



## Informa Markets: Customer Data Hub provides new insights to connect and grow specialist markets

Informa Markets is part of Informa plc, a leading international information services, advanced learning, B2B exhibitions and events group. Informa Markets operates worldwide, providing platforms for industries and specialist markets to trade, innovate and grow through targeted digital services, virtual and face-to-face exhibitions and actionable data solutions.

### Client

Through 450+ industry-leading brands, Informa Markets delivers event solutions through in-person, digital and hybrid experiences, audience and media solutions that help customers reach targeted and qualified audiences, marketplace solutions, content and data insights that help buyers and sellers source and sell more effectively.



### Challenge

Large-scale data engineering, addressing huge data volumes and rapidly scaling up to deliver an accurate Customer Data Hub for marketing and customer relationship management.

### Solution

Fit-for-purpose Customer Data Hub for mastering golden customer records using Talend and Snowflake, enhanced using Mphasis Datalytx expertise.

### Benefits

The latest platform is far faster and can handle millions of customer data points and interactions, providing new opportunities for customer insights and marketing a scalable and flexible solution that provides a pathway into the cloud.

### Background

Informa Markets embarked on a centralized data processing project in 2017 to capture and update details of every customer in a single data store. This Master Data Management (MDM) approach would ensure one "golden record" for marketing and customer relationship purposes. "We couldn't build marketing automation without sorting our data out first," says Louis Engelbrecht, VP Technology Strategy and Architecture at Informa Markets. "We worked with Talend UK on the

"This critical data engineering project flowed from a wider transformation effort and investment in the business, with the goal of transforming our marketing processes and capabilities."

**Louis Engelbrecht, VP Technology Strategy and Architecture, Informa Markets**

initial implementation of the MDM and automation part to match and merge our data and with Cognizant for elements of core database design. It was a rocky start: we were quick to get the initial Customer Data Hub into production, but various design issues were still to be resolved."

### Challenge

While the solution was being implemented, Informa Markets had continued to evolve. "There were inherent problems with the solution design," Louis says. "We needed to re-engineer components, and worked with Talend to streamline and improve processes. After a year we were almost there. It met perhaps 80% of our requirements, but after Informa Exhibitions combined with events business, UBM, to form Informa Markets - the size of the business doubled overnight. We needed to get the platform to 100% and scale it up so it could support the entire business. We also had to upgrade Talend as our version was approaching end-of-life, while improving on the original design of the data store. We wanted to work with a strategic partner, with the right resources and skill sets to help us." Talend recommended Mphasis Datalytx.

### Solution: Talend upgrade, Snowflake proof of concept and Mphasis Datalytx expertise

Louis continues, "It was a good fit with Mphasis Datalytx, with regards to its location for our core team and the fact that while most partners may be skilled in Data Integration they don't understand the core concepts of master data management. Mphasis Datalytx had clearly done this type of work before." Mphasis Datalytx assigned a team of up to six engineers. Louis says, "Our engagement with Mphasis Datalytx had two elements. The main part was upgrading Talend and redesigning the data model to improve performance elements so it scaled effectively. While Mphasis Datalytx helped with the Talend upgrade we re-architected to use PostgreSQL databases.

"The secondary part was marketing segmentation: how we might use an analytics platform to filter across millions of rows of data. But we needed more power for the segmentation to scale effectively, so we engaged in a POC to evaluate Snowflake's performance and scaling capabilities"

"Our brief was to deliver a successful upgrade to Talend, revise database schemas and enhance the data model in areas such as naming standards to optimize code, and consider replacing existing data warehouse technologies with more powerful alternatives," says Peter Chase, Mphasis Datalytx. "For the latter, we recommended Snowflake and a proof of concept (POC) was added to the project." This involved performance comparisons between Redshift and Snowflake, detailed technical testing and user acceptance, followed by performance optimization and data migration.

### Outcomes: improved marketing content, more targeted campaigns

Louis Engelbrecht says, "We have a fairly small team so it's important for us to have subject matter experts and platform owners in-house and then scale our team through third parties. That's what Mphasis Datalytx provided for this project in a focused way. Mphasis Datalytx was flexible in helping us to complete the project—it was a good experience. Thanks to their work optimizing Talend code and their suggestion of a Snowflake cloud data warehouse, the platform is far faster than before and can indeed handle large volumes of data: the key project goal. Informa Markets can process customer data faster and in more efficient ways." Louis adds, "Importantly, this project also enabled us to move away from a legacy solution and onto a path that will likely lead to Talend Cloud, enabling us to avoid major upgrades in the future."

The events and exhibitions sector was impacted dramatically by the Coronavirus pandemic, with virtually all physical events cancelled or postponed. With an eye to the future and recognizing the value of MDM, Informa Markets soon recognized an opportunity to return in stronger and more customer-focused ways, as Louis explains. "We now understand our customers like never before, so we can improve how we engage with them and the processes we use. As an events organizer, we knew what people did on our website, how they found an event and how they registered. But once a visitor walks through the door of a physical event, the knowledge stops. We didn't know what they did on the exhibition floor, and how buyers and sellers interacted. By contrast, our virtual events program and digital offerings mean we are seeing everyone's behaviour throughout their whole journey; every interaction, every product they look at. We're gaining a wealth of information to further drive analytics and insights into these industries—so we can create improved content and better targeted marketing campaigns to enhance the experience for all involved."

### 'A new understanding of customers and behaviour'

"The new Customer Data Hub contains all that highly structured data about customers. Obviously it would be inefficient to just throw in all the behavioural data as well, so we've created a data lake where we are ingesting that data. We can then analyze and draw insights from that information, and mix that with the customer data. The output of that insight goes back into our Customer Data Hub to drive marketing activity, sales activity, reporting and so on. In this way we can enable targeted action on the insights we're getting, improving our interactions with customers and helping them in turn grow their businesses."

## About Mphasis Datalytx

Having partnered with some of the best companies in the data analytics, big data and data warehousing world over the last 10 years (AWS, Microsoft, Talend, Snowflake, etc.) we have seen both the best and the worst of data platform deployments within customers. And in complex, heavily instrumented industries, the convergence of traditional data and real-time IoT streams creates even bigger problems with the sheer volume of this data. To turn raw data into actionable information at scale, businesses need a way to quickly respond to business demands while guaranteeing data security and data governance.

In 2018 Mphasis Datalytx started looking at how we could reduce the time to insight, and accelerate the time to value for our customers. In 2019 we developed our technologies around the emerging discipline of DataOps (with a clear focus on the true principles of DevOps) and extracting value from volume in IoT data. And in 2020 we publicly shared our DataOps Philosophy (#TrueDataOps) and released our DataOps for Snowflake platform supported by our patent-pending IoT Data Compression algorithm.

Datalytx makes it easier for you to do cool, critical, valuable and smart things with data. We provide the resources, skills, and technology to deliver better data faster with reduced risk, fewer headaches and lower overall cost.



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