



Apps Associates Helps OUTFRONT Media Rapidly Improve Reporting With Oracle BICS

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 VP, Application Development
 OUTFRONT Media

OUTFRONT Media Inc. (NYSE: OUT) is the US leader in out-of-home advertising. From Sunset Boulevard to Times Square, its diverse portfolio includes more than 400,000 digital and static displays, which are primarily located in the most iconic and high-traffic locations throughout the 25 largest markets in the U.S. OUTFRONT is the advertising partner of choice for major municipal transit systems, reaching millions of commuters daily in the largest U.S. cities. OUTFRONT Media has displays in over 150 markets across the U.S. and Canada.

Operating in a highly competitive market, OUTFRONT’s ability to efficiently access and utilize its extensive volumes of transactional data, as well as find new and innovative ways to examine cross-organization data, is integral to its business.

Information requests drain IT resources

“We have 12 years of transactional data from Oracle EBS, 20 years of data from bespoke sales and inventory sources, and hundreds of standard reports available for users,” says Derek Hayden, VP, Application Development for OUTFRONT Media. “However the reporting was not being fully utilized. The UI’s were underwhelming and the tools themselves needed to be refreshed.”

Users had a hard time knowing what to run to get the answers they needed. Since they needed cross-platform reporting, they would turn to IT, causing an unnecessary amount of intervention to produce the information.

“IT had to divert resources from our valued-added activities to run these reports,” said Hayden.

In addition, OUTFRONT suffered from cumbersome distribution methods, sometimes sending 10MB files through email or setting up shared drives, which further bogged down the IT group.

OUTFRONT turns to Oracle, Apps Associates for the solution

OUTFRONT decided to implement a centralized data warehouse and business intelligence tool for accelerated information reporting. Goals included:

- Leveraging insights from transactional data
- Taking advantage of a cloud-based solution
- Rapidly deploying information to users
- Enabling mobile for both iOS and Android

- Providing a self-service solution
- Delivering quick wins to encourage user adoption

“We knew we had large amounts of transactional data, what I call ‘Little Data,’ and we knew it could tell a compelling story if it could be digested correctly,” says Hayden. “We would break this transactional data down to its finest level and build it back up for users to answer questions they would need.”

After evaluating the standard niche software applications, OUTFRONT selected an Oracle based solution. For consulting, development, and implementation, OUTFRONT looked at traditional big box firms, but found they had limited experience in delivering Oracle cloud solutions. They instead chose Apps Associates to help implement the project.

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“Apps Associates has become a true, trusted partner in the delivery of our vision,” Hayden sums up. “They are flexible and adjust to our needs as they change on a day-to-day basis. The onsite support has been great and are looked at as almost an extension of the OUTFRONT team. We couldn’t be happier with the BICS solution and our relationship with Apps Associates throughout this project.”

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Apps Associates provides an accelerated implementation

Apps Associates worked with OUTFRONT to map out a two-phased approach to the solution. They began with BICS and followed up with a database as a service cloud implementation. They automated data retrieval using data sync and leveraged Apps Associates’ technical and functional expertise using their BICS accelerators to fast track the requirements and design phases of the project. The Apps Associates solution is mobile enabled and ensures data security by restricting information to only those parties with specific access rights.

“We started with a small subset of data to quickly prove out the BICS concept,” says Hayden. “Apps Associates suggested the best way to evaluate, import, and showcase the data. Their knowledge of BI concepts such as KPI’s, visual data representation, and drill down capability really accelerated our delivery timeline.”

Using a blend of onsite and offshore development resources, Apps Associates was able to help provide a quick win by delivering a custom solution in just five weeks. The initial rollout provided 15 reports specifically addressing sales and customer trends as well as account executive performance.

Currently, nearly 225 users have ready access to more than 50 different reports with several drill down levels across Sales, Finance, and Real Estate disciplines.

“I’ve been involved with many offshore resource projects and they don’t tend to go all that well,” says Hayden. “However the Apps Associates offshore model is very responsive, cost effective, and accelerated the delivery of our solution by essentially having a 24 hour development cycle.”

Program success spurs rapid expansion in scope

With the successful implementation of the initial BICS solution for Sales, OUTFRONT called on Apps Associates to expand the program into several other areas. The next step involved the Real Estate department where 5 new KPI’s were established by management. Additionally, a Real Estate dashboard was created with a focus on market and location profitability, lease portfolio analysis, and real estate rep performance.

With both the sales and real estate data now readily available, Apps Associates began working with the Finance team to set up a financial dashboard to report on key indicators like gross margin, revenue, expenses, pricing, budget to actuals, and

year-over-year performance. During this phase, Apps Associates was able to assist OUTFRONT in expediting the retirement of a legacy sales pacing system which consolidates revenue forecasting across the U.S. and Canada. Consolidated sales pacing is now integrated into the BICS solution.

Apps Associates and OUTFRONT worked together to implement tight security protocols. This enables OUTFRONT to control activity at the account level and institute inclusions and exclusions for access as needed.

The initial phases of the program utilized the standard databases that come with BICS. As the amount of data in the program grew, however, there was clearly a need for additional storage. Apps Associates and OUTFRONT addressed the issue by building a data warehouse and moving the data source to an Oracle DBaaS platform.

New system greatly enhances sales information delivery

The BICS solution provides a daily refresh of the data vs. weekly or monthly distribution. Delivery time of OUTFRONT’s Bell Curve analysis report was reduced significantly. The self-service tool was introduced to 20 users and quickly expanded to 100.

The new system features dashboards with KPIs, graphic illustrations, and grid representations with drill down capability for further detail. Managers now have easy access to performance measures like actual to budget and year-over-year performance to help identify areas of improvement.

“Now the information is in one spot, updated daily, and tailored to what users in particular roles need to know to do their jobs,” says Hayden.

Daily efficiency has improved since people no longer have to spend time creating and running reports. They now operate with up-to-date data to better plan out their activities.

“The widespread adoption has improved decision making at all levels of the organization by providing real time reports,” says Hayden. “Most importantly, the new system allows senior management to set a direction of what’s important, and send out a consistent message to the entire company.”

Apps Associates relationship continues to benefit OUTFRONT

“We are placing more and more expectations on the solution every day and constantly expanding the available reporting in order to provide advanced insights into our business,” says Hayden.

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ABOUT APPS ASSOCIATES

Founded in 2002, Apps Associates is a global provider of business and technology consulting services that partners with companies to help them maximize the value from their IT investments. Services range from new technology deployments to 24x7 global support services with practices in BI, ERP, CRM, Integration, Cloud Services, Infrastructure, Testing Services and Custom Development.



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