CDATA

OFFICE DEPOT

Office Depot Leverages CData to 'Lift and Shift' Critical Data and Enable Analytics Integration

Out-of-the box connectivity
CData offered Office Depot a drop-in replacement for connectivity to their existing analytics cubes, with no custom development required.

Rapid time-to-value
Office Depot was able to implement their CData connectivity solution in just four weeks.

Improved loading speeds
Office Depot can now load data faster into SSAS when compared to their previous connectivity solution — powering real-time reporting on critical performance metrics.

Office DEPOT®

Company
Office Depot

Industry
Retail & B2B

Product
CData Drivers

Snapshot
CData ADO.NET Snowflake Data Provider helped Office Depot connect Microsoft SQL Server Analysis Services (SSAS) multidimensional MDX cubes with Snowflake.

Migrating from a legacy data warehouse, the company needed a way to leverage their existing SSAS cubes with the data stored in their new Snowflake instance.

Office Depot, a wholly owned subsidiary of The ODP Corporation, is a leading provider of business services, products and digital workplace technology solutions through an integrated B2B distribution platform with an online presence and approximately 1,100 stores.

The Office Depot Enterprise Intelligence team, led by Sr. IT Manager Terry Campbell, is responsible for compiling and evaluating various merchandising, retail, and supply chain data to understand how effectively internal teams are operating against key performance indicators (KPIs).

To meet the business' growing data needs, Office Depot underwent an initiative to take their data to the cloud, transitioning from a legacy data warehouse to Snowflake. They needed a quick and reliable way to connect the data now stored in Snowflake to their existing analytics platform, Microsoft SQL Server Analysis Services (SSAS), using multi-dimensional MDX cubes.

With CData, Office Depot was able to easily and quickly "lift and shift" their data to the cloud, while maintaining their existing SSAS-based analytics cubes and minimizing disruption to their end-users' reporting processes.

Background: Growing Demands for Data Access

Like most modern enterprises, Office Depot has increasingly become a data-driven organization, processing and analyzing mass amounts of critical data each day.

Thousands of internal users across merchandising, retail, and supply chain business units constantly run ad hoc requests for data to monitor their specific store, district, or inventory performance. That adds up to a lot of demand on their data cubes.

"The types and the amount of data that was desired and collected was increasing," said Daniel Ligas, Office Depot IT Architect. "Business units kept creating more KPIs, and that was expanding the need for data."

> "Our primary goal was to modernize our data warehouse to provide access to limitless computing resources, low-cost storage and to work with all types of data at scale. By moving to Snowflake, we could do this while leveraging our existing investments in our SSAS cubes, reporting tools, and Extract Transform Load tools"
>
> – Daniel Ligas, Office Depot IT Architect

To answer the growing demand for more robust data and analytics capabilities, Campbell and his team chose to migrate to a modern data storage platform that could grow and change with their business. Ultimately, they decided on Snowflake to replace their legacy data warehouse.

"Now we have a single source of truth that is free of resource limitations," said Campbell. "Snowflake gave us the ability to grow and shrink our CPU as needed."

But migrating the database wasn't the only challenge facing Campbell's team. To extract business value from their data, they needed a way to connect their new Snowflake instance with their existing analytics engine. As they soon discovered, that was easier said than done.

The Challenge: An 'Uphill Climb' to Leverage Existing Data Cubes

Office Depot had previously poured many hours and countless resources into developing their SSAS analytics solutions using multi-dimensional MDX cubes. Now, they faced the possibility of having to re-build these cubes to make them work with Snowflake.

With no native functionality within Snowflake to connect to SSAS, it was an "uphill climb" to find an out-of-the-box connectivity solution that would allow them to pull critical business data out of their new database and easily surface it for Office Depot employees to leverage and report on as needed.

> ## "CData offered a drop-in replacement — nothing had to be redesigned. We could simply reconfigure the cubes to get them working."
>
> – Terry Campbell, Office Depot Sr. IT Manager

Campbell briefly considered switching to a tabular model, but quickly dismissed the idea since it would not only require his team to re-build their cubes on a new technology, but tabular cubes would also fall short of their functionality requirements. The only option for Office Depot was to find a solution to connect their SSAS multidimensional data cubes with Snowflake.

"We had researched, and we actually really struggled to find connectivity. CData was the only provider that really worked," said Campbell.

The Solution: Out-of-the-Box Connectivity

Once they discovered and downloaded the CData ADO.NET Data Provider for Snowflake, it took only four weeks for Office Depot to implement a fully streamlined data connectivity solution.

"In a very short amount of time we had the drivers installed, working, and building our cubes on a daily basis," said Campbell. "We installed the driver, we pointed the cubes at Snowflake using the driver, and we were up and going."

CData's speed and reliability make it easy for Office Depot to access and analyze their performance metrics in real-time.

> ## "CData allows us to take that Snowflake data and put it in a cube with that sub-two second response time our end-users are looking for."
>
> – Daniel Ligas, Office Depot IT Architect

The Office Depot supply chain division is now able to leverage data cubes in real-time to closely monitor performance and fill-rate. Retail employees can quickly access scorecards to evaluate individual stores' sales compared to others in the district, and the merchandising department can continue to build detailed financial, sales, and market basket analysis reports in SSAS using data stored in Snowflake.

In an effort to support their organization's growing data needs, the Enterprise Intelligence team at Office Depot democratized data, allowing internal users to analyze and report on their performance data to make better-informed business decisions.

"We were able to do so with minimal disruption to our end-users," said Campbell. "CData was really a hidden gem for us to find the technology to allow us to move forward like that."

"CData was really a hidden gem for us to find the technology to allow us to move forward."

– Terry Campbell, Office Depot Sr. IT Manager

CData Software is a leading provider of data connectivity solutions. We make it easy to connect, integrate, and automate enterprise data, solving even the most complex data fragmentation challenges. CData's standards-based drivers and data integration solutions enable real-time access to hundreds of cloud-based or on-premises applications, databases, and web APIs.

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