

Michigan State University, University Advancement



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- Monique Dozier, Assistant Vice President of Advancement Information Systems and Donor Strategy, Michigan State University, Office of University Advancement

Data Quality and Governance Strategies

Michigan State University (MSU) has a long history of pioneering spirit, especially when it comes to fundraising to support innovative and diverse educational opportunities. The first university in the United States to receive a land grant—state-owned land to fund its creation—MSU was also the first to teach scientific agriculture and offer practical education to working-class students.

This far-sighted wisdom has helped MSU grow into one of the largest universities in the nation, with a living alumni base of more than 500,000. It is one of the world’s most powerful alumni networks, with a large percentage of graduates giving back to the university to provide scholarships and opportunities that help make it possible for the next generation to contribute to the world.

Enabling more strategic advancement efforts

MSU’s Office of University Advancement works to build lasting relationships with

alumni, friends, and donors, providing information systems, communications, marketing, and event support for all college and university sanctioned advancement efforts. It is the steward of alumni and donor data, which it uses to determine their capacity to give and stay involved.

“Data is the center of our universe,” says Monique Dozier, Assistant Vice President of Advancement Information Systems and Donor Strategy, Michigan State University, Office of University Advancement. “We can’t effectively engage alumni or raise funds without good, solid, and robust information on our constituency.”

More than 100 gift officers rely on data from 47 source systems—from on-premises mainframes to off-premises sources such as LexisNexis and social media—to inform their fundraising and engagement efforts. Key metrics include wealth indicators, past gift amounts and frequency, the number of alumni attending university events, Net Promoter scores, and donor retention year-over-year.

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY | University Advancement

Business Needs:

- Empower gift and engagement officers to be more strategic and effective
- Modernize information and systematic data to engage with a focus on business value and measurable key performance indicators

Data Challenges:

- Establish a single version of the truth by integrating data from 47 source systems
- Improve data quality for better analytics
- Minimize human intervention and manual data review processes

Solution:

- Informatica PowerCenter, Data Quality, and Data Integration Hub provide a consolidated, holistic view of alumni capacity to donate their time, talents, and financial assistance.

Results:

- Enabling gift and engagement officers with quality information to achieve their goals
- Measuring Key Performance Data Quality Indicator Scorecards and Profiles
- Building in-house talent and reducing vendor dependency
- Able to be more efficient and agile with staff resources

Inside the Solution:

- Informatica Data Integration Hub
- Informatica Data Quality with integrated Business Glossary
- Informatica PowerCenter

To keep data quality high, MSU Advancement relied on a 20-person team of programmers, data entry, and data integrity staff working full-time to unify data from the fragmented source systems. Even with ongoing manual labor, it was difficult to establish a single source of the truth. Gift and engagement officers often had to base decisions on data that was at least a week old, and relied on programmers to build customized reports or extractions so they could consume the data effectively. Adding new source systems could take laborious months, hampering university efforts to move away from legacy, mainframe-based systems and adopt best-of-breed applications and cloud services.

"To empower our gift and engagement officers to be more effective and strategic while modernizing our systems, we needed a better data management strategy," says Dozier. "Our technical team is great, but the time it took to bring reliable data to the end users was just too long."

Moving to a modern data hub architecture

MSU Advancement began looking for a solution that would enable it to improve data quality and implement a self-service hub architecture for any size and type of data, whether on-premises or in the cloud. After evaluating available solutions, it chose Informatica Data Integration Hub coupled with Informatica Data Quality and PowerCenter.

"We saw that Informatica earned the highest ratings in the Gartner Magic Quadrant for Data Integration Tools," says Dozier. "But the game-changer for us was the Data Integration Hub, because it allows us to move away from having one-

to-one relationships with our transactional systems. We can be more agile and send data back to the source systems to cleanse it without manual intervention."

MSU Advancement worked with Eccella, an NGDATA company and Informatica partner, to implement the Informatica solutions and decouple data sources from destinations through a publish/subscribe model. "We were very pleased with Eccella," says Dozier. "The team helped us define our architecture and kept the project moving as we were learning and maturing."

Saving time and money with better data management

By centralizing data management, monitoring, and control, the MSU Advancement was able to reorganize its technical staff from a team of tactical programmers to one that is strategically focused on supporting and enabling end users. "Informatica helped them transform their jobs from sitting behind computers all day to actively engaging with gift officers to help them be more effective," says Dozier.

With more in-house capabilities, MSU reduced consulting costs as well as the amount it spends acquiring information from outside sources. "We're saving at least six figures a year because of what we can do with our Informatica tools," says Dozier. "We can segment our audience more precisely and be more strategic with our investments."

Strong data modeling for the future

Adding new source systems is now much easier, as each system is simply

another endpoint feeding into the hub. MSU Advancement can deploy and integrate new systems quickly, adopt best-of-breed technologies, and benefit from modern cloud applications. As MSU Advancement moves toward a hybrid architecture, it can seamlessly move data between cloud and on-premises systems and connect to Hadoop for Big Data management.

"Informatica allows us to dream big and modernize our advancement systems while still bringing in the valuable data stored in our legacy mainframe environment," says Dozier. "We could not have envisioned charting this journey without the foundation of the strong data modeling architecture we have with Informatica."

Closing in on a \$1.5 billion goal

Since choosing Informatica, the quality of the data MSU Advancement receives from other source systems has improved, enabling the team to be more focused on its fundraising campaign goal of \$1.5 billion. "Our users are thrilled with our strategic focus on data quality thanks to Informatica. We have positioned ourselves as a transformational team whereby we are not only enriching the accuracy of our reports but we are also changing the conversation from purely about the output to descriptive, prescriptive, and predictive of our engagement and fundraising outcomes. Game-changer," remarks Dozier. "We're 98 percent there, and Informatica is helping us streamline the home stretch by improving our data quality and visibility into KPIs. We're very excited about our next journey."

About Michigan State University

Michigan State University is a public research university in East Lansing, Michigan, founded in 1855. The nation's pioneer land-grant university, MSU is an R1: Doctoral university, indicating the highest level of research activity. MSU frequently ranks among the top 30 public universities in the United States and the top 100 research universities in the world.



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