

## Data Strategy Transforms National Client's Business Prospects



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### Introduction

The line “water, water everywhere, nor any drop to drink,” from Coleridge’s *“The Rime of the Ancient Mariner”*, could also roughly describe the dilemma of many health care organizations that are drowning in a sea of data, unable to consume its contents.

Consider the case of a national provider of physician services which was experiencing unprecedented, double-digit growth over the past 5 years. While this business success sounds great, the company was also swamped with waves of frequently changing, CMS-required quality-reporting metrics.

Concurrently, as the company shifted from a reporting-based to population health model of care, its leaders recognized that their business processes and IT systems and staff could not deliver on current needs or ambitious, transformational goals. The enterprise’s data strategy to transform business processes and IT systems – two years in the making – had hit a dead stop, due to imprecise internal data requirements that simply confused potential vendors. During this time, a series of different consulting firms engaged by the company had generated little progress.

Confronted with new regulatory reporting requirements and unable to execute on its new data strategy, the company turned to Freed Associates (Freed) to assist.

## Data Strategy Goals

In conjunction with the client, Freed helped identify the most pressing data strategy goals, including:

- **Creating a prioritized set of business requirements** – there were several executive stakeholders, but limited clarity on their requirements in alignment with the company’s business strategies
- **Improving data quality and governance processes** – there was a need to improve the company’s data governance and the extract-transfer-load (ETL) processes, which required a significant amount of technical resources to “cleanse” the data
- **Building an executable implementation strategy** – the company needed to build a sustainable governance structure (in which decisions would stick), an actionable request process for requirements, and identify implementation owners
- **Selecting a solution vendor for data analytics** – the company needed to develop a vendor RFP that included proper business requirements and a solution architecture roadmap

Essentially, the client’s initial desire to fix one pain point (its data strategy execution) evolved into Freed addressing and resolving at least four other client needs, as noted above. Owing to the depth, breadth and complexity of the client’s work and data needs, a multi-consultant Freed team divided the work strategy into these principal areas of focus:

- **Business work stream** – activities related to the company’s “go to market” strategy, proof of concept requirements and measurement, a company-aligned data program roadmap and ongoing corporate-level roadmap management
- **Site engagement work stream** – activities related to engagement with the client’s site leaders, business and IT executives, and data mapping, integrating and validating
- **Technical work stream** – activities related to technology, vendor selection and execution including data loading, cleaning, warehousing and analysis

## Tactics

Freed addressed all of the client’s goals during its engagement, and accomplished the following:

- **Developed prioritized requirements and a phased solution architecture roadmap** – these requirements, created and executed by Freed within the first 30 days of engagement, guided the company’s future technology

strategy

- **Developed an RFP to guide Phase 1 implementation** – identified and engaged Tier 1 and Tier 2 vendors in a competitive bid process within the second month of the engagement
- **Led vendor selection and negotiations** – based on vendors identified through the RFP process, Freed organized vendor selection and negotiations during the third month of engagement
- **Created a “go to market” strategy** – this included ways and means, including messaging and engagement collateral for business development, that the client could use its resources to deliver its unique value proposition to customers to achieve its data strategy

## Results

Freed consultants successfully partnered with the client to execute all of the strategies and tactics listed above, allowing our client to achieve its desired data strategy-related outcomes. This included developing an executable go-to-market plan, a multi-year execution roadmap and new processes to manage the project portfolio.

Critically, Freed successfully completed a 30/60/90-day assessment of the client’s data intake and management processes, which helped reduce load errors and reduced turnaround time by less than half.

All of these tasks were accomplished within 90 days. Additionally, our team helped the client reduce its projected contract cost for its chosen solution vendor to less than 25 percent of the vendor’s original bid. This allowed the client to save money and further deploy its new system.

## Conclusion

As often happens with successful consulting engagements, the client’s request for Freed to address a single pressing need evolved into us working together to resolve multiple other needs to meet the client’s expanded business demand.

Freed’s insight, experience and results catapulted the client to unexpected new levels of business success. Supported by our foundational data strategy efforts, the company is now well-positioned to successfully partner on data processes with its own clients, enjoy more mutually successful business relationships, and capitalize on its increased business demand.