

Case Study



CHALLENGE

As it decided whether to invest in a new multi-million dollar development project, Tyco Water Asia needed to design a customer survey that would:

- Deliver a professional image to customers as they worked through it with Tyco's sales team
- Reduce the risk of bias through a standardized, automated approach and questions ensuring consistency across Tyco's customer base
- Gather detailed survey data for further analysis by Tyco's team

RESULTS

- Excel-based questionnaire, with navigation allowing targeted questioning based on previous answers
- Automated data collection delivering highly relevant, in-depth survey data
- Project dashboard allowing analysts to drill down into data for detailed market understanding

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Tyco Water Asia, part of US Fortune 500 company Tyco International, and a leading supplier of systems for the water industry, faced a challenge. As it considered whether to invest in a large scale, multi-million dollar development project, it needed to understand whether the project would meet its customers' future needs.

However, says Ian Jacob, Tyco's Managing Director, collecting the data necessary to make a decision was not straightforward. "We simply couldn't get the detailed data we needed – it's just not available," he says. "We could have commissioned a company to go and get it, but that probably wasn't the best solution for us because it needed to be very targeted."

So, he says, the Tyco team decided to develop its own survey. By carrying out the survey in-house, and having his team collect data from customers directly, Jacob believed that Tyco would benefit from a more targeted approach.



But even then, he knew the survey's design would be critical to its success. "I was concerned about the outcome, because we could have had a whole lot of sales people out collecting data, and if they didn't get the content right, the answers would be meaningless," he says. To avoid this, realized Jacob, "it was really important to have a standardized questionnaire."

As he considered the best approach, Jacob had a conversation with Jeremy Artan, Managing Director of iExcel Consulting, about Tyco's plans. Until then, he says, he did not know about the functionality a tailored Excel solution could provide. "I knew Jeremy and I knew he had some skills in that area," remembers Jacob. "But until he started to explain to me what they could do, I didn't really understand that you could actually do what they did in Excel. I didn't know it was possible."

Artan agrees that Excel's capabilities are more impressive than most businesses realize. "Excel has developed into a robust application, capable of handling several users and external data sources," he says. "Yet it is still fully flexible. Too often, companies are stuck with big off-the-shelf software that only partly works for them. Excel software has no limits and continues to evolve as a company grows."

The Tyco team had started work on a standard series of questions for its sales team to work through with customers. But there were still risks: the data gathering exercise might lack the professional image provided by an outside company; the data could suffer from bias if collected by customer-facing sales teams; the project

would use up valuable time and resources; and the final data would have limited reporting features.

Most importantly, says Jacob, if the data was not accurate enough, Tyco risked making the wrong investment decision. So, impressed with Artan's approach, Jacob appointed iExcel to develop a tailored Excel-based questionnaire. Tyco provided iExcel with its list of survey questions, and asked it to design an efficient Excel-based platform to help move customers quickly through the survey.

Tyco specified that the questionnaire should look professional and be easy to navigate; questions should be mandatory and appear automatically based on previous answers; and all the data should be collected in a single database to provide flexibility when assessing the results.

Even then, says Jacob, used to working with regional suppliers who often had to revisit projects several times before their solutions met Tyco's needs, "I didn't know what sort of outcome we would get from iExcel."

But he found the process pleasantly straightforward. "I gave them an indication of what we were looking for; we gave them the data; and then they came back with the solution and it was already 99% done," he says. "They delivered us that solution very quickly, and there was virtually no tweaking in it. We changed some questions, but other than that it was great."

"The solution was outstanding. The dashboard that we got – we'll be using that for the next three or four years on this project."

Not only did the platform iExcel designed do exactly what it was meant to, says Jacob, but it will continue to be useful for Tyco beyond the survey for which it was built. "The solution was outstanding," he says. "The dashboard that we got – we'll be using that for the next three or four years on this project."

iExcel's dashboard has been particularly effective, he believes, because of the depth of data it can provide. "It allows us to keep going back and looking in a very efficient way at what the data was and how it applied," he says. "Their solution allows us to drill down into the data and see specifically who it came from. We can analyze it by region; by customer; by customer type – all of those things. So, it's a very, very efficient way of analyzing a lot of data."

Another advantage of working with iExcel, believes Jacob, was the commercial approach the team brought to the project. "The main benefit was their ability to understand what we wanted and then deliver it," he says. "They have a pretty good commercial sense of what needs to be done, and an ability to grasp our requirements. I just think we got an output that we could not have got from another local company."

iExcel's Artan is proud of his team's commercial attitude. "Most of our employees have grown their skills through roles as analysts or strategists," he says. "This provides them with a business understanding and business approach that most IT people lack. As a result, our solutions not only work, but they fully integrate within our client's business."

The dashboard that iExcel produced for Tyco, reflects Jacob, "did exactly what we wanted." And, impressed by the project, he expects Tyco to work with iExcel again in the near future. "We've shown it to other people within the business," he says, "and some of them want to do similar things. Like me, they also didn't understand that you could actually do this in Excel."

iExcel Services



EXCEL PROGRAMMING

- Hours of work converted into clicks
- User-friendly systems and dashboards

ACCESSIBLE DATA

- Systematically collected
- Visual and easy to access

SECURE SOLUTION

- Automation almost eliminates human error factor
- Restricted access based on username and password

SYSTEM BENEFITS

Excel-based applications offer:

- Maximum flexibility for further developments
- Customized solutions that respond to specific business needs
- Ability to work on a widely-used and recognized platform

FOR MORE INFORMATION



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