smartsheet

The University of Adelaide transforms its compliance procedures at lightning speed thanks to Smartsheet.

Faced with a challenging government deadline, The University of Adelaide turned to Smartsheet to ensure a response to new legislation at speed, ensuring compliance.

THE UNIVERSITY of ADELAIDE

Customer:
University of Adelaide

Industry:
Education

Organization Size:
Large (1,000 - 9,999 employees)

Region:
APAC

Website:
adelaide.edu.au

> **Without the use of Smartsheet, there's no way we could have met that deadline. I had a tiny window to get this up and running, with a fraction of the budget of other university teams.**

Bruce Northcote
Chief Security Officer
University of Adelaide

Professor Bruce Northcote is the Chief Security Officer within the division of Research and Innovation at the University of Adelaide in Australia. Ranked in the top one percent of universities worldwide, its global partnerships across research, education, and industry create a diverse and innovative environment for its students and fellows. Given its international exposure, it is Northcote's job to ensure that the University of Adelaide is compliant with essential regulatory requirements relating to defence, national security, foreign influence, and interference regulations and guidelines.

Now in his nineteenth year with the university, Northcote has experienced first-hand the need for efficient systems and what he calls *"single sources of truth."* First exposed to Smartsheet in his previous role as a Director of a Research Centre, he utilised Smartsheet dashboards as a key part of his project management strategy. Northcote was impressed with Smartsheet's *"responsive, intuitive nature,"* and its ability to drive customisable insights across a wide range of activities.

His prior Smartsheet use would soon prove invaluable, with the Australian Foreign Relations Act of January 2020 requiring increased compliance and reporting for universities on their activities with foreign entities. With limited time and budget, the university required a system that was easily auditable and could prove that it had undertaken the relevant due diligence on its international partners.

Smartsheet ensures compliance at lightning speed

Northcote required a solution that could bring together data from many disparate corporate systems to create a common picture of all offshore engagement. With a challenging federal government deadline to meet, the university's reputation and vital government funding were at risk if it was missed.

He set about creating a sophisticated system that would ensure the efficient reporting of all new and current foreign arrangements. Not meeting the federal deadline meant reputational risk with the

Customer:
Conditional Logic has transformed a previously lengthy form-filling process into an intuitive online exercise.

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Conditional Logic in Smartsheet Forms has been a huge time saver for the university.

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Government and the risk of losing Government funded research contracts– in excess of $100M.

As a result of Smartsheet implementation, the university successfully met the Foreign Arrangement Scheme (FAS) deadline of June 2021, just six months from the act's passing to the final reporting deadline. Northcote credits Smartsheet's multi-purpose functionality and speed of set-up with preventing the need to stand up an extended project team. Manually completing the task would have required the allocation of 4 to 6 staff across testing, solution development, change management and project management.

"Without the use of Smartsheet, there's no way we could have met that deadline. We had a tiny window to get this up and running, with a fraction of the budget of other university teams."

Smart customisation reduces unnecessary data collection and allays privacy concerns

One of the greatest challenges faced by the university is that all offshore activity must go through a thorough compliance review, requiring time-consuming and often repetitive data gathering. With numerous review and endorsement chains throughout the process, any tool implemented had to be dynamic enough to work harmoniously with the existing data capture systems.

For Northcote, the ability to customise Intake Forms in Smartsheet has been a "huge time saver" for the university. Customisation has also eased processes for users while reducing the collection of incorrect information. For example, with conditional logic in Smartsheet Forms, Northcote can ensure that forms completed by end users are quickly personalised to their requirements, removing the need for lengthy online or paper-based forms. For example, on choosing their country of collaboration, a staff member's questions are quickly tailored to their country of partnership. Smartsheet ensures that only relevant information is asked of the staff, reducing the time spent on data capture for the admissions team.

In a Nutshell:
Smartsheet ensures compliance at lightning speed.

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Without the use of Smartsheet, it would have been far more complex and costly to meet that deadline. We had a tiny window to get this up and running, with a fraction of the budget of other university teams.

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With several thousand staff and students, Northcote is grateful for the ability to use Smartsheet to control what information is shared, safeguarding against potential breaches of privacy. "*For us, data control and access were always the hardest to crack,*" he says. With the use of Dynamic View, the university now easily controls who has access to data. This has created what Northcote calls a "*self-serve platform,*" with insights that can be tailored to the user. As a result, he no longer needs to be involved in individual queries, a key advantage as his role requires him to interact with every staff member at the university.

Integrated technologies result in university-wide benefits

Having previously navigated several unique systems, Northcote is pleased with how easily Smartsheet can ingest data from the university's legacy set-ups, as well as driving new efficiencies in previously time-consuming processes.

With customisations and system enhancements often a source of pain over the upgrade cycle, he is thankful for Data Shuttle and its ability to quickly and immediately automate the mapping of data from other systems, obviating the need for major integration projects. Dashboards have also proved helpful in developing internationalisation strategies, allowing the university to create country-specific dashboards, with easy click-through access, to make it easier to find information by specific country.

Northcote is an advocate for the user-friendly nature of Forms and Dynamic View and credits them with an uptick in productivity and service quality.

A single source of truth in response to new legislation

With every university in Australia working to meet similar compliance requirements, it didn't take long for Northcote's counterparts to learn that he was flying ahead with a new system. "*We proved just how quickly you can stand something up in*

Real-time collaboration is instantly reflected in Smartsheet.

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It's so empowering to walk into a business unit meeting and to be able to modify something in real-time. It really is that simple and, for me, that's powerful.

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Smartsheet. It was seen as exemplary," Northcote says. *"For me, that was really gratifying."*

Northcote credits Smartsheet with averting a potential legislative crisis, given the time constraints faced. *"Without Smartsheet's capability to stand up to an immediate demand, we would have had to commit far more resource."*

Whilst he jokes that his favourite Smartsheet hack is his *"exceptionally complicated lookups!"* Northcote's biggest achievement lies in how Smartsheet allows him to map supervisory lines of command and organisational structures from a staff ID number alone, negating the need to involve HR in unnecessary meetings.

With hundreds of collaborators across the university, Northcote is ultimately most impressed by the ability to access Smartsheet anywhere, any time, *"It's so empowering to walk into a business unit meeting and to be able to modify something in real-time. It really is that simple and, for me, that's powerful."*

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