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48

THINKING OUTSIDE THE BOX

The best way out is to do something new.

PAGE 22

Insight®

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Letter From the Editor

For leaders in and outside of IT, the last few years have been a rollercoaster of volatility. Feeling dizzy from the topsy-turvy fluctuations in staffing, costs, supply chain and more, we're all hungry for stability.

We know there will never be "business as usual" — and yet, how much of our operations are still thinking and behaving in traditional ways?

To get off this roller coaster ride, it's time to think outside the box. Because for every problem, there's a creative solution to be found. (We know that's easier said than done.)

But creating space to play and explore can lead to profound discoveries. So: for this Tech Journal issue, we invite you to take a break — catch your breath — and come play with us as we unpack the power of creative problem-solving in tech.

It starts with pouring out a box of LEGO to reimagine the role and relationship of an IT partner for your business — because there are better, bigger things we can build when we have all the right pieces and experience working together. We're talking Lego Masters and beyond; an incredible opportunity where one plus one equals three, and the outcomes and impact are beyond what many people thought possible. More on that in our conversation with Microsoft in the CXO Corner.

Our own data scientists understand the traps of thinking within familiar methodologies. They go through four exercises to inspire creative problem-solving, which has led many of them to invent patent-worthy solutions.

There's much more to explore in this issue, including how Westland Milk improved collaboration to ensure dairy products from 400 farmers are efficiently distributed across New Zealand and exported to 40 countries worldwide and how the University of Sydney saved in excess of AU$1 million a year through a data led approach to Software Asset Management. I hope these stories get your wheels turning and ignite your ambitions. Because while there may not be a ready-made, click-into-place answer to solve your biggest challenges, thinking outside of the box may lead to unique combinations of solutions that didn't exist before. So. let's get playing.



Athena Thompson
Director Marketing and Strategic Partnerships ,
Insight APAC

Hot IT Tools

Transform How Work Gets Done

Drive your business forward with innovative solutions built to boost productivity.



Work has gone digital.

And for all the benefits, there are also new challenges: disjointed work, siloed workflows, disconnected tools and multiple applications. The constant switching and workarounds not only slow productivity, but can also lead to employee burnout.

The solution? Seamless workflow integration.

By incorporating **Adobe Acrobat Pro with the Microsoft 365** applications people use every day, your teams can collaborate and complete secure document transactions quickly and efficiently from anywhere.

Adobe Acrobat Pro is the comprehensive, all-in-one PDF and e-signature solution that automatically works with Microsoft 365 applications, such as Word, Outlook, SharePoint and Teams — so you can enjoy greater efficiency, better employee experiences and improved security.

Adobe Acrobat Pro with Microsoft 365 offers:

- Cost-saving automation
- Reduced manual errors
- Faster document approvals
- Eco-friendly digital transactions
- 24/7 collaboration on any device
- Everything in one place

Adobe and Microsoft: Work with teams you can trust.

Microsoft Cloud Gateway

Discover how you can harness the power of Microsoft Technology to strengthen security, enhance productivity and improve employee experience.



Our Cloud Gateway program includes funded Microsoft workshops which assess your needs and demonstrate how to improve the value from your technology investments.

We offer a number of workshops which include step-by-step guidance and content to assess your needs, demonstrate the "Art of the Possible" and build actionable deployment plans:

SECURITY

Our Microsoft Security workshops arm you with the most up to date knowledge and skillsets surrounding data privacy and practices, insider risks and cloud threat protection.

MODERN WORK

Our Modern Work workshops help you embrace new ways of working to address hybrid working challenges.

Learn more

Insight®

From Budget Constraints to IT Opportunities:

How Automated Procurement Can Help

The world is changing fast — again — causing market-defining challenges. Continuing to meet your technology needs in a fast, efficient manner will be critical to achieving your business goals.





Recent headlines have created a need for caution:

Interest rates have risen by 4.25 percentage points since early 2022 — increasing the cost of borrowing and investing in your business.

Meanwhile, the supply chain continues to have issues, as 61% of supply chain manager survey respondents indicate their supply chain still isn't working normally, according to a CNBC survey.

And, despite layoffs at well-known technology companies, the job market is still tight. The Bureau of Labor Statistics noted in January that job openings have only dropped .9% from the peak in March 2022 to 10.5 million openings.



In short, businesses across industries are facing many issues.

The question remains: How do you continue meeting today's and tomorrow's technology needs amidst economic uncertainty?

If there's one silver lining to challenges both past and present, it's that we've all become experts at adapting. Organisations must continue to drive the business forward through key investments — particularly when it comes to supporting digital transformation with innovative tools like advanced analytics or eliminating technical debt by replacing legacy technology.

By continuing to support your organisation's technology needs, you'll be better positioned for long-term success. Additionally, Harvard Business Review mentions that digital transformation should be an investment priority during a downturn to help face challenges such as supply chain woes and to better predict customer needs.

