Spotlight On
RAY WHITE

Ray White™

NATHAN KRISANSKI, SENIOR ANALYST, FINANCE & ANALYTICS

Ray White is a household name in Australia and New Zealand, a name synonymous with the property and real estate industry, home loans and mortgages and insurance. As a 110-year-old family-owned business, the residential real estate firm employs 10,000 agents across 1,000 offices. Nathan Krisanski, a senior analyst at Ray White sat down with us at the 2012 Tableau European Customer Conference to discuss how Tableau is helping the real estate giant create better agents and more satisfied clients by generating externally-facing reports for their agents based on over 40 million rows of data.

TABLEAU:
What is Ray White's business?

NATHAN:
Ray White is the largest real estate company in Australia. We sell one in every 10 houses across Australia and New Zealand. We specialize in residential property, primarily auctions, but we also work with commercial property management and a whole range of financial services.

TABLEAU:
Who at Ray White uses Tableau and how?

NATHAN:
Approximately 1000 business owners use Tableau Server to access everything from our key KPI market share to salesperson performance and overall office performance in their market.

Our 10,000 salespeople receive their own sales information, and can compare themselves year-on-year and analyze their own KPIs in Tableau. With better information about themselves and their offices, agents can then provide that information to their consumers, making them better agents overall.

TABLEAU:
How do you see metrics making Ray White more strategic as a company?

NATHAN:
Our key KPI at Ray White is market share. We're constantly striving to improve through more offices or more productive offices. Customizing data for consumers makes our offices better, and subsequently improves market share. Tableau is also a great recruitment tool, as we can tell people outside of our network that if they come to Ray White, they'll have access to this tool and be better off for it.

TABLEAU:
How are metrics affecting interactions between agents and sellers?

NATHAN:
If you're looking to sell your house, three agents may try to convince you they're the best to sell your property—but each presents you with the same report from the same external company, only the logo's changed. We've re-molded the data and prepared it in a unique way. Our reports use Tableau's quality visualizations that are a real point of differentiation for our agents in the marketplace.

TABLEAU:
Your agents access this data using a web browser?

NATHAN:
For Tableau to be successful in our network, we really needed to have a web interface to access it. No one was interested in downloading software. Tableau is integrated with our intranet, so using trusted authentication, they go straight from our intranet into the different reports that we publish for them. We've also got links between different dashboards, giving them direct access to dive into more information and more data around their own office or themselves.

TABLEAU:

Do agents require training?

NATHAN:

We offer very limited training for Tableau Server because we rely on the design of our dashboards to make it easy and simple to use. We also incorporate tool tips onto the side of our dashboards to make it easy to understand some of the graphs.

TABLEAU:

Are the dashboards easy to use?

NATHAN:

Generally speaking, real estate agents aren't terribly analytical, so they needed their information to be easy to use and easy to find. To get adoption through the network, we needed their information to be there for them at the start so they didn't have to go digging for it.

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"Our users were not going to be interested in downloading software. "

TABLEAU:

What is the response from the agents?

NATHAN:

The agents love it. The only feedback I get is "When can we have new templates?" They like to have new styles that can give their documents a fresh look and a fresh feel. So, if that's the hardest part of my job—keeping up with all the requests that come through for new changes—I can't complain.

TABLEAU:

Can you walk us through the flow of accessing Tableau data?

NATHAN:

Our corporate staff and business owners generally access the Tableau Server directly to see interactive visualizations in a browser. From the intranet, they access their "analytics page"—that's just our term for accessing the Tableau information or the server report for their office.

They'll scroll through a 3-page visualization or dashboard that gives a summary of the different areas within their business. And they can click on any graph to go into a more detailed report about that particular area—everything from market share to the performance of their salespeople.

TABLEAU:

And you've built a tool for agents to customize reports?

NATHAN:

Yes, we utilize a custom layer built over the top of Tableau Server, called the Document Builder—which is by far our most-used IT system in the entire company. With upwards of 98 percent adoption, this system generates up to 500 documents on any given day that are individual for any salesperson in any suburb or area in the entire country.

TABLEAU:

Who is the audience for those documents?

NATHAN:

Agents use them when they are out in the street talking to mom and dad who are looking to sell their house or investors who are looking to buy property in a certain area—people who want to know information about what the sales are doing in an area, what the demographics are, and other information like that.

TABLEAU:

What is the benefit of designing Document Builder to interact with Tableau?

NATHAN:

The real power in these documents is that it makes our salespeople look like the market experts in their area. Let me give you an example. One salesperson created a flyer for a market review document. He gave out 200 and had 20 requests for the document. Ten of those receiving the document asked for an appraisal—an amazing turnaround for marketing collateral. It was so successful because it wasn't about the agent or his about his successes; it was about relevant market information the consumers were interested in.

TABLEAU:

Tell us about the type of data you use in Tableau.

NATHAN:

It comes from a bunch of different sources. We use external data from individual state governments, and also the Australian Bureau of Statistics, which provides data updates regularly. We merge that then with our internal sales information and information about our people. So, combining those datasets is a job in itself, but Tableau makes it easy.

TABLEAU:

How big is the data and where is it stored?

NATHAN:

Our main data source is market sales information: number of sales and total dollar value by suburb for over 17,000 suburbs in Australia and New Zealand. Cut that up with dimensions like time and property type, and we end up with over 40 million rows of data—all being pulled into pie charts that are overlaid over a map.

External sales information from the different governments comes to us monthly, and is loaded manually into a SQL database and merged with our internal systems. Those systems are updated every night. So, the following day our people have access to the latest information that we can give them.

Tableau Software helps people see and understand data.
To learn more visit http://www.tableausoftware.com