

Towergate case study

Insurance

PRECISE. PROVEN. PERFORMANCE.

Delivering accurate information, quickly, for a successful insurance intermediary



Fast facts

Company profile

Launched in 1997, Towergate is Europe's largest independently owned insurance intermediary.

- 100 offices and 3,500 staff across the UK.
- 200+ insurance products – widest range in the market.
- 123 successful acquisitions (as at 31/12/06).
- 4,000+ agencies and outlets distributing its products.

Challenge

Towergate has been acquiring companies rapidly since it began in 1997 and continues to acquire on average 1.5 companies per month. As a result over 100 companies are running on thirty different systems, operating disparate processes and procedures. In such a complex organisation, information would take up to 3 months to collate, with a heavy reliance on excel spreadsheets. Towergate wanted to deliver accurate, timely KPIs to their executives and provide the business with the ability to analyse its data. Added to which, it was important in such a large organisation that they created one view of the business, so everyone was working from the same information.

Solution

Towergate decided to develop a data warehouse framework to standardise and deliver information to the whole of the group. Moore Stephens Consulting were short listed from a list of 20 suppliers and were selected on the basis of their data warehouse capabilities, insurance knowledge and Microsoft experience.

Benefits

- Improved reporting from 3 months to 3 days.
- Executives now have the ability to analyse data.
- One single monthly report at the touch of a button.
- Flexibility for further growth.

Europe's Largest independently owned insurance intermediary

Towergate was established in 1997 to provide insurance in niche markets ranging from holiday homes to cherished cars. Since then it has expanded both organically and through the acquisition of specialist businesses which has broadened the product range to over 200 – the widest range of specialist and traditional products in the UK market.

Towergate is Europe's largest independently owned insurance intermediary, with over 3,500 staff operating out of 100 UK offices.

Towergate operate through two divisions; Towergate Risk Solutions, the retail broking division who advise personal and corporate clients on their insurance needs, and Towergate Underwriting, a virtual insurer carrying out all the functions of an insurance company.

Towergate operate a business model that enables them to deliver exceptional value to clients through quality insurance products and services, underpinned by strong relationships with leading insurance companies. They refer to this as the 'value triangle' – a three-way partnership.

Managing a rapidly growing business

Following acquisition of over 120 companies, Towergate became a huge organisation running on around 30 different systems, often with separate companies using different processes and procedures and major differences in the way systems were used. As a result it was difficult to get a view of the business, and any adhoc requirement for information could take up to 3 months to collate.

Richard Woodhams, Group Business Information Manager, Towergate explains "In a rapidly growing business we were being overwhelmed by data and analysis. Getting information was time consuming and the accuracy was questionable."

Whilst acquiring, on average, 1.5 companies per month, each potentially with a different system, Towergate were also trying to rationalise existing Broking systems through migration to 3 main systems and implement a new Underwriting system, creating an everchanging development environment. In order to deliver quicker, more accurate performance figures to the executives, Towergate needed a comprehensive and stable Data Warehousing solution.

Selecting an insurance specialist – Moore Stephens

With limited resources, a small MI team and faced with a massive project, Towergate wanted to reduce the possibility of failure and de-risk the project so decided to source an external supplier. This would also speed the route to market. They were looking for a data warehouse specialist, with technical expertise in the latest Microsoft BI technologies and more importantly, knowledge of the insurance market.

From an initial list of 20 companies, 4 were short listed and Moore Stephens Consulting were selected to work with the Towergate team to deliver the solution.

Richard Woodhams said "Moore Stephens consulting matched the knowledge and expertise we were looking for perfectly. Working as one team was an important factor and when we met the staff, we knew that we would all be able to work together. Added to which, Moore Stephens demonstrated how we could get added value from our data."

The Solution

The main objectives of the project were: to provide the ability for the business to analyse its data, to deliver accurate KPIs and to create one single view of the business.

The biggest challenge was bringing together all the data from diverse operational systems and delivering standard, consistent reports.

Due to the size of the project, Towergate decided to have two data warehouses – a broking data warehouse and an underwriting data warehouse. The project was split into phases to make it more manageable.

Phase 1 was development of the Broking Data Warehouse (BDW). A pilot project spanning 4 – 6 weeks was undertaken to provide confidence in Moore Stephens ability and to produce a template for the data warehouse going forward.

The intelligent solution uses SQL Server Integration Services to consolidate all the data and is supported by a Microsoft SQL Server 2005 database. SQL Server Analysis Services provides the OLAP data cubes for multi-dimensional analysis. Microsoft SQL Server Reporting Services manages and automates delivery of reports from one central location, providing increased consistency and improved performance throughout the reporting process.

The front end analytical tool is ProClarity, which enables flexible analysis of management information and delivers Key Performance Indicators via dashboards and saved views. An intranet portal accessed through Microsoft Office Sharepoint Server 2007, enables the executives and management team to access the information easily, at any time.

Timing was critical. From start of development to implementation, Moore Stephens delivered the Broking Data warehouse in just 4 months – even quicker than anticipated.

Richard Woodhams said "Microsoft is our preferred technology and we are comfortable using it. As Moore Stephens' are a Microsoft Gold Partner, we had confidence that the solution they developed would work and provide a solid foundation for future application and database development."

Phase 2 of the project, the Underwriting database, is currently under development and will be ready for population by the end of the year. Data will be loaded throughout 2008 with completion anticipated by October. Phase 3, which is on going focuses on Local Reporting and making policy detail available to users, including tailoring reports to specific branch requirements.

Software and services

Microsoft SQL Server 2005

Microsoft SQL

Server integration services

Microsoft SQL Server Analysis Service

Microsoft SQL Server Reporting Services

ProClarity Web Professional

Unified SSAS/SSRS Security Model

Office Sharepoint Server 2007

Business Value

Monthly Reports at the touch of a button

Historically a team of people at each branch would need to collate the information necessary for just one monthly report. This proved time intensive and a drain on man hours, by the time one report was completed it was almost time for the next month's to be produced. Relying on Excel spreadsheets meant there was also the possibility that errors could creep into the report. The Intelligent solution delivers this report at a touch of a button saving 140 man days per month.

Executives gain control through KPIs

Overwhelmed by masses of data, Towergate selected the most important information and developed 48 KPIs aligned to current month and year-to-date budgets. This gives executives greater control and enables them to gain a better understanding of business operations.

Analysing data enables better business decisions

With such features as league tables and decomposition trees, executives have the ability to drill down into the data and rapidly gain real insight into performance, which enables them to manage the business more effectively and make better business decisions.

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About Moore Stephens Consulting

Moore Stephens are data management specialists with an unmatched depth of knowledge of the general insurance sector. We speak and understand insurance; and so we are uniquely positioned to respond to all the issues affecting your business. If you believe – as we trust you do – that data is a critical asset for your business, we can help you unlock its full potential. Our track record speaks for itself. We have consistently delivered market leading solutions, enhancing our clients' business performance and empowering them to make better informed decisions about their future direction.

As you'd expect, our own people are highly qualified and technically second to none. They use proven technology and business intelligence systems to interpret your data, but also apply their unique creative skills to build the powerful and distinctive applications you need. And, as part of Moore Stephens, we can draw on the insight and experience of over 1,500 partners and staff in the UK, and an international network across 100 countries with over 21,000 people, including specialists in all major business functions.





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