlled. DLR had no experienced BI personnel.

The Solution
Use StatSlice to build an analytical reporting "roadmap" to guide the flow of business intelligence information. Using this roadmap, rigorous prototypes were built to show a "try before you implement" system.

The Result
The StatSlice and DLR team was able to successful build a strong BI infrastructure and implement a financial dashboard that provided key management information and decrease certain licensing costs.   Given the success of this project, more comprehensive systems are now approved.

Industry
Commercial Real Estate

The client has quickly realized benefits and been so pleased with the new BI platform that a full year's new projects have been budgeted for. These new projects include new data views allowing more comprehensive forecasting, integrating the financials of different functions, and reducing the headache of too many spreadsheets.

The Key Challenges – Building from the Ground Up

Given there was no infrastructure upon which to build, the StatSlice team had to gain buy-off on an "analytical reporting roadmap" to guide DLR. In addition, they had to assist DLR in obtaining cost-effective software components to build out a flexible, scalable BI architecture. Finally, DLR had no experienced individuals knowledgeable in BI concepts or techniques.

The StatSlice Approach – The Importance of Prototyping

The StatSlice team first modified the existing roadmap so that clear, reachable goals could be attained readily and ensure that DLR did not get caught extending too much budget for too little benefit. As with many DLR clients, the platform had to leverage a cost-effective toolset to collect, archive, and disseminate actionable data through interactive reporting, therefore, the Microsoft BI suite was chosen. StatSlice believes strongly in a "try before you implement" development concept, ensuring that working prototypes are deployed to ensure buy-in from end-users before rigorous testing and deployment are performed. Working with DLR's IT Operations group, key milestones were determined and met, thus providing a strong foundation for continued enhancement today.

The Results – A Low Cost Yet Solid Reporting Foundation for Now and the Future

The StatSlice and DLR IT team was able to successfully build a strong BI infrastructure and implement financial dashboard and budgeting applications that:

- Eliminated license fees being paid out to the hosted application providers
- Integrated data from key systems into a common catalog of business data (cross-referencing)
- Provided new security for data enforced on a per-user basis
- Built in separation of knowledge and applications layers, thus allowing swapping of applications in the future without disrupting historical analysis of company data.

StatSlice is currently working with DLR in leveraging the new environment and the prototyping scheme to roll-out new enhancements and applications at a rapid speed. The client has quickly realized benefits and been so pleased with the new BI platform that a full year's new projects have been approved.

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About StatSlice

StatSlice is a strategic data services consulting firm headquartered in Dallas, Texas specializing in data warehousing and business analytics. Strategic data services include the skills, processes, technologies, applications, and practices used to support business decision-making. They have a highly dedicated consulting organization with a reputation for excellent customer service and measurable success in implementation. They promote an environment that encourages resourcefulness, innovation, and creativity without sacrificing measurable results. They continually stay on the cutting edge of the latest Business Intelligence (BI) challenges and principles and as a result they are the "go-to" team for the most challenging projects.

For More Information

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