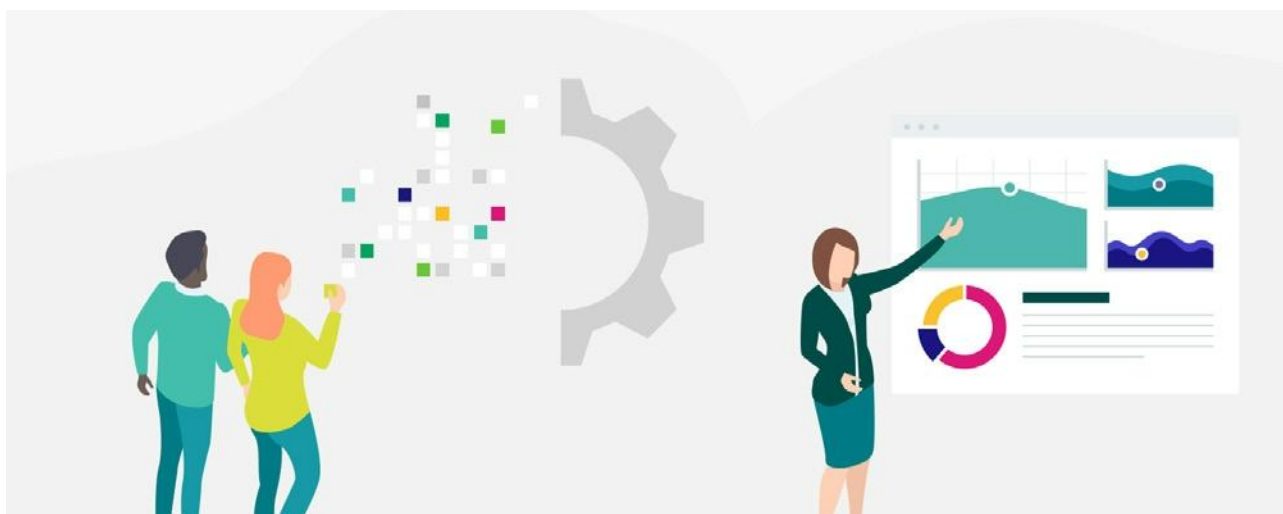# Transforming Decision-making with Power BI: a Case Study in the Value of User Empowerment Programs

Digital Transformation is as much of a cultural change as a technological one. As organizations begin to realize the value of their data through adopting new software, they also start to expand the art of the possible with regards to this data, shifting not only the ways of working but the outcomes of it. This calls forth a reconciliation of technology and skills that needs to be addressed in order to fully accept and enjoy the benefits of any technologically disruptive agenda.

One of Thorogood's recent clients' experience is a showcase of this reality and offers a case study on how organizations can realize the value of advances in technology by widening access to data through empowered users. As is the case with many, the department in question wanted to improve its efficiency through more informed decision-making by suiting its software stack to the possibilities of their data. But it wanted to do so in a democratic way, putting the power in the hands of its employees, by giving them access to the tools that enable such analyses. The department had already deemed Microsoft's Power BI as the tool of choice, but it still needed guidance on how to roll the software out organization-wide effectively and in a balanced way. It needed to build a framework that would allow for the sophistication of the staffs' data and technology skills without letting the idea of self-service and autonomous analytics override any governance structure or standardization needed.

In Thorogood's Dashboard in a Day program, the client found the tools and knowledge to achieve this. The training offered a crash-course in Microsoft's Power BI by the end of which users from varied backgrounds and business divisions were able to begin envisioning ways to incorporate Power BI's capabilities into their work, while at the same time taking the organization into the future with regards to its data capabilities.

In its more than 20 years as a Gold-certified Microsoft Partner, Thorogood has guided thousands of users from nearly 800 different companies through a comprehensive introduction to Power BI – from an initial first contact with the tool to visualization best practices, data modeling, and governance strategies. Without fail, each of these sessions reinforces the notion that the biggest thing allowing companies to dramatically expand their analytical capabilities is closing the gap to easy, intuitive data access for everyday business.

The first step toward a data-driven future

As one of the biggest UK Government departments, the client is heavily dependent on a wide array of data. This pushed the organization to explore how advances in technology could help uncover the value hidden in its records.

With the discovery of new software, the department dedicated itself to improving the way in which it analyzed data. Its infrastructure and institutional knowledge had long been oriented around localized, spreadsheet-based reporting and analytic solutions. The department wanted to instil in its employees an understanding of the way that Power BI's functionality can outstrip the drawbacks inherent in a more traditional approach. During the Dashboard in a Day sessions, Thorogood consultants guided participants through the various ways that Power BI enables users to unify report creation and sharing. They highlighted the ability of Power BI Service to facilitate cloud-based collaboration and eliminate the need to sort through multiple different versions of the truth that a siloed, desktop approach entails . In doing so, they showed its employees that the biggest benefit of software like Power BI is the time it allows them to spend performing actual analysis.

Previously, user empowerment programs such as Dashboard in a Day have been run in person. But with the world in the midst of the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic,

Thorogood quickly adapted the program for a virtual setting that still allowed for individual instruction and real-time interaction between users and consultants. Thorogood created an environment where participants were able to gain a first-hand understanding of how to apply Power BI to their work.

To that end, the training sessions covered all aspects of conducting data analysis using Power BI. Thorogood consultants guided users through a comprehensive introduction to the software's data processing and analytical capabilities, from the identification and comprehension of data sources to the navigation and manipulation of that data to yield higher-level insights, to the designing and publishing of reports that present those insights in visual form.

A powerful "kick start"

At the end of the program, the feedback was unanimous. While some participants entered the training sessions with rudimentary knowledge of Power BI, they left the training with a holistic understanding of the software and an end-to-end crash course in utilizing Power BI's capabilities within the context of real-world scenarios. Even in a virtual environment, the DiaD sessions had provided a valuable springboard to a future in which the organization could use Power BI to achieve its goals, improve performance, and better understand citizens. In the words of one user, the sessions proved to be "a powerful and useful kick start."

"The content was shared really easily, it was very accessible. It's been great that Thorogood knows the ins and out of our company, really valuable."

Thorogood has seen the benefits of such a spirit throughout its long history as a Microsoft partner. Whether the setting is in-person or virtual, the opportunity to gain a concrete understanding of Power BI's applications can be worth its weight in gold.