



Microsoft SQL Server 2005- Reporting & Analysis Services Customer Solution Case Study



Microsoft SQL Server 2005 Provides New Level of Business Intelligence

Overview

Country or Region: United States

Industry: Software

Customer Profile

Blackbaud is the leading global provider of innovative technology solutions designed specifically for nonprofit organizations. Through its repertoire of products and related services, the company has helped more than 16,000 organizations meet critical challenges and enhance the work they do.

Business Situation

With business and historical pipeline data stored in various systems across the company, Blackbaud needed a way to consolidate and integrate the information and make it accessible to all employees. The company also required a versatile reporting framework that would allow the data to be viewed and analyzed in a customizable and interactive manner.

Solution

With the help of Innovative Architects, Blackbaud took advantage of Microsoft® SQL Server™ 2005's business intelligence solutions, creating an OLAP data cube representing the company's historical pipeline data, employing the application's flexible analysis and reporting services and making the information available through a customized dashboard framework built on ASP.NET 2.0.

Benefits

- Quick access to valuable information
- Increased business agility
- Improved client experience

"The Microsoft SQL Server 2005 platform allowed Blackbaud to stand up a fully featured, world-class Business Intelligence solution with a fraction of the effort and cost of other solutions."

Rich McCraw, IA, Principal Architect

For more than 25 years, Charleston, South Carolina-based Blackbaud has provided nonprofit organizations worldwide with the technology solutions they need to stay competitive in the ever-growing marketplace. From fundraising and financial management software to direct marketing communications and online community-building solutions, Blackbaud has identified the unique needs of organizations working within the nonprofit sector and developed exclusive tools that are designed to help them achieve their specific goals.

Blackbaud currently serves more than 16,000 organizations, giving them practical yet innovative solutions that help them raise money, manage finances, improve operational effectiveness, make better decisions and leverage the power of the Internet. The company, which also has operations in Massachusetts, Ontario, Scotland, England and Australia, deals with more than 1,000 nonprofits every single day and counts on its 1,300 employees to manage that substantial interaction effectively.

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For More Information

For more information about this Microsoft SQL Server 2005 solution, call the Innovative Architects Sales Information Center at 678.775.6851 or access on line at www.InnovativeArchitects.com

For more information about Microsoft products and services, call the Microsoft Sales Information Center at (800) 426-9400. To access information on line, go to: www.microsoft.com

Software and Services

- Microsoft Office System
 - Microsoft Office
- Microsoft Windows Server System™
 - Microsoft Windows Server™ 2003 Enterprise
 - Microsoft SQL Server™ 2005
 - Microsoft SQL Server Analysis Services 2005
 - Microsoft SQL Server Reporting Services 2005
 - Microsoft Integration Services
 - Microsoft Visual Studio 2005
- Technologies
 - Microsoft Windows® SharePoint Services
 - Microsoft .Net Framework

Partner

- Innovative Architects, LLC



Situation

Blackbaud had to reevaluate the way it manages its large database of historical pipeline data, which includes everything from contact names and numbers to business lead information and product support details. Previously, all of that information was stored in disparate systems and historical data was only stored in aggregate, making analysis and reporting difficult. The information needed to be consolidated and integrated, as well as easily accessible to employees throughout the company.

Solution

For this solution, Blackbaud worked with Innovative Architects, a Gold-Certified Microsoft partner.

SQL Server 2005 Serves Several Purposes
Blackbaud elected to institute a new system with Microsoft® SQL Server™ 2005 as its foundation, thanks in large part to the application's user-friendly business intelligence tools. Using SQL Server 2005, the company developed a SQL data mart and an analysis services data cube that mines data from the current SalesLogix transactional database. SQL Server's reporting services are then used to manipulate the information in the data cube and turn it into reports, which are viewable in both summary and detailed versions through a customizable dashboard that utilizes the Web Parts framework and Report Viewer Control in ASP.NET 2.0.

Core Capabilities

SQL Server 2005 provides Blackbaud with the following capabilities:

- A unified dimensional model
- Easy, automated data loads from existing systems by leveraging SSIS ETL
- A highly compressed and optimized data cache that is maintained automatically
- Data mining capabilities that allow the identification of rules and patterns
- A maintainable, robust reporting framework
- Full reporting life cycle support, from report authoring to report delivery
- A single, complete reporting platform with a scalable and extensible architecture

Benefits

Since the successful deployment of the solution, Blackbaud is realizing a number of important benefits, fast access to business intelligence data, the ability to pinpoint trends and respond to the market, and the opportunity to provide clients around the world with an enhanced experience.

Quick Access to Valuable Information
Dealing with more than 1,000 clients every day, Blackbaud needs to have information about those organizations at its employees' fingertips. The solution delivered through SQL Server 2005 not only keeps data organized, but also provides easy access to that data in a variety of formats. The integration services allow the new data mart and cube to be automatically updated to reflect the latest transactional data. The reporting services give users the power to customize their view of the information and have it presented in the way they need to see it. Furthermore, the new dashboard framework lets employees retrieve reports quickly and easily without having to go from system to system to find information.

Increased Business Agility

With the new reporting services making important data available at a glance, Blackbaud now has more insight into each customer, from the issues they face and the products they use to the support they request. Having this understanding, the company can anticipate clients' needs and be ready with solutions. This agility applies to the marketplace as well, with Blackbaud having an advantage over any competitors because of its ability to forecast overall market trends and plan for changes.

Improved Client Experience

Being fully prepared to meet customers' needs in the sales, deployment and support realms helps Blackbaud build stronger relationships with clients. And when the company can show its customers that it keeps track of what works for them, those clients enjoy a sense of trust and reliability that encourages them to continue to turn to Blackbaud when they need truly innovative technology solutions.

