

case study: MDM drives results for global restaurant chain

innovative application grows stores' sales and provides operational insight

results at a glance:

problem: A data-driven business, the types of data collected, the formats and classification of the data, and the platform used to manage and assess their data vary throughout this client's 35,000 worldwide stores. A major problem was how to structure and consolidate this diverse and disparate data and offer market owners the tools to improve their operations while bridging a variety of cultural and language differences. Additionally, data security had potentially severe legal ramifications for this company.

solution: Randstad Technologies would help build and deploy a Master Data Management (MDM) system that would function as a data dictionary consolidating and combining like data elements and serve as a data repository and clearinghouse. The scope of work included a group of toolsets that would allow individual restaurants to acquire the information they needed to evaluate and improve operations.

results: Leveraging Randstad Technologies' extensive technology expertise and the firm's worldwide talent recruiting engine, the dynamic, specialized project team has helped implement the system in a number of markets including the U.S., Canada, and selected countries in Europe and Asia. More markets and countries will be scheduled this year. The value of this project is realized through a suite of custom-built toolsets that enables market owners to access the information they need to increase store sales and reduce costs. The success of the system has induced wide adoption.

client profile:

The client is the leading global foodservice retailer in the world with more than 35,000 local restaurants serving nearly 70 million people in more than 100 countries each day. The firm employs 1.8 million people. Eighty percent of the restaurants are franchised. The firm generates more than \$35 billion in annual revenues worldwide.

business problem:

With an uncompromising focus on quality, this company needs to understand what is happening at the individual store level to ensure consistently high levels of quality, service, and performance. Each franchise location operates like a small business. With 35,000 individual stores worldwide, 28,000 owned by franchisees, collecting and managing the data needed to assess each store's operations is a gargantuan undertaking. Cultural and language differences further complicate the task.

This firm divides its global markets into more than 100 sub-markets. The types of data collected, the formats and classification of the data, and the platform used to manage and assess the data vary by market. Up until now, the platform used depended on the size of the market. The first problem confronting this firm was how to structure and consolidate the vast amount of diverse and disparate data and offer market owners access to the tools they needed to use this data to improve their operations.

Data management is not the only issue of concern; data security, important to all firms, has a special effect on this firm's attempts to centralize data. The employees at the franchised stores are not employees of the client. There are legal implications, which can vary by nation, regarding access to this non-employee data. Franchisees must opt-in for the franchiser to use their employees' data. Failure to keep this arms-length agreement could have far-reaching, negative implications for the client.

It's a double-edged sword—the client needs the data to gain operational insight and ensure consistent quality—but accessing the data carries some risk.

A Master Data Management (MDM) system would eliminate multiple versions of the same master data in different parts of the company. The system would function as a data dictionary consolidating and combining like data elements and serve as a data repository and clearinghouse.

Even though this client has vast and capable internal IT resources, tackling this MDM project internally would pose at least two thorny obstacles. The first relates to direct access to the franchisees' raw data; any breach, no matter how small, could pose problems. The second issue relates to the specialized skills required to build and maintain such a complex and elaborate system. Finding and keeping people with the required database skills would be challenging. The time it might take to recruit and/or replace such hard-to-find individuals could create significant delays.

Developing and managing the data of 35,000 stores would be a gargantuan undertaking! The right partner was needed to build an MDM system.

tough requirements narrow the field

This client had a number of criteria in mind in selecting a partner for this complex and comprehensive MDM project:

- The project had to be provided as a managed service. The firm performing the work would provide the leadership for the technical aspects of the project under a given budget.
- The MDM was to be built on Microsoft's SQL Server® application. This would require a team consisting of highly skilled database developers. The team had to be flexible enough to rapidly expand or contract depending on project requirements.
- The contracting firm had to understand data governance. In order to get the types of

information out of the system required to improve individual store operations, the data going into the system had to meet rigid standards. Understanding how to “globalize” the various data would be mandatory for realizing the benefits of the system.

- This was to be a high-profile project and the firm providing the managed services over its multi-year duration had to be firmly committed to its long-term success.
- Security of franchisee employee data was paramount. This required a trusted intermediary capable of securing the data and allowing the client to operate as a global company without compromising their franchisee value proposition, which assured their privacy and autonomy.

Few firms could meet most of these requirements; the client decided that Randstad Technologies could meet them all!

the Randstad Technologies solution

Working at the client's location, Randstad Technologies provides application development and data base architectural services. The nine-member Randstad Technologies team consists of one Project Manager, one Business Analyst, a User Interface developer, and six database developers with specialties in SQL Server, data base architecture, and .NET.

All of the data going into the MDM system is consolidated at the market level. The Randstad Technologies team works with each market individually to assess which data fields now exist, how they are currently structured, and how they should map into the MDM environment. Processes specific to a market generate data that can be brought into the system.

Once it is brought into the system, the data is “harmonized” so that terminology is the same from market to market. For example, take the data field “job title”. In one market, the job title for a restaurant manager might be a four-part code; in another market, it might be completely different. Harmonizing

the data creates worldwide consistency. This is not as straightforward as it might sound. Ultimately, a rules engine will ensure that all data entering the system meets guidelines for “clean” data.

Using Randstad Technologies’ proven agile software development framework, the project has progressed in a tightly structured manner. Scrum software development is focused on short iterations of development called Sprints with re-prioritization in between development iterations. This benefits the client in that multiple, albeit related, projects can be under development in the same sprint. All MDM tasks, including requirements gathering and documentation, project scheduling, code development, quality assurance and testing, and production and production support are approached methodically with rigorous attention to detail. Requirements are developed side-by-side with the client’s team representing their specific market to ensure that the information gleaned from the system supports both corporate’s and the stores’ business needs.

A group of toolsets has been developed that allows subscribing restaurants to attain the information they need to evaluate and improve their operations. From a global perspective, because the data now fed into the master database is consistent regardless of its country of origin, executive management can obtain more insight into individual store performance as compared against other stores in that market as well as in other markets. Regardless of location, everyone is now speaking the same language in terms of data.

Initially, the MDM did not allow the user to create data—only extract data fed into it from a pre-existing source. With the creation of a user interface, subscribers can now author data to fit a specific need. If, for example, a store introduces a brand extension, data concerning that brand extension can be input into the system allowing management to query the system and measure performance. Market owners now have the flexibility to collect, organize, and analyze data specific to their store operations and tactics.

benefits delivered

The markets first to implement the MDM included the U.S., Europe, and Canada. In addition to providing this MDM as a managed service with strictly maintained schedules and budgets, Randstad Technologies has provided this client additional benefits:

- Randstad Technologies being part of Randstad, the second largest staffing organization in the world, allows them to augment the project team with the specialized talent they need for as long as they need it. They are not bound to use a static group of pre-existing employees, as would be the case with most consultants. The size of the team can grow to accommodate the workload.
- This project required SQL server developers who knew MDM—a small group of hard-to-find people. The ability to leverage Randstad’s broad talent-finding network to obtain the level of skills required is unique to Randstad Technologies.
- A strong focus on governance aligns the client’s goals for this project with the design of the MDM so that the information provided by the system enables the client to get the information needed in the formats required to provide the anticipated benefits.
- A commitment to working with the users to understand the types of information they need to better manage their operations has resulted in a suite of toolsets that help market owners to increase sales and reduce costs.
- The project team is on target with project deliverables and meeting all the client’s goals.
- The initial success of the system has triggered its adoption throughout multiple markets.

Enhanced operations and profitability realized from implementing MDM motivates more markets and countries to deploy the successful system.

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