Affinity Federal Credit Union embraces self-service business Intelligence

Industry	Use case	Benefits	Key Product Components
CREDIT UNION	**SELF SERVICE BI, ANALYTICS, MODERNIZATION CLOUD MIGRATION**	**ENABLE SELF-SERVICE BI, INCREACE BUSINESS AGILITY**	**SNOWFLAKE, EXCEL, TABLEAU**

As a large member-owned credit union, Affinity Federal Credit Union (AFCU) has a forward-looking data team that prides itself on the ability to leverage newer technologies before much larger banks. They encountered AtScale in a search for analytics governance options to enable broader self service reporting across the organization.

AtScale worked with their team to provide a centralized source of consistent metrics, enabling their business analysts to access data with different tools and provide the guardrails needed to effectively access and analyze data. This was an alternative to relying on a Credit Union Service Organization (CUSO) to provide them with "analytics as a service" using their own data.

Working with AtScale, AFCU established a semantic layer for curated, trusted data that connects to their business intelligence and data visualization tools including Tableau and Excel. As a result, this credit union enabled "citizen data analysts" to make data-driven business decisions, empowering the entire organization to leverage data as a strategic asset.

CHALLENGE

Removing "human middleware" in analytics

Affinity Federal Credit Union — in the top 2% of credit unions by asset size — is continually looking for opportunities to better leverage their data assets to improve service to their more than 185,000 members.

Historically, they had been relying on legacy analytics infrastructure tools like ModelMax or Dundas BI. These solutions required too much manual effort — effectively requiring a layer of "human middleware" to operationalize data. It took too much time and effort to make informed, data-driven decisions.

AFCU had been partnered with a Credit Union Service Organization (CUSO) that provided analytics-as-a-service. This approach was both slow and uncontrollable, often getting in the way of decision making and making it difficult to grow internal understanding of data.

AFCU realized they couldn't remain reliant on an outsourced analytics team and legacy processes to unearth insights from their data. It was time to transition to a modern, self-service BI program to allow faster, databacked decision-making at scale.

SOLUTION

AtScale's Semantic Layer underwrites self-service BI

AFCU saw the importance of a semantic layer to establish analytics governance policies while establishing the level of flexibility needed to scale self service BI. A semantic layer would allow for unified data access across all stakeholders in their business, technical and otherwise.

AtScale was chosen as an independent semantic layer that enabled open connection to different BI platforms and different cloud services. This approach expanded access to data for both seasoned data scientists and to non-technical business users. By expanding data science programs, AFCU was able to incorporate advanced prescriptive and predictive analytics to their business, powering growth and smart decision-making.

Building out the right semantic layer strategy was important to enabling outcome-based decision-making and gaining leverage from a treasure trove of customer and financial data. The AFCU team was able to leverage a flexible modeling environment to build views of raw data that addressed a wider range of business needs. The ability to quickly create new views of data, without relying on complex ETL, enabled the team to more rapidly iterate analytics.

AFCU was able to harness the power of dimensional modeling with AtScale, standardizing dimensions, hierarchies, and attributes to present a unified set of data regardless of the analytics toolset being used to access. By shielding users from the complexity of data wrangling and engineering, this organization has given their internal teams a leg up and made self-service BI a reality.

RESULTS

More for your money: Self-service BI in action

By applying AtScale's semantic layer, this organization gained the ability to manage data models, calculations, dimension definitions, access controls, and governance in a single location — all integrated with business tools like Excel and Tableau. This ultimately allows the team to understand their customers better and provide better services and products based on meaningful data.

Improved business outcomes are a natural consequence of applying a semantic layer, and the organization's citizen data scientists benefit from being able to do their jobs more effectively with self-service BI.

AtScale plays a very heavy role in our overall data program," said John A., VP of Data and Analytics at the credit union. "We're just now starting to deploy Tableau across most of our user base [thanks to AtScale], and we're seeing great value coming from that."

With a semantic layer, this organization is able to use business tools the team is already comfortable with to access deeper and more relevant insights, all while retaining autonomy and building up knowledge capital for the organization. This has a positive ripple effect throughout the entire organization, right down to their most important constituents, their members.

ABOUT ATSCALE

AtScale enables smarter decision-making by accelerating the flow of data-driven insights. The company's semantic layer platform simplifies, accelerates, and extends business intelligence and data science capabilities for enterprise customers across all industries. With AtScale, customers are empowered to democratize data, implement self-service BI and build a more agile analytics infrastructure for better, more impactful decision making. For more information, please visit www.atscale.com and follow us on LinkedIn, Twitter or Facebook.

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