



# Simplyhealth adopts data science for greater customer understanding

## Leveraging data delivers healthy outcomes

Simplyhealth has modernised its data and analytics technology. The health insurance business has begun to use data science to improve customer retention following an Adatis-led implementation of a Microsoft Azure data stack and data science skills development programme.

Over three million UK customers access health cash plans, dental, well-being and health insurance services from Simplyhealth, a B corp status business that can trace its history back to 1872.

## Situation

Simplyhealth recognised that it holds valuable data. The business also recognised it needed to become data-led, which was of particular importance as CEO Dr Sneh Khemka has a strategy for Simplyhealth to become a health solutions provider with integrated offers, Apps and services. To deliver the CEO's strategy, Simplyhealth needed a new data platform and skills. Simplyhealth could then develop data science capabilities.

"We knew we had to get really good trusted data so that our reporting, dashboards and basic analytics was right," says Andrew Bradley, Head of Data and Analytics at Simplyhealth. The business was demanding a data science-led approach in order to deliver more to its customers and improve the performance of the business. "The question the business brought to us was: could we use the data we have today to better understand our customers behaviours to predict when they are going to leave, so that we can undertake proactive marketing to encourage customers to make better use of our products, and prevent them leaving?"

Pete Evia-Rhodes, Head of Customer Engagement at Simplyhealth says there was a clear opportunity for using data to understand customer behaviours. "Before working with Adatis, we were not able to identify what behaviours were driving customers to leave. Our data platforms were focused on looking backwards and my team needed to be proactive."

Simplyhealth approached Adatis to help them overcome their skills and technology gaps. This included the replacement of an on-premises Oracle database platform that Simplyhealth could not scale to meet the new business demands. "The database was in SQL, so writing a Python query against it was a difficult challenge," Andrew Bradley explained. "So we had to upskill ourselves and create new capabilities and infrastructure."



## Approach

Dave Exall, Chief Digital and Technology Officer at Simplyhealth says "To meet our strategic ambition to be more data led, we embarked on a project to create a new data landscape and platform. Over a period of 18 months, we have built out a new Microsoft Azure platform." Adatis has deployed an Azure data lake, data warehouse, Microsoft Azure Synapse Analytics, Data Factory and Databricks platform. "Adatis helped spin up the infrastructure and model out the principal data lake, data warehouse, and platform architecture and design the main business processes. Their consultants came in and worked hand-in-hand with my team to build the platform."



To enable Simplyhealth to use data science, a hub and spoke model was devised. The data lake and data warehouse act as the first two major spokes for the business, and then the data science provides an additional spoke. In addition, Adatis implemented Microsoft Power BI to replace an on-premises Tableau technology and trained the Simplyhealth team in data science skills. "They trained the team in the data science processes, such as approach and technical questions to ask," Bradley says.

"We wanted a trusted partner for that, and we selected Adatis as a Microsoft Gold Partner, and we have formed a really good rapport with them. The relationship we have built with Adatis is fantastic and has a huge amount of flexibility," Bradley says.

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**Andrew Bradley**

Head of Data and Analytics at Simplyhealth

## Outcome

Today Simplyhealth has a strong understanding of its customers. "We are able to classify all of our policies into buckets of behaviour and then measure the likelihood of policy lapse as to whether it is a high or low probability, and then look at the behaviours and ask within these what can we do about it," Bradley says. This means Simplyhealth is able to meet its strategic aims. "Positive health outcomes is an OKR (objective and key results) for Simplyhealth, and if customers are not using the product, we are not helping them," Bradley says of how benefiting customers is central to growing the business at Simplyhealth. "What we are able to prove with the data is that those customers that engage with the product are much stickier, and that is what our marketing department needed, so they can take proactive action."

This business outcome was achieved by the integration of data from two separate policy administration systems. Adatis unified data from both applications to provide Simplyhealth with a single view of its customers. A new cloud computing policy administration system is being adopted by Simplyhealth. The Adatis deployed data platform means Simplyhealth can easily add new data and new data formats. "Before, that would have been a significant effort," Bradley says.

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The underwriting and planning team, as well as the business performance leaders, are the main users of data science outputs. "We have a cadence of daily insights and, therefore, a much better understanding of our business and performance," he says. One member of Bradley's team is now acting as the Simplyhealth advocate for Power BI as the technology is rolled out across to the business.

"We now also capture practitioner data, so we have a better understanding of who our customers are going to for treatments and what prices they are paying. That is leading to better product performance and fraud analytics," Bradley says of a completely new insight, and business performance metric Simplyhealth has available to it.

And that original question that was brought to the Simplyhealth data team: "could we use the data we have today to better understand our customers and to predict when they are going to leave?" Bradley says the adoption of data science has led to: "The marketing team making much better use of the different marketing channels for different customer segments. They have a much more effective way of prompting our customers to use the services that we have on offer. Leveraging data is critical to delivering healthy outcomes."



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