Still, supporting your business should be done affordably and efficiently in light of the recent challenges — especially when it comes to providing your end users with hardware, software, accessories and other critical IT tools.

Ensuring affordable technology access

Digital tools have long been used to help organisations succeed, and many are still working toward maximising the value technology brings to people and processes.

"As businesses navigate today's challenges, a balance needs to happen where you're paying attention to the market's outlook while ensuring the right resources are in place to succeed," says Joyce Mullen, president and CEO of Insight. "Having the right IT tools and technical capabilities will be imperative to meeting customer needs and growing the business."

Using the enhanced insight.com experience

Expanding on its IT procurement capabilities, insight.com launched enhancements that provide a self-service, friction-free technology purchasing experience. When you create an insight.com account today, you'll be able to:

- Discover and compare products using advanced search and comparison capabilities.
- Review quotes, orders and invoices from a single dashboard.
- Purchase and manage hardware and software with few clicks.
- Update shipping and billing information with ease.



Implementing the right technology delivers many helpful outcomes during uncertain times, including an improved client experience, revenue growth, cost optimisation, risk mitigation and operational efficiencies.

But how do you get the right IT tools affordably?

After spending a combined eight years at Amazon, Insight Vice President of Digital Transformation Rob Green says one way to do so is to change the way you buy.

> Driving efficiency in your buying processes by shifting manual, repeatable and scalable processes online can be an easy way to free up capacity and control costs while continuing to access the technology you need to transform the business," Rob says.

Adopting a technology procurement process that mirrors your standard ecommerce experience — one that streamlines your technology access — can help your teams focus more on running and improving the business while keeping costs affordable, Rob says.

You'll accelerate your ability to get the technology you need by automating away the labor that involved back-and-forth conversations and lengthy paper trails — helping your organisation save time and money.

What does automated IT procurement look like?

There's a huge opportunity for many organisations to implement automation into their IT procurement, Rob says. With the right procurement tools and systems in place, you'll be able to easily scale your technology purchasing, so you can get what you need when you need it, he adds.

When end users have access to a pre-defined catalog that includes robust product details and information — removing old systems that provided too many product listings and housed



outdated information — your teams will be able to choose devices that fit their exact needs.

After the purchase, your procurement processes will also benefit from reconciling and reporting capabilities that can integrate with your existing tools to help simplify post-purchase management.

Additionally, modern procurement systems can support the ability to ship devices to a home or office. This helps with adding new teammates at scale or replacing devices when they stop working during critical times.

You'll also be able to minimise or even eliminate maverick spending — unapproved IT costs — with self-service. Your employees can use a pre-approved catalog that also supports approvals instead of going out on their own to purchase new devices.



Streamline your technology purchasing. An insight.com account offers seamless, self-service capabilities that accelerate and maximise the value of your technology purchases.

And, alongside cost controls around what types of devices staff can purchase, you'll be able to maintain a strong security system by requiring devices that support pre-defined, modern security capabilities.

The end result: Your business will be better equipped thanks to simple, automated systems that provide streamlined access. As you navigate upcoming challenges, you'll no longer have to debate your technology investments or spend critical time making decisions or waiting for the device to arrive.

