

## Australia's Tourism Queensland Maximizes Business with Web-based "Decision Dashboard"

*Cutting-edge solution based on PopChart™ platform from CORDA Technologies*

### Background:

Known as Australia's sunshine state, Queensland Australia is home to the Great Barrier Reef, world-class beaches and the Outback. It's no wonder more than 23 million people a year visit Queensland, and those visitors drop about \$14 billion into the economy.

Who is responsible for attracting these visitors? Tourism Queensland.

With about 500 employees, Tourism Queensland is a marketing organization designed to promote Queensland, Australia as a travel and holiday destination. To that end, TQ has a for-profit commercial division called Sunlover Holidays, which is the largest ground-based travel wholesaler in the country and winner of the National Travel Industry Awards - Wholesaler Of The Year for 2002. Within TQ, the commercial division also operates a retail travel chain called the Queensland Travel Centres. Sunlover Holidays works with accommodation and tour operators to promote their business directly to consumers as well as to large travel agencies throughout Australia and New Zealand.

Tourism Queensland has been a statutory authority of the Queensland Government Since 1980. As part of Queensland's Smart State initiative, TQ is the most progressive destination marketing and development organization in Australia.

Barry Moore is Director of E-Commerce for the commercial division of Tourism Queensland. It was his responsibility to update the e-commerce systems they use to sell holiday packages online and also streamline their internal business systems to make them more efficient.



### Challenge: Visualizing sales data

"We have a very large call center where the sales staff is judged and rewarded on several performance criteria," Moore said. "In the past, performance reports needed to be compiled by hand and distributed to the appropriate staff and managers as PDFs or other office documents. This process was slow and cumbersome and resulted in a very high workload for the reporting staff and extended turn around times for some reports."

Management decided TQ needed a reporting solution that would allow the staff and managers access to information about the performance of individuals as well as the performance of the business as a whole in real-time via a browser. Such a solution would allow staff to see relevant information for any specified period of time whenever they wished. Moore also wanted a solution that would reduce the workload on the reporting staff, allowing them to focus on other tasks.

### Solution: Decision Dashboard

"We chose to use PopChart™ from Corda Technologies as the graphing solution for a Web-based Decision Dashboard," Moore said.

A Decision Dashboard in this case somewhat resembles the dashboard on a car. It organizes and presents information in a way that is easy to read and understand. Dashboards offer a simple graphical presentation of diverse data that can also drill down on underlying information. Charts and graphs can be compared to a speedometer in a car; they provide a quick assessment of a single item by indicating whether the measured function is within set parameters.

The Decision Dashboard provides a powerful way of monitoring the performance of individuals or entire organizations in real time by visualizing that data through the use of charts, graphs and maps. Representing performance data with a Decision Dashboard lets executives and managers quickly identify trends and locate exceptions to those trends.

"For example, an individual staff member (or manager) can now go to the Web and pull up their own dashboard. They can see where their sales performance is in relation to their weekly or monthly goals. They also have the ability to check every day the commission they will be receiving for those sales. This instant access to information has proven to be a major motivational tool for the sales staff," Moore said.

TQ's sales and management staff now have immediate access to the information they need. Previously, they would have had to submit a report request to the reporting staff. The reporting staff would then have to prioritize the requests and compile the reports, which in some cases took several days. Today, the sales and management staff can look at the data whenever they like. They can even customize the date ranges for the reports to the period that best suits them.

"There are no longer hundreds of office documents flying around the network taking up bandwidth and storage space in people's email boxes. In addition, now the reporting staff has time to get to reports and analysis they never had time to compile in the past," Moore said

TQ developed a security model, which is tied into Windows 2000 active directory. The system is set up to make sure that the right people have access to the appropriate reports. Directors can see the whole business; Managers can see their business units; team leaders can see their teams; and individuals can view their own performance.

The sales staff can now see how they stand against their current sales targets rather than having to wait until the end of the month. In addition, management staff can see many of the key performance indicators of the business conveniently in one place on the dashboard.

### How it works

The dashboard solution was built using ColdFusion and PopChart. The system pulls sales data from TQ's mainframe overnight. The data is automatically put into a MS SQL server database and massaged to make the reporting easier. Then a scheduled task is run to create and cache frequently used reports so that they are ready and waiting when the users arrive in the morning.



"In about two months we put together a pilot system, which was wildly successful with the sales staff." Moore said, "There would be a mutiny if we took it away from them."

The burden on the IT infrastructure is reduced due to the fact that TQ no longer has hundreds of office documents and reports circulating in the email system and old daily reports are no longer adding to the clutter on the networks disk storage.

"PopChart is very much a fire and forget type of solution. We were able to get our system up and running very quickly due to the compatibility and ease of use of the product. We haven't had to touch the Pop Chart server since we launched the system," He said.

### Value of real-time reporting

Real-time reporting allows sales staff to get a greater indication of how they are performing against set targets and the managers can see trouble spots in the business and take corrective action as it is happening. This allows TQ to maximize its sales and better serve its customers.

"We've found that running the business using real-time data allows us to be more flexible and responsive which hopefully translates into an edge over the competition. I can see future demands for this information at any time on any platform," he said.

### Future Trends

"Since we are in the travel industry we have a strong need for maps and mapping solutions," Moore continued. "Judging by the ease of use of PopChart, we'll be taking a close look at Corda's OptiMap dynamic mapping platform as well."

If the current trend is an indication, Moore's organization is poised to do well. As its graphing software clearly illustrates, Tourism Queensland is on a definite rise.