

Optimizing data for customer insights and marketing personalization

Executive summary

Who: Global personal care and beauty retailer

Goal: Improve client engagement and experience; enhance marketing personalization across multiple channels

Challenges: Fragmented data sources, low visibility of customer behavior and insights

Solution: Implementation of data platform and development of customer data analytics

Result: Enhanced customer experience with individualization of marketing and promotional activities

Overview

Data and *beauty* are two words that are rarely spoken in the same sentence. And yet, a multinational personal care and beauty retailer has seen the beauty in the data. This company has realized the enormous significance of leveraging data in its global marketing and customer outreach activities.

The size of the company and the number of retail transactions with consumers creates an immense amount of valuable marketing and customer data. The company decided to use this data to enhance their customers' experience by accompanying them on their personal buying journeys, starting from the moment they enter a physical or online property. Using accumulated data, this needed to be achieved in a way that would improve marketing, reach more customers, and ultimately increase profits.

The challenge

Having a huge volume of customer transaction data is essential for personalizing offerings to individuals. However, to be usable, that data must be in a form that can be manipulated and analyzed. The retailer had vast stores data gathered from multiple sources, but it was fragmented and therefore of limited value.

In addition, there were no applications in place to analyze the data and come up with multifaceted strategies and business intelligence outcomes that would be beneficial for the company from both the enterprise and customer perspectives. This lack of harmonized and normalized data was a major obstacle to the company's ultimate goal of enhancing the customer experience on multiple channels by hyper-personalizing customer interactions.

On top of all that, any changes or modifications made to data stores and processing had to be implemented without disrupting the day-to-day operation of the company.

The requirements

To achieve the goals set out by the administration of the retailer, there were several requirements to be fulfilled. These include:

- Consolidating data from multiple sources that continue to accumulate information onto one single data platform. This included information gathered from over 60 sources such as store data, promotions, samples, inventory, purchases, social media metadata, and the creation of customer profiles based on client characteristics and identity.
- Creating the appropriate tools that will analyze this data and deliver meaningful insights that are useful in marketing and customer engagement activities on multiple complementary channels.
- Applying these tools to enable the retailer to deliver hyper-personalized experiences to its customers.
- Establishing a foundation of reliable and enhanced data and applying policies that will ensure that new data conforms to this reliability both today and in the long term.

“ iTalent Digital helps map what steps are needed to keep new and existing products at the forefront of customers' imaginations. They understand what's happening in the market.”