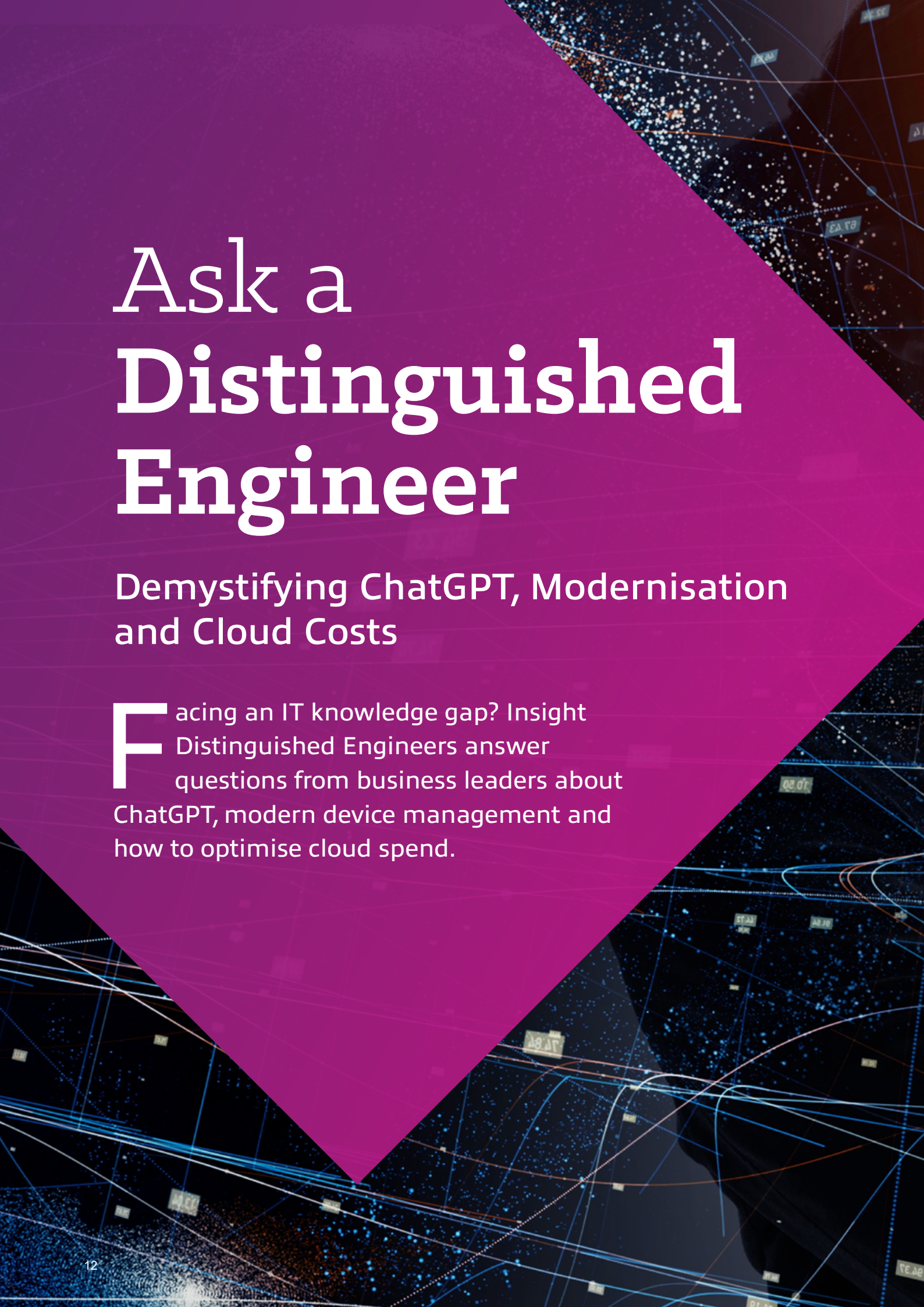
Instead, your teams and business will be able to move forward quickly and take advantage of situations that enable you to better position yourself for the future — without wasted time or wasted investments in the wrong technology.



Written by

Jesse Millard
Senior writer





Ask a **Distinguished Engineer**

Demystifying ChatGPT, Modernisation and Cloud Costs

Facing an IT knowledge gap? Insight Distinguished Engineers answer questions from business leaders about ChatGPT, modern device management and how to optimise cloud spend.



At Insight, our Distinguished Engineers are industry-recognised experts with the highest levels of thought leadership, mentoring and industry influence. They're highly tenured, well-respected and sought-after veterans of the industry — and their perspectives on key trends and evolving technologies give business leaders new ways to approach digital transformation.

Here, we share their takes on hot topics on the minds of many consumers and business leaders alike.

Question

Is learning how to incorporate AI tools like ChatGPT into my role a necessary shift in skill set?

I think that's the right perspective to take. AI certainly isn't about replacing jobs but advancing what we can do and achieve. It's about replacing repetitive, complex or challenging tasks with technology to assist and augment what we can accomplish. An example is using technical innovation as part of ensuring consistency or to make things more productive for us. It's about making sure that, as we innovate, we can focus on the activities that enable the betterment of society, or allow us to be able to learn more advanced concepts.

Innovation has been a driving force for as long as civilisation has existed. I hate to date myself, but I remember when robotics first came on the scene. People were going crazy thinking, "Oh my God, I'm not going to have a job anymore."

This fear is true of any sort of innovative technology or any automation that occurs over time. This is the human element. But we evolve. Understanding the benefits, value proposition and impact of innovation is key to driving the advances that innovation can enable and the requisite adaptability that is part of human nature.

I'm an adjunct professor, so — perhaps like many of my students — I wonder, can ChatGPT write my paper for me? Can it answer questions for me? And yes, it could be used to write a paper for you, but what have you learned? Academic integrity really has to do with application of learning and using your own perspective and subjectivity to create original thought (submissions or content). Personally, I think something like ChatGPT and its capabilities can be used to assist the learning process and help organise your thoughts — but not be a proxy for your thoughts. The innovation of ChatGPT is that it can provide acceleration in your ability to explore concepts, summarise large quantities of information

and gain perspectives in areas where you may have limited time or inclination to explore.

I love the term, "fit for purpose." Use AI and ChatGPT for the right reasons. The intent is not to replace human intelligence. It's meant to provide consistency where it's necessary and eliminate redundant tasks that may fatigue a human. Leverage the consistency and efficiencies that are provided by some of this innovation.



Carmen Taglienti
Connect with Carm on LinkedIn

Carm brings more than 25 years of experience to the table with deep expertise in cloud computing, data science, data analytics, cybersecurity and organisational innovation. He is also skilled at building and driving Centers of Excellence, which he's done for IBM Cloud and AWS Cloud.



Question

What is modern device management? What are the benefits?

