Why Reporting Falls Short of Expectations and What You Should Do to Fix It

Every organisation has data.

To use a retail example, even the smallest coffee stand has records of their sales and stock, how much money comes in and how much goes out. This data can be analysed and actionable insight can be extracted.

When it is ordered and organised it becomes *information* which can be analysed to impart *knowledge*, such as what are the top selling items and the busiest times, which can be used to make predictions for future demand and to drive decisions about when to order supplies, how large the inventory should be, when to run promotions and which products to replace or delist.

As businesses mature and grow, the data architecture becomes more complicated.

The simple cash box can become a complex point-of-sale system. An ERP (Enterprise Resource Planning) system might be introduced to monitor sales, inventory and cashflow. A contactless payment system and an e-commerce site might be added to offer more and better services to the customers. When customer data is captured, a CRM (Customer Relationship Management) system might be introduced to keep track of customer details, communications, and marketing. The business could also expand into new locations and markets or acquire a competitor.

Before long, the data is captured in different formats, on different cadences from different systems and where once you could keep track of sales there might be duplications, and the data can no longer be trusted. Where it was a simple task to create and update a spreadsheet it is now a full-time job to clean up the data and produce the most basic reports and analyses.

This is where 29FORWARD can help.

Our expert consultants take a high-level view of your data architecture and governance, your reporting structures, and your business needs. We recommend, and work with your own specialists to deliver, a programme of improvements to streamline and accelerate your data collection, storage, transformation and to maximise the automation of your Business Intelligence generation so that you can extract the maximum insight from your data with the minimum resource while maintaining the highest levels of data security.

Our consultants are specialists in data analytics and reporting including warehousing architecture, cleansing, analysis, data migration and Business Intelligence and have experience in banking, insurance, retail, automotive and aviation industries.

An Example:

29FORWARD Ltd were engaged by a heritage UK luxury retailer with international operations to lead a project to realise the full potential of their Business Intelligence systems. The retailer has multiple physical stores in the UK, Europe and the Far East.

The Discovery.

During a two-day discovery our consultants analysed and mapped the client's systems, their interactions, and dependencies to provide a detailed proposal and action plan.

The client already used Microsoft Azure for cloud data storage, however, as is frequently the case, manual data transfer, entry, and manipulation was required to generate even basic management reports.

The Solution.

We stabilised and improved existing data feeds, introduced new ones and created data marts where we applied the client's business rules. Together with the client we reconciled and validated data to regain their confidence in the data and reduce the need for manual manipulations.

We proposed improvements to their reporting suite, which was based on Microsoft PowerBI, to automate the client's standard reports and to build and expand their capability for self-service and ad-hoc reporting.

Most of our recommendations from the discovery were applied, which increased the maturity of the client's data analytics and reporting capabilities.

Our guidance, technical expertise and hands-on approach delivered a more stable, trustworthy and insightful reporting portfolio, which allows for more confident, and data driven decision making at all levels. The reduction in manual data manipulation has freed up resources to carry out more advanced analyses to enable increased value services to be offered to their customers.

Our work with the client has continued to expand their in-house analytics capabilities to understand and predict customer patterns and behaviour.

The Conclusions.

29FORWARD has enabled the client to realise the full potential of their systems, resources and capabilities to extract the most from the data already gathered. Change was managed as an evolution rather than a revolution in an iterative and collaborative way.