

Case Study: GSD&M Idea City



Overview

Country: United States

Industry: Advertising

Customer Profile

Part of Omnicom Group, Inc., GSD&M Idea City is an advertising agency that has helped grow some of the world's most successful brands.

Business Situation

GSD&M had been providing its digital media clients with campaign performance information from Microsoft Atlas Solutions. However, extracting data from Atlas, merging it with other data sets, and formatting it for analysis were cumbersome and time-consuming activities, which limited time available for optimizing live campaigns.

Solution

GSD&M needed a way to deliver actionable information from Atlas and other digital media tools more quickly, so it turned to Atlas and Microsoft SharePoint 2010 Enterprise.

Benefits

- Eliminates manual conversion of data from Atlas and other information repositories.
- Enables access to preformatted campaign performance data within hours instead of days.
- Delivers interactive access to campaign performance information through personalized dashboards.
- Allows analysts to spend more time driving performance than producing reports.

Ad Agency Clients Gain Actionable Insight into Digital Media Campaign Performance

“In the advertising space, analytics is a real hot button. Our ability to provide better data in a timely manner using Atlas+ and SharePoint Enterprise is a real asset to our clients—and a real differentiator for GSD&M.”

— Dallas LaRose, Enterprise Systems Supervisor,
GSD&M Idea City

GSD&M Idea City had been providing its clients with reports about online advertising campaign performance. In doing so, agency personnel would manually extract data from the Microsoft® Atlas Advertiser Suite and other digital advertising performance information sources. However, because of the work required to transform the raw performance data into useful insights, GSD&M delivered these reports weekly at most. The agency wanted a way to capture and present online ad performance information in a more timely and efficient manner, so it turned to Microsoft. GSD&M implemented a Business Intelligence solution based on Atlas+ from Microsoft, which works with Microsoft SharePoint® 2010 and Atlas data to deliver updated ad campaign performance information on a daily basis. This enables GSD&M and its clients to better analyze results and optimize media and creative performance.

“Using Atlas+ and SharePoint Enterprise, we now have a collaboration platform that provides updated information daily and that enables us to strategize with our clients much more effectively.”

— Dallas LaRose,
Enterprise Systems Supervisor,
GSD&M Idea City

Situation

Austin, Texas-based advertising agency GSD&M Idea City, part of the Omnicom Group, is an award-winning leader in the area of digital media advertising. If you've seen online ads for AARP, L.L. Bean, United States Air Force, Norwegian Cruise Line, or a host of other well-known brands, then you've seen the creative work of GSD&M.

The agency uses the Atlas Advertising Suite from Microsoft Advertising, and Atlas can track every aspect of digital media campaigns. Are impressions being delivered? Are consumers interacting with advertising? From which sites? Atlas captures all the raw data required to answer these questions, and GSD&M had been extracting this raw data for years. GSD&M personnel analyze the data and provide campaign performance information to clients so they can gain insights and respond accordingly.

The problem with the approach GSD&M had been taking was timing. Before a client could gain any insights, a GSD&M analyst had to export the raw data from Atlas, combine it with other relevant information, and provide insight and analysis. These manual processes could take days, even weeks in some cases.

GSD&M turned to Microsoft for help. The agency wanted to find a way to make campaign performance information from Atlas—or from any other digital information source—available to clients more quickly and more efficiently. Microsoft, in turn, had just what GSD&M needed to achieve these kinds of outcomes, a system named Atlas+.

Solution

Atlas+ is a comprehensive digital media analytics and reporting system built on Microsoft SharePoint 2010 and Microsoft

SharePoint Enterprise PerformancePoint® Services. The system provides GSD&M and its clients the critical business impact analysis capabilities needed to optimize the performance of digital marketing campaigns.

Atlas+ takes full advantage of the capabilities of the Microsoft Business Intelligence platform within SharePoint Enterprise and integrates tightly with Microsoft Atlas—and any other marketing data source, including Omniture, search, social networks and more. It offers advanced features designed for business users such as dashboards, scorecards, campaign-level budgeting and planning, “what-if” analysis, data submission and management, and data model maintenance. It is highly scalable, fully customizable, easy to learn, and easy to use.

Building on SharePoint PerformancePoint Services

Atlas+ is one of the first applications built with the latest features of SharePoint 2010 in mind. It makes extensive use of the scorecard, dashboard, and analytic functionality included in SharePoint PerformancePoint Services, ensuring that it can deliver information to business users quickly and efficiently.

“Atlas+ makes it possible to use the Microsoft tools to pull data from Atlas—as well as Omniture or any other data source we might want to use—in an automated manner,” says Dallas LaRose, Enterprise Systems Supervisor for GSD&M Idea City. “It pulls data into an optimized data model in Microsoft SQL Server®, and we can then use SQL Analysis Services and serve it up to clients through SharePoint Enterprise Business Intelligence technology. Using this approach, the information our internal analysts and clients need is always right there, and it's always at their fingertips. As Atlas+ gets refreshed with the latest

information from Atlas and other data sources, our clients can check their dashboards to see how their campaigns are performing at any point—and all in a seamless and timely manner.”

