



Avaya Optimizes Business using Informatica Data Quality

CONSIDER THE AVAYA DILEMMA

Imagine supporting data volumes equivalent to eight times the size of the Library of Congress. That was the scale of the task facing Avaya, one of the world's largest and most respected business communications technology companies. Avaya's formal data quality process entails using Informatica PowerCenter to integrate data of questionable, defective or unproven quality into the center's data warehouse – Avaya's third largest after its production databases – where quality issues can be analyzed and addressed.

A cutting-edge Data Quality Center of Excellence (COE)—underpinned by Informatica—is safeguarding and maximizing Avaya's investment in information assets, the COE has introduced a formal process and methodology that provides a proactive approach to data quality management. This method is founded on a value-driven approach that prioritizes efforts based on business benefits, optimizing Avaya's data quality investment, maximizing business impact, and ultimately leading to significant business improvements.

“In today's cost conscious business environment, Avaya is focused on streamlining business processes, eliminating waste, and maximizing return on their investments. By using Informatica within our Data Quality Center of Excellence, Avaya has access to the accurate information needed to achieve operational excellence.”

— Rich Trapp, Global Data Quality Director, Avaya

With the globe gripped by the most severe recession in generations, every communications technology company is looking at ways to improve operational efficiencies. So the fact that Avaya has been able to significantly optimize their revenue stream by using Informatica while retaining its extraordinarily high quality of service is a barn-storming performance by any measure. Businesses around the world use Avaya IP telephony, unified communications, contact center technologies and services. The company worked with Informatica to create a Data Quality Center of Excellence (COE), which is driving out defective data that drove up expenses and cut into revenue.

The journey to these savings can be traced back to the decision by Avaya some years ago to embark on a large SAP ERP and Siebel CRM re-architecture. Data quality was an intrinsic ingredient of this mix, and the company needed to ensure that the legacy ERP and CRM data had a sufficient level of integrity before it was migrated to the new architecture. However, like many companies, these legacy systems were fundamentally hamstrung by poor quality data.

Rich Trapp, Avaya's global data quality director, was there from the start and saw the problems first hand. “Initially many people saw the problem as simply being defective address data and duplicate customer records, but we knew it was much more complex and deep-rooted than that,” he explains. “The solution we used at the time satisfied the requirement for standardizing addresses, identifying duplicates or correcting invalid values. However, we were more concerned with the more complex data integrity issues – created over time by flaws in system and business transaction processing that led to incorrect customer asset records and erroneous service agreements.”

Data Quality is an Integral Component of Avaya's Business Functions and Initiatives

For Rich Trapp and his team at Avaya, data quality is the fourth operating dimension within the business landscape. IT investments have traditionally recognized three critical dimensions—people, processes, and technology—with data typically classified in the technology dimension. For Avaya however, data quality is an integral component of business functions and initiatives. “Many people assume that Information Technology (IT) is caring for data quality, and IT in turn assumes that the business process owners—who might use price data to quote a solution, for example—are taking care of data quality. In reality, it falls between the two and is easily forgotten about; which is why we believe that data quality is the next frontier in business optimization. It was this mindset that has allowed us to deliver significant business benefits through improved data quality,” he says.

Informatica was chosen to support this COE for several reasons. The rich functionality of the solution portfolio—its data analysis, cleansing, matching, and reporting and monitoring capabilities—were all persuasive factors. But it was the software's ease of use, scalability, and support for all master data types which made the difference. “We looked at solutions from other companies, but Informatica is generally considered the market leader in data integration and data quality, and our evaluation vindicated that,” says Rich Trapp.

The Avaya COE—underpinned by Informatica Data Quality® and Informatica Data Explorer®—supports more than 400 applications and databases. The amount of data it manages is, according to Rich Trapp, “equivalent to about eight times the size of the Library of Congress.” In fact, it spans more than 150 terabytes of customer, vendor, service, financial, and pricing data. The center's 36 data quality specialists rely on the two solutions to fulfill the COE's comprehensive 478 step process for data quality across six key data types: customer, vendor, pricing, product, finance and Human Resources (HR). Informatica Data Explorer is used upfront in what is called the ‘catalog phase’ to understand the content and structure of the enterprise data in the COE.

