Building a better South Africa with advanced analytics

By Kroshlen Moodley   16 Aug 2013

Declining tax revenues, requirements for maintaining high levels of service, unprecedented demands for increased efficiency, effectiveness, transparency and accountability - these are all challenges that government is facing today and the demands placed on it have never been higher as our society utilises the social platforms available to them to become more engaged, vocal and informed.

But how does government make the best possible use of the diminishing resources available to them to address these issues especially within such a vast, multi-layered and silo'ed tiers within the public sector? How does government make the decisions that will bring with it the intended national, regional and local impact South African citizens are demanding?

It's all in the information

Fortunately the answer also lies within the heart of this very complex public sector eco-system - its information. More importantly, information that can be brought together and mined for the deep insights and intelligence that will help government deliver on its key national outcomes. I am talking about information management that can consolidate government's data sources, and the use of predictive analytics to increase efficiencies, combat fraud and maximise public sector effectiveness for citizens. Or, as government calls it, a process of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation.

The use of analytics within the public domain has matured since the days when it was only used for reporting purposes. Most public sector agencies are still in the early stages of information management adoption and implementations, using historical data to report and influence decision making.

Get a better understanding

True analytics however can go beyond simply understanding the past towards guiding us in building the better future. It has the ability to shape strategies and influence policy-making, by allowing government to better understand, use and protect its data, regardless of volume, condition, state or location.

For example, by bringing together the information it has within various departments and agencies, government can make a significant and positive impact on improving performance, tracking expenditures and even focusing on areas of non-compliance.

From an internal audit point of view, processes that have relied on manually sifting through information can be simplified and updated through deploying evidence based decision making solutions, underpinned on strong analytical platforms.

This is the power of true analytics - not only making sense of the past, but also providing that crystal ball that will help government forecast and predict the challenges of tomorrow; transforming service delivery excellence within the public service.

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