When we talk about the modern workplace experience, it starts with that out-of-box experience on the device. Provisioning methodologies from Apple, Microsoft, Chrome and others allow you to provision a device right out of the box so the employee is getting the best user experience. In our labs at Insight, we call it "pre-provisioning," and it's part of the zero-touch provisioning process. We can customise and personalise the device to the end user. IT doesn't have to touch it. When the employee receives their device, they power it on, log in and immediately get their applications and data. And the best part is, with modern workplace technologies, it's secure, and you can drive security at every stage.

Many companies for 10, 20, even 25 years, leveraged on-premises technologies. That means when IT ordered a device, an IT staff member would take the device out of the box, install applications and updates, and then deliver the device to the end user in person and walk them through logging in and setting up their personal experience. Everything's great when they're in the office. But now, when we shift to the new way of working, getting a user a device remotely is not as easy. You have to send them the device. And in most cases, the user is going to call and say, "I can't log in", or "I have to connect the VPN and VPN's not working." And so they're losing productivity in that user experience right out of the gate. It's just down the drain.

With modern device provisioning, the device is provisioned from the cloud. Employees are getting a great user experience right out of the box. IT isn't answering calls for login issues. And it doesn't matter if the end user is in the office or at home.



And, when it comes to device end of life or conducting a device refresh for a user and replacing one device for another, that's a seamless approach. They're not having to reset or set anything up, it just follows from one device to the next. And it's a phenomenal experience.



Joseph Flynn
Connect with Joe on LinkedIn

Fueled by a passion for trending technology, Joe continues to build on his 25 years of industry experience. A trusted leader among clients and teammates and a go-to subject matter expert in our Modern Workplace area of expertise, Joe is an influential voice for redefining and proving the value of the modern workplace.

Question

How do I optimise my cloud costs for better multicloud orchestration?

We've helped clients through many different entry points, and it really depends on the pain point they're having. Increasingly, we hear, "Oh my gosh, my cloud spend is too much. What the heck's going on?" And there's great tooling we've developed — including tooling from partners — that we leverage to help us understand everything that's running because most clients that have that problem don't even know what they're running. They don't even know their consumption. They just know they have this humongous bill, and that's a great entry point. So, we can start taking a look at actual consumption, and based on that, we can fairly easily identify, "Hey, that workload right there — you probably need to spend your time on that one, and that one will give you the greatest amount of return for the least amount of effort." And they'll start setting the right people and processes in place for you to do that.



Juan Orlandini

Connect with Juan on LinkedIn

The most senior of our Distinguished Engineers with more than 30 years as a technologist, Juan has demonstrated expertise in everything from networking and IT strategy to server architecture and much more. As chief architect, he's seen this market evolve and transform, leading every step of the way as a client-obsessed thought leader and dedicated mentor.



Look for this section in the next issue of the Tech Journal when our Distinguished Engineers will share their insights on tech and sustainability.

CASE STUDY

Westland Milk improves its Microsoft Teams maturity to boost collaboration and efficiency



Based in Hokitika, New Zealand, Westland Milk Products is one of the country's largest dairy processors. Westland Milk's team needs to collaborate effectively to ensure that dairy products from 400 farmers are efficiently distributed across New Zealand and exported to 40 countries worldwide.

Westland Milk turned to Insight Enterprises to conduct a Microsoft Teams Maturity Assessment. This has helped the company implement best practice governance and security processes, increase operational efficiency and optimise its use of the platform to improve collaboration across the organisation.

The company had been using Microsoft Teams for 18 months when it began to notice key issues around governance, particularly in the optimisation of data, files and documents shared in Teams. With over 650 employees collaborating via Teams every day, the company was keen to determine the best strategy for managing growth and maximising value going forward.

> *"When we moved online with the pandemic, our Teams usage exploded as people began collaborating and storing files and documents within Teams groups. It made us really aware of the need to make sure all of this is happening in the most efficient and most appropriate way."*
>
> ***Kerri Broadhurst,** Head of Enterprise and Operations, Westland Milk NZ*

Kicking off the maturity journey

Westland Milk's established relationship with Insight as a software procurement partner made it the ideal company to approach when optimising Microsoft Teams became a priority.

The company was already using Microsoft Teams for internal collaboration, mostly for chat and videoconferencing. Its long-term goals included rolling out Microsoft Teams



telephony for collaboration, as well as implementing better governance around how data and documents are shared and stored on the platform.

Insight conducted a workshop with the Westland Milk IT team to determine the company's maturity across seven measurements: vision, roles and responsibilities, business usage, lifecycle management, security, compliance and adoption.

"The Westland Milk team had some big goals for Teams but little clarity around what they needed to do to achieve these goals and how to follow best practice. So, we suggested that they conduct the Microsoft Teams Maturity Assessment – which was also a great opportunity for us to take on our first New Zealand reference client."

