Making the Case for Technology Upgrades

Realizing the Impact of Reliable, Accessible Data for Nonprofits

Overview

Organizations must take into consideration that their processes and databases will need to be maintained and adjusted in order to support continued growth. This is more apparent in the ever changing and non-standardized environmental field. In an industry that is non-profit, it is often difficult to prioritize and fund technology upgrades. But with a clear business case and an understanding of the benefits of the investment, the industry is more likely to take on the financial burden.

As is true for most industries, the environmental field is facing new challenges when it comes to data collection, storage and access. The objective of this project was to ensure that the client was able to upgrade the storage and access of data without impacting the method of collection.

Industry: Non-profit Environmental
Location: Washington, DC
Size: 40 Employees

Company Bio

The client is a non-profit organization that pioneers innovative finance for conservation. Primary focus on healthy forests, sustainable agriculture, clean water and biodiversity.

The Challenge

The client's data team was relying solely on a very large excel spreadsheet, which was updated manually through daily internal processes. The excel spreadsheet was treated as their "Database Management System". The spreadsheet included over 4400 entries and encompassed over 2200 attributes. Therefore, a comprehensive investigation was required to gather detail into the current data that was being collected and how this data was stored, utilized, and disseminated for their clients.

The desired capabilities of a future database management system included integration with company websites, ability to store and parse company documents, and the capability for the team to readily add and delete attributes. The primary consideration for a future database management system was the ability to integrate with various other solutions, while not affecting collection processes.

2200 **Attributes Mapped**

Documentation of Data Collection Processes

Technology Roadmap Developed and Delivered

The Solution

Raven Bay conducted workshops with the data collection team and other internal stakeholders to understand their current database management system, their required capabilities of a new system, and determine the current constraints on data capture and storage.

With this information we were able to outline the current state of their database, a desired future state database system, and conduct a gap analysis between the current state and future state. This included the effort and suggested timeline to transition from their current state system to a desired future state.

From this, a proposed roadmap was delivered utilizing an "off the shelf" solution and presented the next steps in implementing a new database management system.

The Results

Armed with a technology roadmap for a new database management system, the client was able to source funding and begin preliminary internal discussions. With the business case laid out including pricing and timelines, the client knew exactly how long the project would take and how much it would end up costing. It was obvious that a change needed to occur, the client finally had the full picture of what that change would look like.

Raven Bay later returned to the client to implement the technology roadmap and deliver the proposed database management system.

"…data encourages institutional transparency, a fundamental principle of most nonprofits and many companies."

TechRepublic[1]

About Raven Bay

As a full-service management consulting and analytics firm able to deliver solutions in both the business & technical realms utilizing the same set of resources; thereby shortening delivery timelines and providing more holistic solutions for our clients. Our proven methodologies & hands-on experience enabling organizations to achieve the benefits of an effective analytics program through this offering also accelerate the development & value realization of the unique Governance Model we will create for you.

www.ravenbay.com

[1] *https://www.techrepublic.com/article/how-nonprofits-use-big-data-to-change-the-world/*