

## Case Study

# William Hill Australia bets on digital with Avanade

### About William Hill

Employing more than 16,000 people globally, William Hill has one of the most recognised, respected and trusted brands in the gaming and entertainment industry.

Australia is among the fastest growing online betting markets worldwide. William Hill has established itself as the second largest corporate bookmaker in Australia after acquiring Sportingbet in March 2013 and tomwaterhouse.com in August 2013, building on the success of Centrebet, which in 1996 was the first licensed bookmaker in the Southern Hemisphere to offer online sports betting. Through [Centrebet](#), [Tom Waterhouse](#) and now its own [William Hill](#) brand, William Hill Australia offers a wide range of sports betting products to Australian customers via telephone and digital platforms.

### Business Situation

William Hill Australia (WHA) was challenged to unify the technology platforms and processes of three companies at different stages of maturity. When Rob James joined WHA

as director of IT, the primary objectives of the technology transformation program he initiated were to consolidate the systems of Sportingbet (now rebranded as William Hill), Centrebet and tomwaterhouse.com onto a single platform and establish a new web presence to differentiate WHA in the highly competitive online gaming and entertainment industry.

Compounding the complexity of this challenge, the majority of WHA's application development and maintenance work was outsourced to non-strategic partners that operated in silos and lacked process rigour. To achieve the objectives of the IT transformation program, James recognised the need to insource the intellectual property from these third parties and build WHA's own capabilities.

"We wanted to internalise our application development, but we were a long way from capable," James says. "Hiring the right capability internally takes time, so we knew we needed to find a strategic partner for our transformation program."

### Avanade's Solution

As a digital business, a priority of the IT transformation program was to build a sustainable web platform to support WHA's key focus areas for 2015 and beyond. To expedite the consolidation of its platforms and stay at the forefront of innovation as internal expertise was built, WHA engaged Avanade to provide managed services.

"Innovation is part of our DNA and with Avanade, I know the resources are the best I can get," James says. "The quality of people and expertise at Avanade provided the right skills and cultural fit for our business."

From the outset, the Avanade and WHA teams have operated as one, which has enabled WHA to realise results faster.

"The value of Avanade people is that they are able to understand the problem and have the expertise to solve," James says. He cites the example of an integration issue that occurred on one of the busiest days on the Australian sports betting calendar, which Avanade was able to solve when no one else could, even Microsoft.



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"The other value of Avanade is the capacity to find a problem we didn't know we had and solve it," adds James, explaining that Avanade has helped WHA launch an innovative click-to-call functionality that makes it easy for online customers to place bets over the phone during an event. (Regulations forbid bets being placed online once an event has commenced.)

Another key deliverable of WHA's IT transformation program was to migrate from the bespoke system that ran most of its business operations processes because it was too niche to be useful to the majority of employees. WHA conducted a preliminary evaluation of 11 customer relationship management (CRM) platforms, narrowing the list to four that then went through a product and platform request for quote (RFQ) process. WHA chose the Microsoft Dynamics platform, with Avanade as its implementation partner. James notes that the decision on a preferred CRM solution was reinforced by the partner – it was not purely a technology decision.

Avanade has partnered with WHA on the following solutions: ASP.NET MVC, HTML / JS / CSS, App fabric caching, Git / Bamboo.NET RESTful Web Services, and Dynamics CRM 2013.

### Results Realised

According to James, the tight partnership of WHA and Avanade is driving unprecedented transparency, discipline and effectiveness in the development of applications, and has helped cut time-to-market cycles dramatically – moving from 'big day' to real-time releases. The new scalability of its web platform also made it possible for WHA to process 2 million+ transactions and maintain 100% up time on Melbourne Cup Day, the highest-revenue sporting event in Australia.

In addition, the new CRM platform has produced benefits, such as more efficient business operations and enhanced customer data security. Importantly, the solution has automated manual processes and improved access to information across the business. For example, WHA's sales teams now have real-time mobile access.

"Avanade has helped us implement a new Microsoft Dynamics solution that has fundamentally changed how we deal with all our customer interactions," James says.

Going forward, WHA will continue to partner with Avanade to transform to a digital workplace. As WHA continues to build technical capabilities internally, Avanade is providing more strategic counsel and other expertise to support WHA's transformation.

*"Avanade's flexible managed services and digital expertise in the Microsoft ecosystem help us maintain a rhythm of innovation that differentiates us in a highly competitive market."*

**– Rob James, Director of IT,  
William Hill Australia**



#### About Avanade

Avanade is the leading provider of innovative digital and cloud-enabling services, business solutions and design-led experiences, delivered through the power of people and the Microsoft ecosystem. Majority owned by Accenture, Avanade was founded in 2000 by Accenture LLP and Microsoft Corporation and has 29,000 professionals in 23 countries. Visit us at [www.avanade.com](http://www.avanade.com).

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