Rachael Lattimor, Account Manager, Insight New Zealand

Insight's Microsoft Teams Maturity Assessment

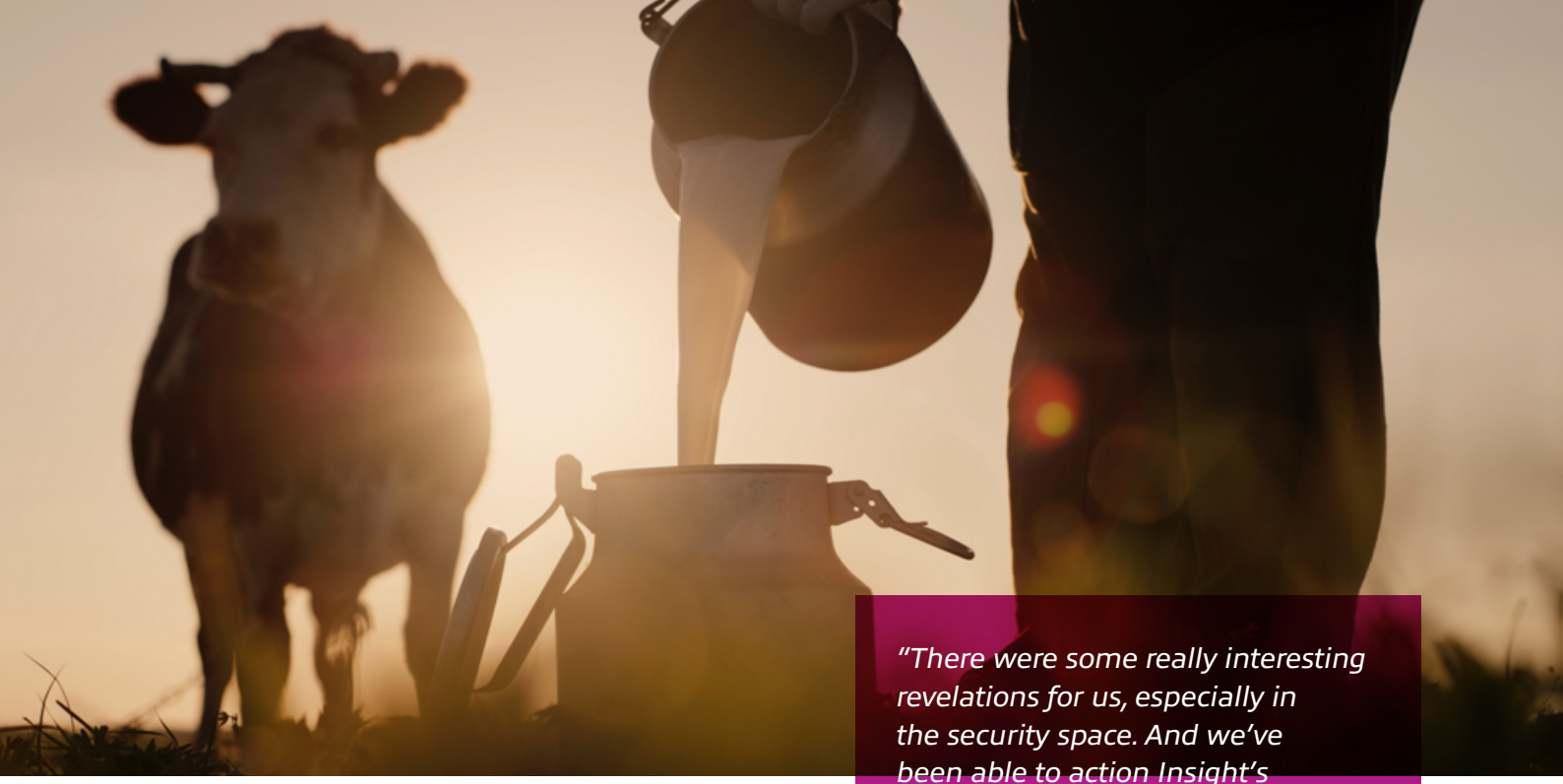
Our maturity assessment measures how an organisation's policies and procedures are applied to effectively use and govern Microsoft Teams. We provide a simple, fast and inexpensive service that allows clients to understand how they can mitigate risk and ensure the business is extracting maximum value from the platform. It determines the client's Teams maturity by using a framework developed by Insight experts, assessing everything from the client's vision and goals for Teams to security, lifecycle management and adoption of new features.

"What the client ends up with is a clear roadmap of projects and activities tailored to help them achieve their goals. We then provide them with the Microsoft Planner tool, which allows them to schedule and assign these activities to team members within Teams. It gives clients a great visualisation of where they are, and how they can get to where they want to be."

Martin Harris, Modern Work Technology Solutions Lead, APAC Insight



View Datasheet



"There were some really interesting revelations for us, especially in the security space. And we've been able to action Insight's recommendations already. We've implemented new policies around monitoring applications that run in Teams, started running application tests before deployment, and set up proper templates for the standard creation of groups and projects in Teams."