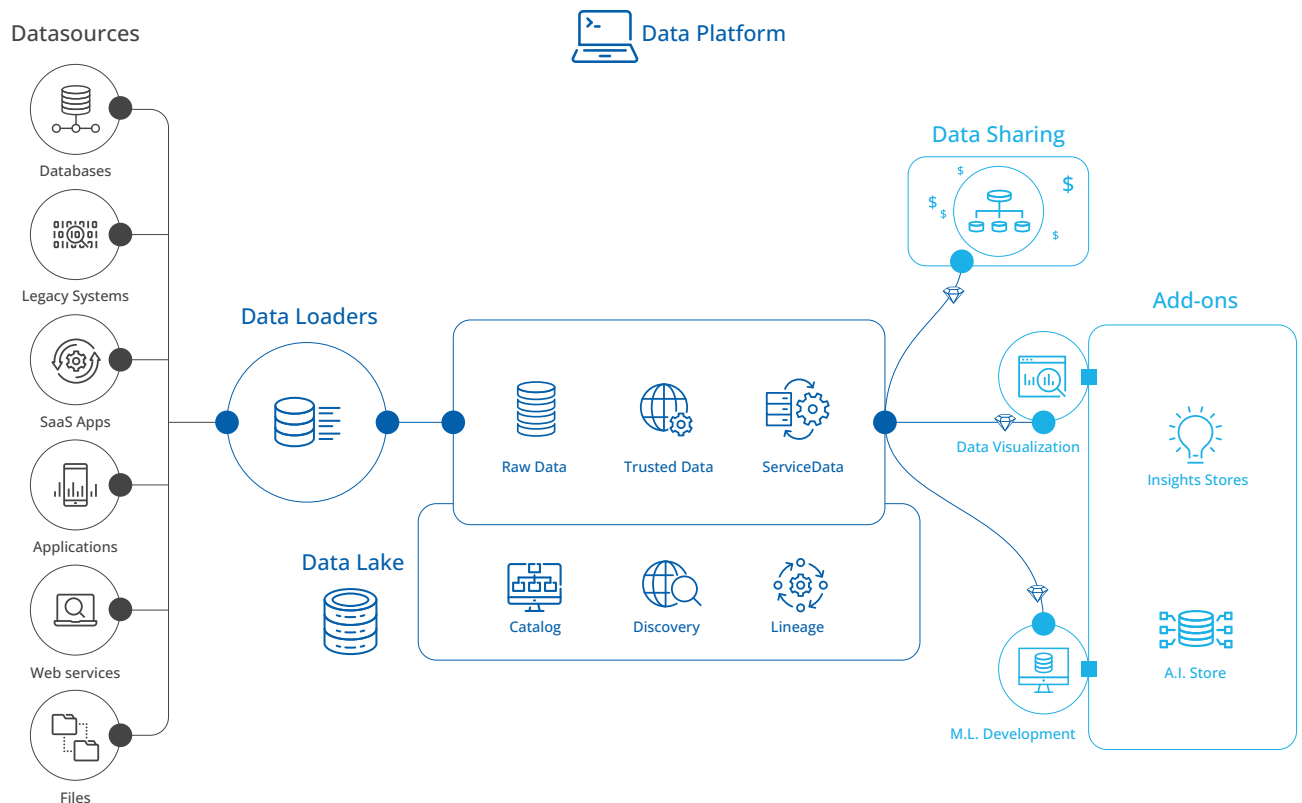
— Chief Technology Officer

Technologies Used

- Azure Data Bricks
- Spark, Hive, SCALA
- Kafka
- Tableau
- Azure Data Factory
- Azure DevOps
- Cosmos DB

The solution

- iTalent Digital contributed as a major stakeholder to a team of partners to establish a new data platform and an information processing system to realize the company's goals. The solution that was implemented included:
 - Creation of a centralized data platform that takes in information from dozens of sources, creating a single source of truth (SSOT) – a single data repository from which all other data is referenced.
 - Data pipelines to and from the platform and developing customized data engineering to be able to make useful sense of the information.
 - Applications working in conjunction with this data, including extensive use of machine learning and artificial intelligence, to individualize products, services, and experiences; craft individualized marketing and promotional content for consumers; and generate insights into future customer behaviors and choices.



Implementation was achieved over a period of close to two years, without disruptions in day-to-day operations. iTalent Digital played a vital role in this process as a coordinator as well as an implementor. It interfaced with product managers to aid the business in understanding the value of data and turn that understanding into a practical roadmap, which in turn became the blueprint for execution and completion.

The results

The implementation of these solutions resulted in high visibility of customer behavior patterns, as well as analyses that generated awareness of predicted customer actions. These results were achieved via the following:

- Enriching the unified customer database with behavioral patterns and personal data.
- Capturing and tagging client interactions for identifying preferred experiences and specific event activities.
- Developing algorithms and models to assess customer lifetime value, affinity, and propensity scores.

Although primarily focused on the customer, marketing, and personalized promotion, the data platform and its offshoots had additional benefits to other departments and company activities, including:

- Client outreach
- Lifetime value
- Propensity to purchase
- Supply chain management
- Workforce management
- The accumulation of useful and enhanced data constitutes several steps towards the retailer's goal of targeting the right client at the right time with the right products and services, on the right communications channel. As a result, this foundational data infrastructure is not only valuable for currently implemented data analytics and applications, but also has the potential for use in the long term, as new analytics algorithms with enhanced capabilities are introduced in the future.

About iTalent Digital

iTalent Digital is a global woman- and minority-owned software engineering and full-service tech consulting company headquartered in Silicon Valley that champions the people side of tech. We help companies achieve exceptional business outcomes through a suite of digital transformation services such as enterprise collaboration, personalization and unified search, business insights and analytics, cloud and software development, and Change as a Service (CaaS).

The team has numerous awards to its name, including 25+ Stevie® Awards, two Forrester Groundswell Awards, five Khoros Awards, two Globee® Disruptor Company of the Year Awards, two Cisco Responsible Procurement Awards, and many others.

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