

# How a national buy group is solving the small-retail data gap

## Client

National retail membership organization

## Company Size

1,000s of employees

## Location

United States

## Featured Partners



A national buy group that represents more than 3,000 independently owned retailers sought to address a growing disparity in the digital capabilities of its members. With large retail competitors rapidly expanding their e-commerce reach and customer intelligence, smaller retailers were at risk of falling behind. The organization recognized the need to enable its members with modern analytics, supply chain optimization, and customer engagement tools.

Marlabs partnered with the client to modernize its enterprise data architecture and deliver flexible, scalable analytics solutions tailored for its diverse membership. Through close collaboration and strategic enablement, the client empowered its retailers to better compete in the digital economy. The project created a foundation for continuous innovation and accelerated time to insight across the organization.



Data Strategy



Data Architecture



Enterprise Analytics



Enablement & Training



# The Challenge: A shared vision for member success



**Objective:** Equip members with modern data and analytics capabilities to better compete with big box and online retailers.



**Existing Issues:** Many members lacked the infrastructure or resources to implement and manage advanced analytics solutions.



**Solution Needed:** A shared platform that could deliver scalable insights, support diverse user needs, and enable consistent data governance.



**Outcome:** A modernized data ecosystem that empowers members with actionable insights and enables future innovation.



**The national buy group recognized a critical need to help its independent members remain competitive in a rapidly digitizing marketplace.** By focusing on shared data and centralized tools, the organization aimed to support its members' digital transformations.

# The Solution: Scalable data solutions for a diverse member base

To address the varied needs of its members and provide a unified analytics experience, Marlabs designed and implemented a centralized, cloud-based data architecture. This platform allowed for shared analytics while supporting retailer-specific use cases. The solution enabled better reporting, greater transparency, and enhanced collaboration, all while maintaining flexibility and scalability.

## Phase 1: Discovery & Alignment

Marlabs conducted stakeholder interviews and working sessions to understand the group's goals, member dynamics, and existing technical landscape.

### Workstreams:

- Business requirements gathering
- Current-state analysis
- Stakeholder alignment
- Strategic roadmap creation

## Phase 2: Architecture & Design

The team created a scalable data architecture that supports centralized governance while allowing for individual member customization.

### Workstreams:

- Data modeling
- Platform architecture design
- Integration planning
- Security framework development

## Phase 3: Implementation & Integration

We built the solution on a modern cloud platform, integrated it with key data sources, and aligned it to retailer priorities.

### Workstreams:

- Data pipeline development
- Source system integration
- Cloud deployment
- Data quality enforcement

## Phase 4: Enablement & Adoption

Training and support ensured adoption across varying technical skill levels within the client organization's member base.

### Workstreams:

- Role-based training
- Documentation delivery
- Support structure creation
- Change management facilitation

## Services and Technologies Used:

### Services:

- Business Intelligence (BI)
- Data Strategy
- Data Management
- Data Governance
- Advanced Analytics
- Enablement

### Technologies:

- Microsoft Data Fabric
- Tableau

# The Results: Impact on the client organization

Through this initiative, the national buy group delivered a scalable data solution that elevated its members' capabilities and closed the digital gap. By offering centralized analytics with decentralized flexibility, they built a model that supports innovation and drives competitive advantage across their network. The collaboration also strengthened the organization's internal data culture and positioned it for ongoing improvement.



**Unified Analytics Platform:** We enabled member retailers to access consistent and trustworthy data and analytics tools.



**Enhanced Data Governance:** Our team established a scalable framework for managing data access, quality, and security.



**Accelerated Time to Insight:** The solution delivers timely reporting and dashboards to support data-driven decisions.



**Increased Organizational Agility:** Marlabs created the infrastructure to quickly adapt to changing market needs and technologies.



**Improved Member Competitiveness:** Through this initiative, we equipped small retailers with enterprise-grade capabilities that were previously out of reach.



**Strengthened Collaboration:** Through enablement and training, we fostered data sharing and cooperation between the buy group and its independent members.