

ballardchalmers
develop integrate collaborate



“Working with two partners only enhanced the success of the project. With the specialist knowledge of a smaller partner, Consolidata, combined with the size and breadth of experience of a Gold partner, Ballard Chalmers, I feel we benefited from the power of both.”

Ian Warne, Head of IT, Weetabix

Summary

Having worked with Microsoft Registered partner, Consolidata, on a prior successful project, Ian Warne, Head of IT at Weetabix, was keen to work with them once again – this time on a project to re-house a copy of the Weetabix current ‘Stock and Sales Information’ into a .NET based environment, named ‘Databix’.

Background

From past experience, Mr. Warne was confident in Consolidata’s ability to deliver a strong business intelligence platform for the migration – one from which Weetabix would derive enormous value. However, he also recognised that the solution he required depended on the delivery of mentoring and training in skill sets which were not part of Consolidata’s portfolio.

Having established the gaps, and enthusiasm to win the project, Consolidata took the initiative to find a Microsoft partner that could help strengthen their proposition and deliver the comprehensive solution that Weetabix needed.

Challenge

Weetabix identified the necessity to consolidate its legacy applications and multiple data sources into a unified data warehouse so that it could efficiently interrogate and extract vital business information in a timely way. This central data repository was branded ‘Databix’ to enable greater internal visibility and adoption.

For the project to succeed, it required a professional, cross-functional team capable of delivering the diverse range of tools and services in a variety of Microsoft solutions including SQL, BizTalk, SharePoint as well as DBA skills and expertise in Business Intelligence and data warehousing.

The collaborative efforts of Consolidata, with its proven expertise in the Business Intelligence and data warehousing field, combined with Weetabix IT team’s operational experience and knowledge of the legacy system, proved a formidable working relationship.

Partnering for success at Weetabix



Microsoft Registered partner Consolidata sought out Microsoft Gold Partner Ballard Chalmers to forge a strong joint proposition for a tender to Weetabix.

Great collaboration between these different level Microsoft partners resulted in a successful ongoing relationship.

“Partnering with [Ballard Chalmers] is very straightforward. We have a lot of respect for them from a professional and technical point of view - they say what they mean and they do what they say! It’s a pleasure working with them.”
Gordon Meyer, Consolidata

“Both Consolidata and Ballard Chalmers integrated with the IT team brilliantly and were extremely professional at all times. The reason it worked so well is that everyone had Weetabix’s best interests in focus throughout the project.”
Ian Warne, Head of IT, Weetabix



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However, both parties were aware that once the data had been consolidated and ported onto a .NET environment, the Weetabix IT team's skills would need to be developed in line with the workings of the new data warehouse.

In order to achieve the level of self-sufficiency Weetabix needed, the migration project would have to incorporate extensive training and mentoring across the new platform. Consolidata's skills portfolio did not extend into these areas, so it was imperative that they partner with an organisation that could provide the same kind of assurances to Weetabix, from an education and coaching perspective, across the whole Microsoft stack.

Solution

Consolidata met Ballard Chalmers at a local business networking event. They quickly realised the complementary nature of their respective skill sets and discussed the possibility of working together should the right project present itself.

Mark Dodd from Consolidata commented, "it was clear from the start that we had a strong synergy, our skill sets don't overlap but fit together like a jigsaw puzzle."

Soon after, Consolidata introduced Ballard Chalmers to Weetabix further strengthening their proposition to tackle the challenges of the overall project. This dual approach provided the assurances that Weetabix needed and Consolidata and Ballard Chalmers were offered the contract.

The next step was ensuring there was a process in place to work together. Mark continued, "demarcation is the key, both in who leads the relationship, who is the central point of contact for the client, and understanding responsibilities for delivery at the various project milestones. By ensuring this process was established up front, we had good, clear communication throughout the project and worked fantastically as a team."

Very quickly the three organisations integrated and began working together to build the data cubes.

"The fact that Consolidata and Ballard Chalmers were partners made no difference to the project or to Weetabix. They acted as one" explained Ian Warne.

Results

The Databix project continues with both partners still supporting Weetabix in their respective areas of expertise. Consolidata and Ballard Chalmers have since worked together on a number of other successful projects and are committed to finding new opportunities that can exploit their alliance.

"Communication between us is excellent and we have a strong working relationship. We are making the most of the reciprocal referrals and one partner always takes the lead depending on who procured the opportunity."

**Andrew Chalmers,
MD, Ballard Chalmers**

"The standard produced from this partnership was vibrant, exciting and informative for the team. The Databix Vision and outcomes have grown substantially since the new data cubes were handed over. The implementation of the cubes and the descriptions around measures have enabled the development team to create many layers of business intelligence from a Sales and Stock perspective. Some are housed within the Databix Document Management Portal and some housed through traditional means such as Excel Services and Reporting Services."

Graham Scanlon, Application Development Manager, Weetabix

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