Working with Microsoft Gold Certified Partner Praxinet, GSD&M used SharePoint Enterprise 2010 to create dashboards that its IT team could easily customize to meet individual client needs. So, when GSD&M analysts and media teams log on to SharePoint and look at their dashboards, they see dashboards branded to reflect GSD&M requirements. When GSD&M clients log on to the agency’s extranet to view their dashboards, they see dashboards that reflect their company’s branding, presence, and user roles. For users in all organizations, this customization ensures that the information they seek renders quickly on the screen.

Benefits

For GSD&M and its clients, there are several significant benefits that come from using Atlas+ and SharePoint 2010. The manual effort associated with capturing and refining data from Atlas—and the amount of time that effort required—is greatly reduced. Where it used to take GSD&M personnel days, even weeks in some cases, to extract and prepare the Atlas data for presentation to clients, Atlas+ automates the extraction and preparation of that data making that same data available very quickly. When the information is fresh, GSD&M and its clients can use it to refine digital ad campaigns much more frequently.

The Advantage of Actionable Information

“In the past, we had to pull data from Atlas into CSV [comma separated value] files and then pivot that data into actionable information,” says Mr. LaRose. “That took a very long time, so our expert analysts were

using valuable time to perform laborious processes. Using Atlas+ and SharePoint, we now have a collaboration platform that provides updated information daily and that enables us to strategize with our clients much more effectively.”

Mr. LaRose points out that another benefit for GSD&M and its clients is the ease with which users can drill down into the information presented in the SharePoint dashboards to see finer levels of detail. Users can click on graphs and data points and see more of the information behind the numbers. With the weekly reports that GSD&M had been able to provide in the past, it was not possible to explore the numbers without additional manual analysis.

“Atlas+ is a great time saver. It streamlines the data compilation and formatting process, allowing our teams to focus on what is most important—campaign performance insights and optimization,” says Mercedes Gray, Interactive Media Supervisor at GSD&M. “Our teams are now empowered to more effectively drive our clients’ business, as we are not devoting talented resources on tedious data aggregation and formatting.”

The Added Value of Information to GSD&M

For GSD&M, there’s clear value in having faster and better access to digital ad campaign performance information. The agency can help its clients move in a more nimble manner, to see trends and act on them to improve campaign outcomes. Moreover, one other aspect of this system is particularly important to GSD&M: it helps distinguish the agency as a digital leader in the eyes of both current and potential clients.

“In the advertising space, everyone is looking for better data,” says Mr. LaRose.

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“Analytics is a real hot button. Our ability to provide better data in a timely manner using Atlas+ and SharePoint is a real asset to our clients—and a real differentiator for GSD&M. Our ability to offer this kind of information in this way is extremely valuable to our clients.”

Helping to Maintain a Competitive Advantage

Mr. LaRose anticipates that this combination of Atlas+ and SharePoint 2010 will help GSD&M maintain its leadership position in digital advertising.

“We are leading digital advertising by providing access to actionable information about online ad performance,” says Mr. LaRose, “and we intend to stay three steps ahead of other agencies. Microsoft showed a big commitment to business intelligence in the release of SharePoint 2010 Enterprise. It has been very progressive in this regard. Other Business Intelligence platforms are coming from companies that are not known to be as progressive, so we’re confident that SharePoint 2010 Enterprise will enable us to stay ahead of the curve going forward.”

For More Information

For more information about Microsoft products and services, call the Microsoft Sales Information Center at (800) 426-9400.

In Canada, call the Microsoft Canada Information Centre at (877) 568-2495.

Customers who are deaf or hard-of-hearing can reach Microsoft text telephone (TTY/TDD) services at (800) 892-5234 in the United States or (905) 568-9641 in Canada. Outside the 50 United States and Canada, please contact your local Microsoft subsidiary. To access information using the World Wide Web, go to:

www.microsoft.com

Microsoft Media and Entertainment Practice

Microsoft Communications Sector Media and Entertainment practice provides media vertical services and supply chain companies with business- and people-ready software and services to optimize their business process management throughout the media lifecycle, from advertiser/partner relationship and business management to the consumer experience and action. Microsoft's enterprise software platforms and solutions enable media supply chain players to be seamlessly, dynamically and securely connected to any point in the media business value chain, driving agility, accuracy and efficiency.

For more information about Microsoft Communications Sector Media and Entertainment practice, go to: <http://www.microsoft.com/resources/mediaandentertainment/default.aspx>.

Solution Overview

Microsoft Server Product Portfolio

- Microsoft Windows Server® 2008 R2 Datacenter Edition
- Microsoft SharePoint Enterprise 2010
- Microsoft SQL Server® 2008 R2
- Microsoft PerformancePoint® Services.

Microsoft Office System

- Microsoft Excel® 2010

Microsoft Advertising

- Atlas Advertiser Suite

Technologies

- Microsoft PowerPivot

Partners

- Praxinet
- deFacto Global