

# 9 REASONS TO CONSIDER MDS ALTERNATIVES



Whether you have dabbled with SQL Server Master Data Service (MDS) for your master data needs or you've gone deep with a full production solution, there are reasons you should be concerned that your investment in MDS is at risk and that you may be limiting yourself unnecessarily. MDS was a fine tool for building small-scale, departmental data management

solutions. However, once you decide to get serious about master data management, you need real tools and a vendor to partner with, like Profisee, that brings to the table a forward-looking plan and migration strategy for moving off of MDS.

If you're serious about master data management, here are 9 reasons you should think about moving on from MDS.



## Ditch that complex obfuscated physical data model

Okay, let's start with something seemingly petty and somewhat of a technical insider joke. Nevertheless, anybody that has been involved in developing a master data solution using MDS will get the joke. To the rest of you, just stand by.

Is this you? We'd wager that the percent of master data solution developers that use MDS and have written some form of the following queries to find their data in the model is in excess of 98%:

MDS uses an obfuscated physical model. The managed schema uses an arcane

naming convention for tables, views, columns to aid in renaming. The problem with this approach is that it represents "friction" in the solution development and support process that costs valuable time and resources. In this day and age, we need to remove inefficiencies like this to move more quickly in our solution development.

With the Profisee Platform, what you see (or model) is what you get. No more resolving codified table and attributes names to find your data in the underlying tables when developing your solutions. It sounds small, but once you shed this inefficiency, it's like breathing fresh air again. Life with master data can be better than it is today.

The screenshot shows a SQL query execution window with the following query:

```
SELECT Entity_ID, EntityTable FROM mdm.viw_SYSTEM_SCHEMA_ENTITY WHERE Name = 'Product'
SELECT Attribute_ID, Attribute_Name FROM mdm.viw_SYSTEM_SCHEMA_ATTRIBUTES WHERE Entity_ID = 37;
```

The results are displayed in two tables:

Entity_ID	EntityTable
37	tbl_4_37_EN
420	tbl_28_420_EN
485	tbl_32_485_EN

Attribute_ID	Attribute_Name
727	Name
728	Code
880	Hierarchy_ID
881	Name
882	Code
897	Hierarchy_ID
898	Parent_HP_ID
899	Child_EN_ID
900	Child_HP_ID
901	ChildType_ID

The status bar at the bottom indicates: Query executed successfully. (local) (12.0 SP2) CORP\davidfe (71) MDS14 00:00:00 7 rows

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## High total cost of ownership

MDS is dependent on the Enterprise edition of SQL Server. For most organizations, this means big bucks. In addition, going big with MDS means scaling the database and web servers up. There really is no scaling out option.

With the Profisee Platform, you can start small with SQL Server Standard or Express editions or go to the cloud and scale up your SQLDB resources as you need to. This allows you to grow your

solution's data and complexity overtime and, as your solutions gain traction and prove themselves to the business, you can slowly increase your resource spend as you get further buy-in from the business stakeholders and sponsors.

The Profisee Platform also offers a clustered architecture that allows you to scale out certain functions to low-cost machines while retaining high-availability of data and services.

Profisee offers a scalable licensing model that is right-sized for your funding and maturity level.



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## Limited enterprise integration options

As 17<sup>th</sup> century poet John Donne said, no man is an island. Collecting all of your master data in a hub with limited external interfaces is just going to create another island of data. Integration with common master data sources like Salesforce, SAP, Dun & Bradstreet, etc. must be custom-built with MDS. MDS comes with no direct options for address verification and

standardization. Yes, these can be integrated via customization. However, customization comes at the price of time and money. Speed is everything.

The Profisee Platform was built from the ground up for integration. It is a trusted foundation for your enterprise data management strategy. Our Integrator product comes pre-packaged with connectors for Salesforce, SAP, Oracle, D&B, Bing, SQL, and a host of other application and data services that are key to your enterprise operations. These connectors can, again, dramatically improve your data and shorten your time to production for your master data solutions.

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## Lack of apps and tailoring

MDS offers three choices for your users:

(1) A standard web browser interface, (2) the Excel plug-in for MDS, and (3) an option to create an expensive custom front-end if options 1 and 2 don't cut it for your business.

MDS's standard web front-end is highly data-centric. It is focused on viewing one entity (table) at a time. But the business doesn't think about data a table at a time. A customer, for example, is likely a complex multi-faceted structure of many tables and associated relationships. Managing this data a table at a time is like a doctor giving a physical exam and only being able to see the patient's body a part at a time. He/She doesn't get a sense of the whole patient; just the parts.

With Profisee and FastApp Studio, solution developers can quickly assemble a prescriptive U/I that is tailored to the business users view of the data, not IT's or a data analyst's view.

It's easy to develop custom forms and views that give a complete picture of your key domain data be it customer, product, equipment, location, or something else.