“Data Explorer is an integral part of gathering the data landscape,” says Rich Trapp. “It answers questions like ‘what are the data structures that are associated with in scope data? ‘What is the general health of this data? ‘What other data sources may we need to connect to’? Thereafter, Data Explorer is used for profiling the data, understanding frequency distributions’ usage levels and whether there is a prescribed list of attributes for a particular data element. We establish instant credibility with the user community when we gather that sort of data as it lays the groundwork for the assessments we do later on.”

Informatica Data Quality Delivered Savings as a Result of Correcting Billing Addresses

Informatica Data Quality helps design, build, and manage the over-arching data quality program, including the implementation of data quality rules as batch processes and the creation of reports and dashboards to confirm data quality improvements. It gives the Avaya team the flexibility to view, edit, and review low-quality records before they are written to the target; use business rules and reference data to analyze and rank data according to issues such as completeness, conformity, consistency, duplication, and accuracy; and cleanse and standardize all Avaya data types.

The results have been almost immediate. “Informatica Data Quality identified and corrected billing addresses for invoices that were not being delivered to the end customer in a timely fashion,” said Trapp. “By billing the right people more quickly and more effectively, we avoid the process inefficiencies, duplicate postage costs and delayed cashflow that were associated with this issue.”

Avaya’s Data Quality COE also established a Data Quality Governance Council that lays out the roles, responsibilities and accountabilities for establishing and sustaining optimal data quality level. Comprising data object owners, data stewards, and data guardians from across the business, the Governance Council ensures data is managed as a valued asset. It also helps make data quality universally visible throughout the organization and instills confidence that data is accurate. “The Data Quality Governance Council provides the authority and visibility for our data quality efforts,” Trapp says, “and clear and unambiguous data ownership and accountability are integral to Avaya achieving desired levels of data quality.”

Maintenance Revenue Optimization Saves Significant Amounts of Money

The lion’s share of the business improvement that Avaya has realized is in ‘Maintenance Revenue Optimization’. This program breaks down into three areas. In the first instance, the unified Informatica platform is helping to drive data quality management practices in ‘Customer Asset Revitalization’. Put simply, this is focused on more carefully aligning the specific Avaya products and services the customer is using against what they are contracted to use.

Second, Informatica is helping to revitalize pricing. This involves the multi-year progressive migration of customers from obsolete, non-standard schedules back to standard pricing models, based on a more accurate view of their situation. The third area where Informatica adds core value is around billing integrity. This helps the team identify areas where Avaya is not billing for services delivered.

With all this success, it’s not surprising to find that the COE is growing 42 percent year-on-year as demand for the services continues to rise. “Avaya is no different than any organizations right now: we’re facing a challenging business climate. Our three key objectives are customer satisfaction, revenue optimization, and EBITDA (earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortization). Informatica supports our delivery against all three of these,” Rich Trapp concludes.

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FAST FACTS

BUSINESS INITIATIVES

- Help the firm compete effectively in a competitive, challenging communications technology market
- Optimize customer satisfaction, revenue optimization, and EBITDA (earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortization)

TECHNOLOGY STRATEGY

- Support a Data Quality Center of Excellence to safeguard and maximize Avaya's investment in information assets
- Implement a formal process that provides a proactive approach to data quality management
- Prioritize efforts based on business benefits and criticality

BENEFITS

- Saved the company a significant amount of money in maintenance revenue optimization
- Delivered a 2,000 percent return on investment
- Delivered a benefit of \$2 million as a result of correcting billing addresses that were not making their way to the end customer
- Helped drive revenue optimization and EBITDA
- Fulfilled 478 step process for data quality across six key data types: customer, vendor, pricing, product, finance and HR
- Introduced data quality rules and dashboards to confirm data quality improvements
- Provided the linchpin for Avaya's Data Quality Governance Council
- Helped ensure customers were invoiced for the specific products and services within their contract
- Used to revitalize pricing and migrate customers from out-of-standard pricing back to standard pricing
- Identified areas where charges should be applied and weren't
- Instrumental factor in the Center of Excellence growing 42 percent year-on-year

NUTS AND BOLTS

- Data Integration: Informatica Data Explorer and Informatica Data Quality
- Sources: Over 400 applications and databases

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