Kerri Broadhurst, Head of Enterprise and Operations, Westland Milk NZ

Based on these findings, Insight offered a range of recommendations to help the company optimise how it uses Teams, including:

- streamlining data retention and recovery by standardising how teams, groups and projects are set up within the platform
- improving the user onboarding and offboarding processes by partially automating the creation and allocation of accounts and licences
- developing and implementing a well-defined set of security standards and processes for dealing with security threats
- delegating responsibilities at the application or solution level to reduce over-reliance on IT administrator privileges to maintain and monitor system health.

These actions have allowed the Westland Milk team to increase operational efficiency and reduce the number of applications being deployed unnecessarily. In doing so, they have created opportunities to adopt and use new Microsoft Teams features in a sustainable way.

Accelerating the digital transformation

As a trusted software licensing partner, Insight has also helped Westland Milk procure, manage and optimise its enterprise technology. This has enabled the company to drive significant cost savings and implement tech solutions along with best practice IT governance.

Licensing Microsoft products through Insight provides Westland Milk transparency over their billing so that it can identify inefficiencies, eliminate overspending and better align IT spend with the company's growth trajectory.

Essential 8 Uplift Workshop

Accelerate your Essential 8 maturity and compliance journey



To help you accelerate your cybersecurity maturity journey, Insight is running a limited number of Essential 8 Uplift workshops. The free 2-hour workshop consists of a review of your current security controls and provide recommendations on how to achieve required Essential Eight Maturity Level.

1. Sharing of lessons learned around Essential 8 maturity uplift from Insight to your organisation
2. A summary of your current position and recommendations when it comes to Essential 8 maturity
3. A next steps and prioritisation session, to create actionable tasks and activities, that will help to uplift maturity

