

Enhancing Self-Service Analytics



The IT division of a leading academic health care system, launching a new self-service analytics (SSA) initiative to the entire organization, sought to improve clinical and non-clinical staff user understanding in using SSA to improve their operational performance.

Problem to Solve

Self-service analytics (SSA) has become increasingly popular in health care by helping non-technical users rapidly gain actionable insights without necessarily needing to engage IT resources for help. Through SSA, for example, clinicians can more directly and readily convert health care data into actions to potentially improve care quality and affordability.

For those new to SSA, understanding its capabilities and fully maximizing is a learning curve, as it is for any new technological process. Most SSA users, no matter their other experience or credentials, do not have a background in statistical analysis, business intelligence or data mining.

The IT division of a leading academic health care system, launching a new SSA initiative to the entire organization, sought to improve clinical and non-clinical staff members' understanding in using SSA to improve their operational performance. This would entail enabling staff members to perform their own data discovery and analyses with minimal IT assistance, increasing the quality and usefulness of analytics developed, and decreasing the time needed to produce analytics.

The IT division turned to Freed Associates (Freed) to develop and implement a set of core processes for supporting a successful SSA launch. Freed was chosen based on its familiarity with this health care system, as well as its considerable project management experience, especially with IT-driven projects.

Strategy and Tactics

The health care system's SSA launch encompassed several dozen clinical and non-clinical departments, each of which would require training on SSA functionality and use. Through interviews with internal subject matter experts, Freed identified two dozen foundational SSA processes that needed to be addressed in the organization to ensure enterprise-wide SSA understanding.

Based on the scope and scale of the SSA initiative, Freed and the client established a central process work group, comprised of members who had accountability for identifying, prioritizing and documenting each of the two dozen SSA processes identified. The work group would be responsible for developing, enabling, testing and implementing all efforts involving these processes.

Freed set and oversaw the ground rules for developing new SSA processes, gaining approval for them, and establishing documentation tools and standards. To manage this effort, Freed established guidelines for process design and development, created a process testing and validating toolkit and coordinated proof-of-concept partner testing and remediation.

Over several months, as process development progressed and neared completion, Freed facilitated agreement and sign-off on final SSA process workflows and documentation, in conjunction with the process owners, and developed all corresponding business requirements. Processes became operationalized according to a change management approach developed by Freed.

In addition to its foundational SSA process work, Freed also developed SSA training content validation tools. To aid with enterprise-wide communication about the SSA rollout, Freed supported ongoing marketing and communications, and developed and implemented a dedicated SSA web site and user guide.

Results and Conclusion

Ultimately, Freed helped the health care system identify two dozen foundational processes necessary for SSA success enterprise-wide and helped successfully implement more than 18 new SSA processes. These processes, instrumental for furthering user knowledge, understanding and use of the new SSA capability, covered such areas as user training and access, licensing and software, data governance and development and publishing.

Based on client and user input, Freed also developed standardized templates and forms to support user process workflows and SSA customer communication, as well as interactive tools for SSA users and a comprehensive SSA user guide. The new SSA web site features a "self-service" section designed to guide users through their use of SSA.

Overall, Freed’s work helped the health care system successfully launch its SSA initiative on-time and improved users’ understanding and application of SSA features and benefits related to their unique analytical needs. Equipped with its new SSA capabilities, the organization should now be more readily able to convert data into actions to improve care, reduce costs and enhance revenue opportunities.