

Streamlining IT for Growth



Enabling the world's largest media investment group

In today's intricate IT environment, Avanade worked with GroupM to provide a solution that would address their application development, infrastructure and talent resource demands

Business Situation

Founded in 2003 as part of the WPP Group, GroupM is the world's number one media investment management group in terms of billings. Today, GroupM's success and track record has seen it grow to 400 offices in 81 countries around the world with global staff strength of over 20,000. The group counts Maxus, MEC, MediaCom and Mindshare as its family of agencies.

As the parent company, GroupM offers clients, advertising media selection services such as media planning and buying, content creation, digital media, ROI and consumer research, internet marketing, and social media marketing through its agencies. While the agencies that comprise GroupM are all global operations in their own right with leading market positions, GroupM's primary focus is to maximise the performance of its agencies and lead collaboration in performance enhancing activities such as trading, content creation, digital, finance, proprietary tool development and other business-critical capabilities.

As a truly global business operating in multiple markets, GroupM was faced with a wide variety of system needs and applications to cope with these multi-market complexities. These development requirements were managed by the in-house development centers in Guangzhou and Shanghai. However, with new enhancements being released every 3 to 4 months based on an ever increasing number of user requests, the task was becoming increasingly complex and costly. In addition, the situation was compounded in today's intricate IT environment with increased demand and expectations from users. "From an internal resourcing perspective, we faced issues in retaining and attracting top talent to support our business' growth and this impacted our speed to develop and roll-out urgent enhancements," said Matt Robinson, Chief Information Officer, Asia Pacific, GroupM.

The Avanade Solution

Avanade, an existing partner that has helped GroupM manage its IT intricacies across the world, recognised and understood the complex requirements in the multi-market development model. "Looking at the challenges that GroupM was facing, it became clear that the approach should be focused around adopting and implementing a standard methodology and process for the various application developments," said Darrell Ryman Senior Vice President, Avanade Greater China. Beyond the current application development, there was also a need to implement a new IT architecture that could support the business applications into the future.

"Avanade has been a long-term partner with a strong track record in developing solutions to aid our business. Beyond the IT infrastructure, they recognized our unique resourcing challenge and provided an outsourcing solution with onsite staff to assist with the application developments," said Robinson.

Together with an initial team of around 20 Avanade dedicated software engineers onsite, GroupM began implementing a streamlined approach to support the development and deployment of their current business application using the Avanade Connected Methods (ACM) - a powerful methodology that provides a common set of repeatable methods, processes, and tools that guide and accelerate the delivery of solutions.

The solution enables a foundation to develop GroupM's business applications into the future." Availability of expert resources is critical for any IT implementation, and in working with GroupM, Avanade provided an easy and seamless transition with the IT infrastructure and for end-users," commented Ryman.

Business Benefits

With 39 Avanade software engineers on-site, GroupM is now enabled to better develop and update the in-house applications which support multiple markets using the new process and solution. With several successful projects already completed, the development of applications for the business has become an advantage instead of a problem for the team.

"Working with our team, Avanade has helped us improve the speed of transactions by developing a new backend architecture which we apply to all of our applications. Beyond speed, the quality of development has increased immeasurably with shorter release cycles, providing updates much needed by our end-users," said Robinson.

"We're really pleased that our solution has benefited GroupM and they are able to see the instant success of their investment. With the Avanade approach, the team is now able to simplify the development and streamline the foundation architecture for every business application," said Ryman.

The partnership with Avanade will continue as the outsourcing solution, with onsite staff to assist with the development, design and testing of the new releases, new enchantments and new functionalities, scales according to GroupM's requirements.

"In Asia Pacific where the different market landscape and needs can be quite challenging, Avanade has become a trusted partner. They understand our business and they continue to offer advice and solutions that keep our systems in tune with our operations. Partnering with Avanade has helped resolve our critical issues of quality of development and staff resourcing. Today, we're really proud of our achievements and we look forward to continuing our momentum in partnership with Avanade," said Robinson.

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About Avanade

Avanade provides business technology services that connect insight, innovation and expertise in Microsoft® technologies to help customers realize results. Avanade's services and solutions help improve performance, productivity and sales for organizations in all industries. Additional information can be found at www.avanade.com.

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