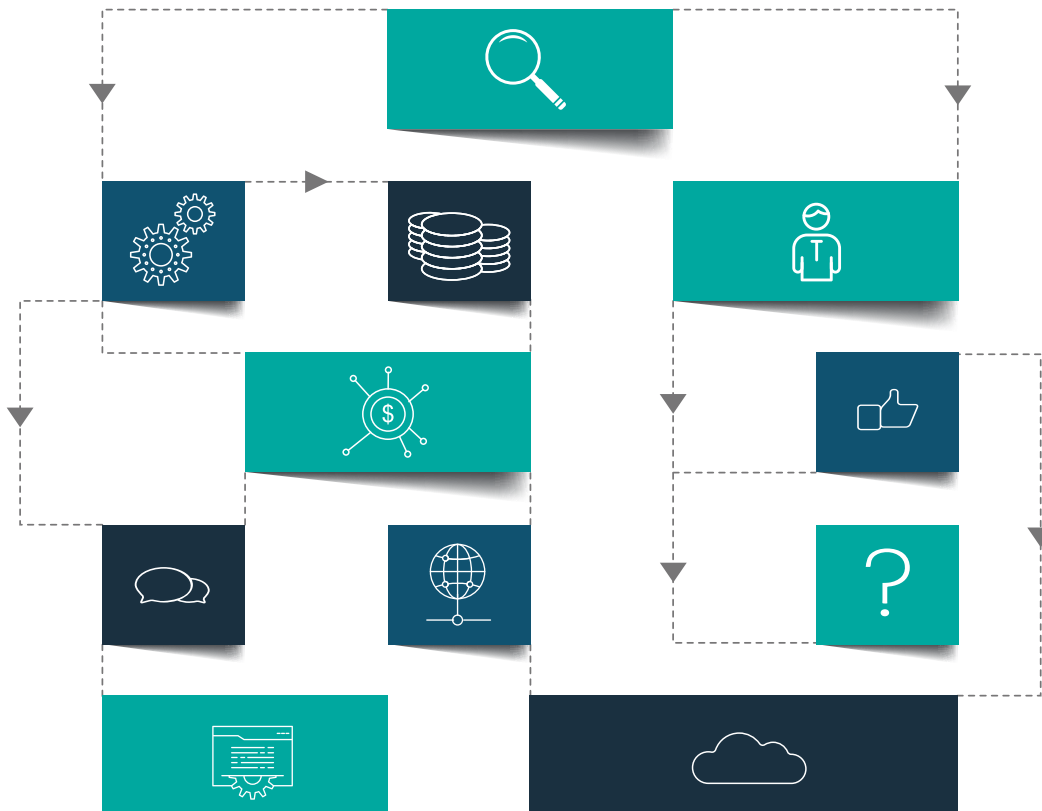


## Workflow? We ain't got no workflow!

To paraphrase Gold Hat from *The Treasure of the Sierra Madre*, MDS ain't got no workflow. Today's business stewards don't want to sit down at yet another application for the specific purpose of managing data. What they want is to do is to address quality and consistency issues as the system encounters them and at a time of their convenience. This means management by exception and workflows to support a process of resolving these issues.

MDS, out-of-the-box, doesn't support long running workflow processes. Yes, it will integrate with SharePoint workflows. But not all businesses want or need SharePoint. And building a custom workflow engine is costly and out of the realm of possibility for most of those looking to deliver a master data management solution quickly.

The Profisee Platform provides the ability to assemble workflows quickly to address the basic needs of data contribution, correction, and approval. Workflow tasks are linked with our Teams structure such that data management exceptions can be dispatched to the right owners to supply the right data when the system detects quality or conformance issues.



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## Duplicates, duplicates, duplicates

If you're dealing with an enterprise of any size, you got 'em and you probably don't want 'em. Golden Record Management (GRM) is a critical discipline and underpinning of any solid data management platform. GRM is typically made up of some form of address verification (AV) (when necessary) and probabilistic matching algorithms. MDS has neither.

The Profisee Platform, on the other hand, has both. Profisee allows you to leverage the AV services from a number of best-of-class providers (Bing, Loqate, Google, and MelissaData) to help standardize and verify your addresses, phone numbers, email, and names and then feed this information into our matching engine to help match, de-duplicate, and harmonize your data.

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## You can't manage what you can't measure

And you can't measure if you don't have a tool to define and report on your metrics. MDS, at best, is a data storage platform. It has no readily available reporting or analytics package and no underlying data marts that help you track your progress toward your data quality goals.

The Profisee Platform includes embedded analytics and visualizations that you can use to help measure and govern your data quality process. Data quality and workflow data marts allow you to establish key performance indicators and monitor your progress relative to the established goals.



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## Your head is in the clouds but your data is somewhere else

You don't want to get locked in to an on premise only solution. Sure MDS can, like any software, be run on Infrastructure as a Service (IaaS) but this is, at best, a half-baked cloud strategy. I personally like my cloud strategy fully baked and with the flexibility to run both on premise and **properly** in the cloud. MDS's reliance on Enterprise SQL Server locks you into IaaS and its deployment strategy is not currently (nor anytime soon) container-ready.

Profisee is focused on cloud your way. We aim to provide a solid Platform as a Service (PaaS) approach that leave the door open to moving back on premise if cloud isn't to your liking or if the costs just don't make sense.

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## Your future's so bright... But what about the future of MDS?

Over the years, we've learned to read the tea leaves when it comes to Microsoft's commitment to their own products. They may not say it outright, but Microsoft's actions with respect to MDS says it all. When products move from Redmond to offshore, they're telegraphing their

intentions clearly. "We're done with this product. It's as good as it's going to get." Do you want to stake your bright future on a product that is no longer going to evolve with you? Didn't think so.

Profisee has a multi-year roadmap for our product line. Our plan is to become the #1 vendor in the master data management space. We have exceptional people working collaboratively to delight our customers every day.

On which master data management solution do you want to bet your future? Profisee? You bet!

Check out the Profisee Essentials™ Solution for more helpful resources around migrating away from MDS.