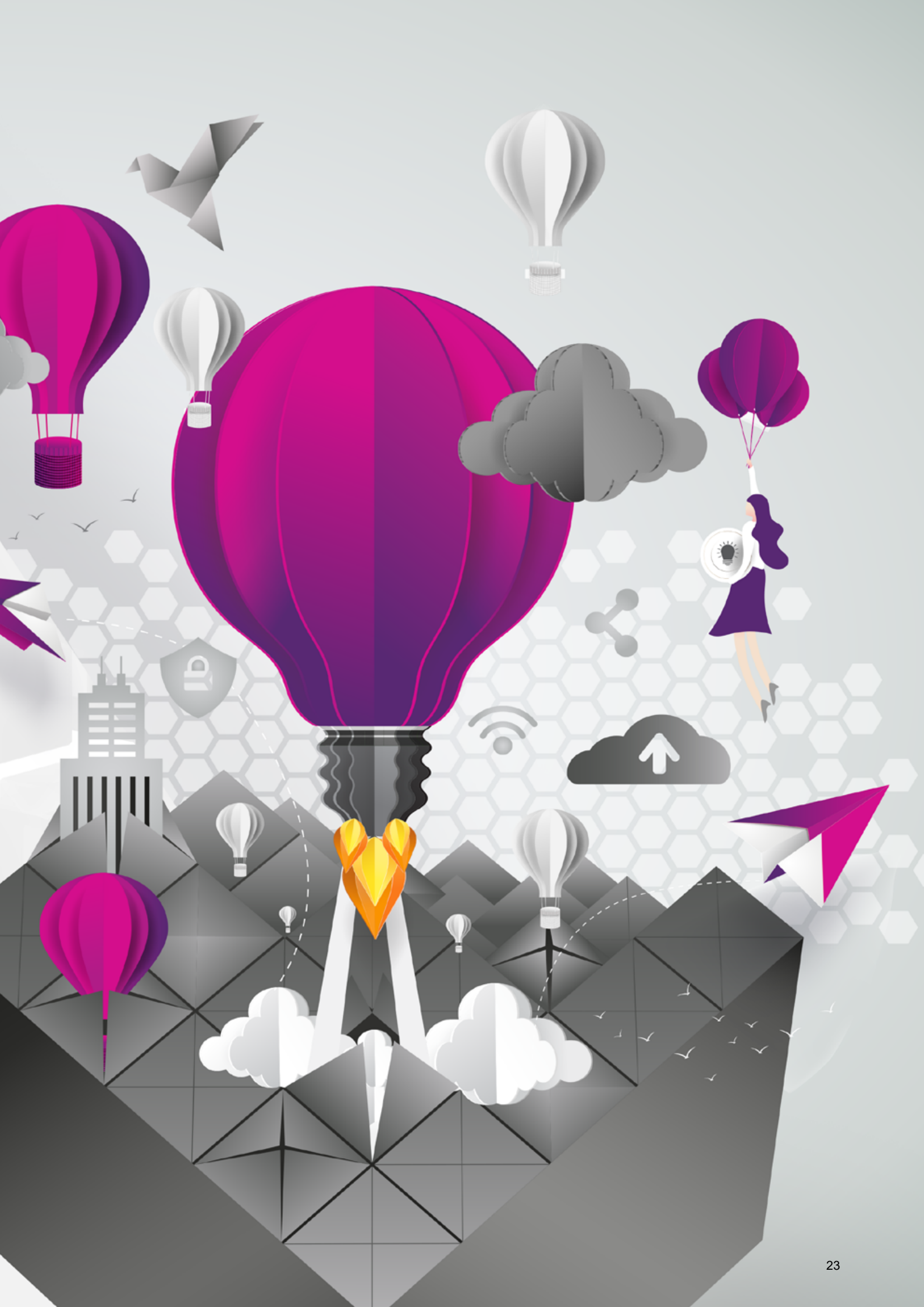
Insight®

Learn More about Insight's Essential 8 Uplift Workshop

What Is a Solutions Integrator?

Meet the IT Partner Helping Organisations Achieve Digital Innovation and ROI, Faster

Technology can inspire a childlike giddiness — like getting a new set of LEGOs. As a business or IT leader, it's easy to imagine the possibilities. You see the potential. You're eager to tear open the box, dump out the assortment of multicolored bricks and get building.





But then, seeing all the pieces scattered across the floor, hesitation sets in. Where do you begin? How will this LEGO set integrate with the others? How will you keep it all secure? Do you have the skills to assemble this, or was this box a little too ambitious?

And if you've walked blindly into a room and stepped barefoot on a rogue LEGO brick, you know the surprising level of shock and pain of those little bricks. The same can happen with new technology — hindering some other element of your ecosystem and, ultimately, your business ambitions.



Technical debt is prolific, but it's far from the only inhibitor to innovation.

Unless you're a startup, your organisation likely has a technology foundation, built upon years of infrastructure, data, platforms, software and more. And because technology changes fast, you're probably among the **86% of organisations** weighed down by **technical debt**.

"We've seen a ton of disruption with people entering net-new markets. Because they're starting from fresh, they have a leg up against the established players in those markets," says Stan Lequin, who's no stranger to technology messes that resemble scattered LEGO bricks.

As president of Insight solutions, Stan leads a team of 5,700+ technical experts and is an executive sponsor for many client projects. He's intimately familiar with the growing pains business and IT leaders experience when facing new technology.
"As you go through growth or acquisition, your infrastructure becomes more complex.

You make decisions to go fast. You put off things that need fixing. But this becomes a hinderance in the future as you try to shoehorn transformation," says Stan. "We see clients that struggle with their old way of business. It becomes an obstacle to the new way they need to do business."

> "As you go through growth or acquisition, your infrastructure becomes more complex. You make decisions to go fast. You put off things that need fixing. But this becomes a hinderance in the future as you try to shoehorn transformation."

Stan sees waves of changes happening industry by industry. Right now, he says some are riding a wave of optimisation, seeking ways to better leverage and optimise their current platforms and technology debt — and do so in a way that's going to allow them to compete in ever-changing markets. On the other hand, some organisations are in industries experiencing rapid growth and need to quickly modernise.

Getting out of technical debt doesn't happen overnight — nor does it require a full rip and replace.



Stan says the key to moving forward is a balance of understanding where an organisation has been — understanding where the technology debt exists and why past technology investments were made — as well as understanding the data that exists within those systems and how (or by who) that data are used.

But few partners have intimate knowledge of a client's historical technology roadmap. And that's where having a longstanding partnership adds significant value.

"We have clients that we've worked with for 20 years or longer," says Stan. "We've seen them transform, we understand the acquisitions and business pivots they've made, we understand the technology they've purchased and why they made those acquisitions. And what's really amazing is we're engaging with clients today around taking those assets and reprovisioning them in a new way that creates a new modality of thinking about how to build modern solutions and greater experiences."

Why a new kind of IT partner is necessary

Regardless of the need to optimise and overcome technology debt or modernise quickly and accelerate innovation, a lot of organisations are saying the same thing: They need help.

According to a 2023 Insight and Foundry report, 84% of organisations are looking to a third-party provider to plan and/or execute their digital transformation strategy over the next 12 months.



84%

of organisations are looking to a third-party provider to plan and/or execute their digital transformation strategy over the next 12 months.

The same report revealed 45% of organisations are experiencing gaps in technology skills and knowledge as a top prohibitor of innovation — but expertise isn't the only quality business leaders are seeking.

45%

of organisations are experiencing gaps in technology skills and knowledge as a top prohibitor of innovation — but expertise isn't the only quality business leaders are seeking.

Gordon Schembri, senior director of transformation and innovation at Cornerstone Building Brands, sought a partner that offered more than IT skills.

Business leaders aren't the only ones with a gap to fill.

Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEMs) and software publishers — brands like AWS, Cisco, Google and Microsoft — are on the other side of the bridge.

