Sun National Bank Brightens Its Business Performance

Industry
Commercial and Consumer Banking

Business Issue
Banking products are similar across the industry. Sun National Bank differentiates through service and technology.

Solution and Benefits
The Microsoft/ADVIZOR platform provides an integrated, self-service solution that empowers decision makers to make fact-based decisions.

The banking industry is experiencing an unprecedented state of change. New regulations and standards are being enforced, data volumes are exploding, new technologies are being introduced and competition is everywhere.

In the midst is Sun National Bank, a $3 billion New Jersey-based community bank, which has more than 70 branches that are empowered with local decision-making authority to build relationships and serve customers. The bank offers a solid portfolio of products including, cash management services, retail and business accounts, and business, personal, construction and wholesale commercial loans.

Since banking products are somewhat similar across institutions, Sun National Bank differentiates with great customer service, a community-centric focus and by investing in information systems that help decision makers understand each client's needs and respond appropriately.

"Our corporate goals are to maximize productivity and profitability," says Louise O'Donnell, vice president of management information systems. "We focus on improving customer service, increasing sales and reducing expenses to maximize overall performance. And there is no doubt that technology plays an essential role."

To support these goals, O'Donnell transforms corporate data into jewels of information and knowledge that enable business people to make accurate business decisions.

"We need to meet end user requirements, minimize our total cost of ownership and ensure maximum scalability and manageability. Our MIS staff should be focused on automation rather than querying data and providing analysis that our business users can perform," says O'Donnell.

One Version of the Truth
The MIS department has been busy arming the business to make better decisions. They initially upgraded their operational systems to enhance transactional throughput and customer service. Since then, they have been busy implementing information systems that provide one version of the truth to the entire business.

Analysts are now expanding ways to identify trends and anomalies across multiple dimensions. For instance, important monitoring and trending indicators such as cash flow projections and profitability are inherent in the system.

The platform improves the availability and quality of customer and sales information, supports financial forecasting and answers key questions, such as: Where are revenues increasing and why? Which retail products are expected to perform the best in a given region over time? What is the fastest growing product? Which demographics are most profitable? What is happening overall?

The system answers these questions and enables users to quickly identify trends and anomalies and then interpret their findings to make fact-based business decisions.

New Product and Service Models

The MIS department was determined to avoid solutions that were cumbersome to manage, had high costs of ownership or had custom architectures, so their evaluation process determined that Microsoft SQL Server would be the underlying platform. The challenge was to provide a high-impact, cutting-edge solution while adhering to the budget.

To maximize their investment in the Microsoft SQL Server platform, the bank selected Microsoft Analysis Services, Microsoft Reporting Services and ADVIZOR Solutions software for the dashboard and analysis capabilities that enable users to quickly monitor the business via key performance indicators (KPIs), drill down to underlying data and then publish their views and findings to the other users such as the executive team. Analysts can choose from a suite of dashboard charts to see their data in ways that are most effective.

To populate the SQL Server data warehouse and Analysis Services data marts, the bank uses Microsoft Integration Services to extract data from core systems, apply business rules, and aggregate and load the data. The data marts are organized by business unit (e.g., customer, retail, lending) and function (e.g., general ledger, ATM). This system of record ensures that everyone is using the same calculations, aggregations and detail records.

O'Donnell also understands the value of a dependable integration partner and frequently teams with Database Solutions, a regional integrator. "This staff augmentation model works well. They understand our business and are great at coming up with creative ideas." she says.

Better Business Performance

To date, the majority of the users are in the bank's finance and accounting units. They serve as liaisons to executive management and are responsible for all the information that is published. Being able to have all the data stored in one self-service environment relieves them of the need to open MIS service requests.

The system strengthens their ability to conduct business analysis that relates to the corporate goals, it supports corporate processes and answers critical questions. The ADVIZOR software provides the graphical representations and key benchmark comparisons that are instantly understood.

In summary, this information system delivers timely, accurate information that maximizes profitability and productivity. Sun National Bank has one version of the truth that empowers users to improve their decision-making capabilities, monitor performance, reduce labor costs, streamline workflows and better manage assets and risk.

"We evaluated numerous tools before making this important decision. The beauty of ADVIZOR is that it complements what Microsoft provides and connects to all of our enterprise data," cites O'Donnell.

"ADVIZOR provides the flexibility that we need in a self-service environment for business people to analyze data and publish their findings. And the entire platform scales to meet our growing needs."