

# Unlock insights on any data

## Customer Solution Case Study



**Customer:** MedAssets Inc.  
**Website:** [www.medassets.com](http://www.medassets.com)  
**Customer Size:** 3,200 employees  
**Country or Region:** United States  
**Industry:** Healthcare—Other health-related services  
**Partner:** Sogeti  
**Website:** [www.us.sogeti.com](http://www.us.sogeti.com)

### Customer Profile

Headquartered in Alpharetta, Georgia, MedAssets is a performance-improvement company focused on helping healthcare providers realize financial and operational gains.

### Software and Services

- Microsoft Server Product Portfolio
  - Microsoft SQL Server 2014
- Services
  - Microsoft Power BI for Office 365
- Technologies
  - SQL Server 2012 Reporting Services

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## Cloud-Deployed Pilot Opens the Door for Effective Self-Service Healthcare Management Reporting

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Steve Wiggs, Senior Director of Software Development, MedAssets

MedAssets is a consultancy whose core business is negotiating supplier contracts for its healthcare clients. The company needed a better way of looking at the data it captured from supplier proposals so that conversations with clients could be more productive. A cloud-based Microsoft SQL Server 2014 proof of concept conducted with the help of Microsoft partner Sogeti achieved aggregation and reporting of the data in new ways. It also supported the rapid development MedAssets will require for future centralization and standardization of its data.

### Business Needs

MedAssets partners with hospitals, clinics, and other healthcare providers to help them achieve financial savings, particularly in areas of supply cost and service delivery. The company accomplishes these savings by gathering product lists and pricing information from vendors, analyzing the information, negotiating the best prices on behalf of its customers, and then making recommendations to each customer about which contracts to award.

At MedAssets, client managers oversee

customer and vendor interactions using reports from the internal sourcing analytics team. These reports contain data and conclusions resulting from the analysis of RFP responses from vendors seeking to provide goods and services to MedAssets clients.

Historically, although Microsoft SQL Server software is used elsewhere within the company to support business functions, the transaction of key pricing input between client managers and the analytics team has relied on individual Microsoft



Excel spreadsheet software files stored in Microsoft SharePoint. Capturing and analyzing complexities in the RFP responses in one file, as well as aggregating data across multiple files to produce management reports, is a labor-intensive manual process. Additionally, these completed analyses are difficult to share within the company and with clients. For these reasons, MedAssets needed a way for client managers and executives to collate multiple analyses simultaneously in order to achieve summary knowledge of trends and identify process improvements.

## Solution

Sogeti, a Microsoft partner with a gold competency in business intelligence (BI), invited MedAssets to participate in a jointly sponsored multicustomer Executive Briefing Conference (EBC) in Redmond.

"Seeing the self-service BI capabilities at the EBC helped us envision what's possible and inspired us to move quickly, using self-service BI to improve data insights and gain competitive advantage," says Deb Cox, US National Microsoft Alliance and Technology Group Manager, Sogeti.

Following the event, Sogeti led the MedAssets IT team in conducting a series of proofs of concept (POCs) over six months as part of the Microsoft Rapid Development Project (RDP) program. The key POC was aimed at showing the analytics team what could be done with its customer pricing data, and how the self-service BI capabilities of Microsoft Power BI for Office 365 can benefit both analytics and client managers now and in the future.

To create the self-service analytics BI POC, Sogeti and MedAssets first created a cloud-based database using a trial copy of Microsoft SQL Server 2014. Then, two MedAssets software developers with experience using SQL Server 2012 Reporting Services spent two days learning the Power BI for Office 365 toolset and its interactive functionality with Excel, and

another three weeks experimenting with new report types they could generate from the existing spreadsheet information.

"We created scripts to automate the process of opening Excel files off of SharePoint and pushing them into SQL 2014," says Steve Wiggs, Senior Director of Software Development at MedAssets.

"Then we brought up all of the data for the latest calendar year using the Power BI tools in Office 365, did some minor data validation, and generated the reports."

These reports aggregated the vendor sourcing data in ways that had previously been impossible for the analytics team. The next step will be designing a method for managing the data as it comes in from various sources. The MedAssets vision is to use the versatility of the Power BI toolset to eventually funnel all of that data into one system, where it can be structured and used for variety of business purposes.

"We think of it as one warehouse with many audiences," Wiggs says. "Having all that data in a centrally managed place provides a lot of self-service opportunity, not just for the analytics team, but for client managers and other field personnel."

## Benefits

The Sogeti-MedAssets self-service BI POC provided a clear insight into the possibilities of aggregating and presenting sourcing data over a range of time. It also provided a platform for rapid development and laid the groundwork for future data centralization and standardization efforts.

### Aggregated Sourcing Data

To MedAssets business users, the biggest impact of the joint POC was the ability to see the sourcing analysis data in ways they had previously been unable to present it to client managers. In particular, having data about how much savings MedAssets provided to each customer over the most recent calendar year is a valuable statistic when cultivating client relationships.

"We always want to remind customers of the savings we bring them," says Matthew Peterson, Vice President of Sourcing Analytics, MedAssets. "What did we save client X over time frame Y? Before using the SQL Server POC, there was no way to answer that simple question."

### Rapid Development, Ease of Use

For Wiggs, a significant success factor in the POC was how fast his team was able to learn, build, test, and deploy the solution. "Deploying SQL Server 2014 in the cloud gave us a way to get in front of the curve and try out the latest SQL Server feature set and use it in a POC, while at the same time giving us the experience of cloud-based deployment," he says. "It only took two developers a couple of weeks to produce results for the business, because the interface was already familiar to them."

"The RDP that Sogeti led for MedAssets was a fantastic opportunity to quickly build valuable knowledge around a new Microsoft product," says David Beaudreau, Architect and MedAssets RDP Team Lead at Sogeti. "With support from the Microsoft Power BI product group, the RDP team was able to deliver our technical objectives, provide product feedback to Microsoft, showcase a promising new Microsoft technology, and spark a series of innovative discussions with the client all in a very condensed time period."

### Groundwork for Future Development

MedAssets looks forward to the day when all data being managed in the POC solution is collected in a programmatic and structured way, rather than entered manually in the spreadsheet files. For now, the POC is providing valuable insights into the ways data can be used to enrich client relationships and equip client managers for optimal results. These insights will provide requirements for a long-range data management solution at the company.