Consulting Firm Gains Competitive Edge and Delivers More Innovative BI in Less Time

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>
> Josh Gaffen, Director of Operations, SharePoint360

Customer: SharePoint360
Web Site: www.sharepoint360.com
Customer Size: 32 employees
Country or Region: United States
Industry: Professional services—IT services

Customer Profile
Founded in 2006, SharePoint360 is a privately owned hosting and consulting services company based in San Diego, California. Each year, the organization earns more than U.S.$5 million in revenue.

Solution Spotlight
- Increases competitive edge and revenue with more innovative offerings
- Speeds time-to-market of reporting solutions for customers by up to 50 percent
- Improves data accuracy and insight
- Expects to save $268,000 yearly

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To attract and retain global customers, IT services firm SharePoint360 must rapidly deliver competitive services including business intelligence (BI) at an affordable price. In 2011, the company implemented innovative BI capabilities with Microsoft software. As a result, SharePoint360 can enhance its competitiveness, increase revenue, accelerate the time-to-market of BI solutions, and improve data accuracy and insight. It also expects to reduce yearly costs by U.S.$268,000.

Business Needs

Microsoft partner SharePoint360 provides enterprise collaboration consulting, Microsoft SharePoint implementations, and managed hosting to a variety of national and global companies. Each hour around the clock, thousands of people use the company's infrastructure to access hundreds of real-time reports generated from approximately 30 terabytes of data stored in 20 data warehouses. To attract and retain customers, SharePoint360 continually evaluates how it can use new technologies to rapidly develop mission-critical business intelligence (BI) solutions that are easy to use and always available.

Before 2011, the company created BI offerings with Microsoft SQL Server data management software, especially Microsoft SQL Server 2008 R2. Users including customers and SharePoint360 employees can access BI from dashboards or key performance indicators (KPIs) in Microsoft SharePoint Server 2010 or reports in Microsoft Excel 2010 spreadsheet software. If they desire, users can take advantage of custom reports with Microsoft SQL Server PowerPivot for Microsoft Excel.

With the previous solution, if a person needed information that was not in the

available dashboards, KPIs, or reports, they had to manually access and compile source data or request new BI, which inflated costs and sometimes created issues. For example, people could make errors when manually consolidating information. Also, efficiency slowed when someone needed a new report, KPI, or dashboard because it could take IT personnel hours, days, or even weeks to create one. Josh Gaffen, Director of Operations at SharePoint360, says, "We have a finite resource pool, and so every day that I take a consultant off of a project, it costs us about $1,600 in lost revenue."

SharePoint360 sought a BI solution that could enhance its efficiency and give users greater control over report content.

Solution
In May 2011, SharePoint360 decided to implement Microsoft SQL Server 2012. By doing so, the company could ease the burden of IT personnel by empowering users with a self-service reporting tool in Microsoft SQL Server 2012 Reporting Services known as Power View. "As a Microsoft partner, we continue to build our business on the Microsoft platform," says Gaffen. "Innovative tools such as Power View in SQL Server 2012 help us deliver more flexible BI solutions so that users can slice and dice reports to get the information they need, when they need it."

Before migrating customer environments to SQL Server 2012, SharePoint360 used it to create a new BI solution for company executives. To do so, engineers upgraded an existing SQL Server database with 10 gigabytes of financial data to SQL Server 2012. The database runs on a virtual server supported by Hyper-V technology in the Windows Server 2008 R2 operating system. To provide access to the new solution, engineers created a portal based on SharePoint Server 2010 that connects to the SQL Server 2012 database and Power View in SQL Server 2012 Reporting Services. With the new solution, SharePoint360 executives can now use Power View to create custom

reports by simply dragging data-set names (as defined in the database) to the report canvas on the main page of the portal. In addition, with the click of a button, users can change how to view information using production-ready charts, graphs, and data animation. Executives can also set up alerts that indicate changes in data.

SharePoint360 plans to migrate all of its internal BI solutions and the BI solutions of all interested customers—potentially more than 4,000 users—to SQL Server 2012 in the first quarter of 2012.

Benefits
By implementing SQL Server 2012, SharePoint360 improves its competitive edge, boosts revenue, accelerates time-to-market, increases accuracy, enhances insight, and saves an estimated U.S.$268,000 annually in labor.

Increases Competitive Edge and Revenue
SharePoint360 expects to attract new customers with more competitive offerings. "To facilitate revenue, we need to be nimble, offer innovative services, and ensure customer satisfaction," says Gaffen. "With SQL Server 2012 and new capabilities such as Power View, that's what we can do: deliver better solutions up to 50 percent faster, for less money."

Speeds Time-to-Market of Reports
Because employees are more productive using Power View, SharePoint360 can speed the time-to-market of new reports for customers. "With Power View in SQL Server 2012, we can create reports 30 percent faster than we could with SQL

Server 2008 R2 and 50 percent faster than with SQL Server 2005," says Gaffen.

Improves Accuracy and Insight
SharePoint360 executives and ultimately customers can use the new BI solution to customize reports without engaging IT personnel. "People can use Power View to define the data dimensions that they want to see, indicate how they want to view the data, and then drill down and up within the data to see the level of detail most useful at any given time," says Mohit Kaushal, Business Intelligence Architect at SharePoint360. "This ability also helps reduce data conflicts and speed resolution because people can easily identify questionable data and determine whether the cause is an operational problem or a data quality issue."

Saves an Estimated $268,000 Yearly
Because people can dynamically explore data in reports built with SQL Server 2012, SharePoint360 can reduce the number of reports it needs to create and manage. "With Power View, we can save significant time and money because—instead of building four different reports—we can build one report that meets very different requirements," Gaffen explains. "As a result, we expect to save at least $268,000 in opportunity costs each year because each employee can save an average of four hours of work per month. As a growing consultancy looking to be the best in our field, we can use the savings to support a new employee or allocate money for research and development— which can potentially make the difference between success and failure year over year."

Software and Services
- Microsoft Server Product Portfolio
  - Windows Server 2008 R2 Enterprise
  - Microsoft SharePoint Server 2010
  - Microsoft SQL Server 2012

- Technologies
  - Hyper-V
  - Microsoft SQL Server 2012 Reporting Services
  - Power View

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