For years, OEMs relied on the partner channel to sell their products to customers. But in recent years, OEMs recognised they need more than a channel partner to push their products — they need help driving consumption and ensuring customers are maximising the value of their products. OEMs need a channel



"[Insight is] not only closing gaps that we have, but also helping us build new services", says Gordon. "They're looking at our biggest problems. They're looking at how we can be more effective. This partnership is not only helping us on our day-to-day, but also building our future strategy. They're helping us build our roadmap."

This partnership is not only helping us on our day-to-day, but also building our future strategy. They're helping us build our roadmap.

partner with the capabilities to stitch together their technologies to solve real business problems.

Recognising this gap, some IT providers have invested deeply in narrow capabilities, such as cloud migration. However, this leaves clients searching for specialist firms that can't serve all their needs. And, ultimately, this creates a (potentially long) roster of IT partners and, likely, disparate technology solutions.

Are you working with the right IT partner for your business?

Navigating the technology partnership ecosystem to find the right IT partner for your business can be overwhelming. IT partner types include Value Added Reseller (VAR), Managed Services Provider (MSP), System Integrator (SI), IT consultant, technology solutions provider, VARs that evolved into MSPs, and so on.

All these categories have value and purpose, but they also have

limitations and shortfalls — especially if you're focused on the long game.

"I don't want a partner that's just going to take my order," says Mike Gemza, vice president of technology infrastructure at Cornerstone Building Brands. "I want a partner that I can trust, who will challenge my view with the intent of truly helping us transform. I've worked with many partners, and it's very hard to find that. I found it in Insight — this team is unique."

Enter the breakthrough IT partner, the Solutions Integrator.

"I don't want a partner that's just going to take my order. I want a partner that I can trust, who will challenge my view with the intent of truly helping us transform."



What is a "Solutions Integrator"?

A Solutions Integrator is an IT partner that serves as a steadfast, central point of execution and guidance. Solutions Integrators blend capabilities, making them ideal for long-term, meaningful connections. The result: You can trust they'll address both your ambitions and insecurities.

Traditional IT partners require additional partnerships for purchasing, joint services or simply offer a limited scope of technology or industry experience.

When you partner with a Solutions Integrator, you have a trusted advisor as well as a central provider for everything from consultation and design to procurement, all the way through execution, support and managed services. And because of the singular vantage point, there's greater alignment of objectives and better understanding of dependencies across different organisational domains.

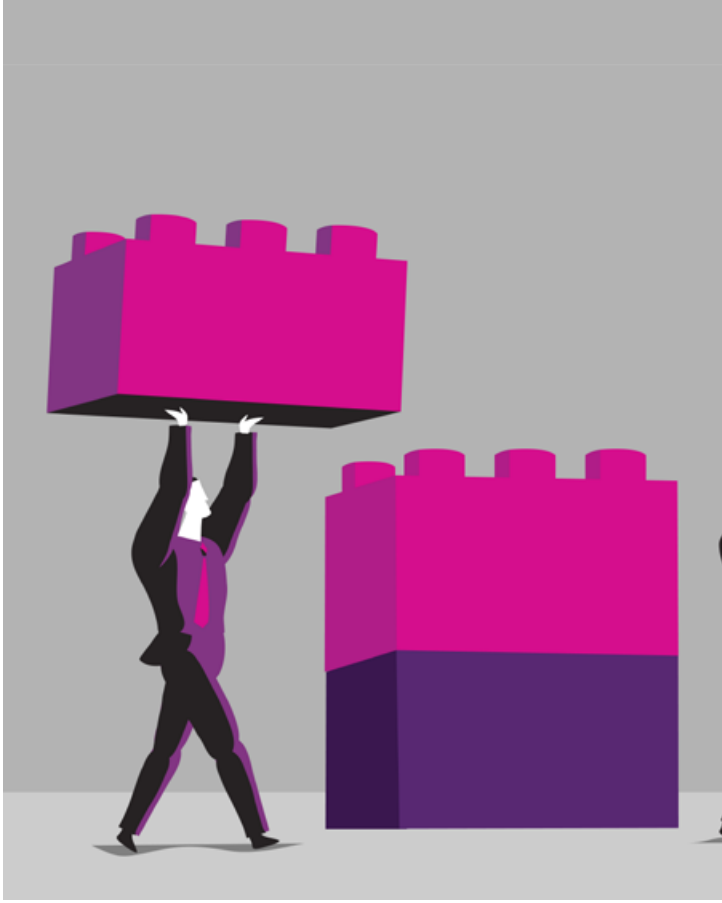
Stan gives the analogy of pulling together different LEGO sets. The first set is technology procurement, such as a VAR. As the conduit between the business (or client) and an ecosystem of partners, a VAR helps clients procure the right technology assets and execute deployment and integration.

The second LEGO set is digital transformation. This is largely achieved through integrating disparate technology, software and solutions to create a seamless ecosystem. This is where you'll typically see Systems Integrators (SI). SI are focused on meeting clients in their transformation and, especially with Global Systems Integrators, the engagement is usually for massive projects.

Finally, the third LEGO set is digital *innovation* — this is the exciting piece. This is where Solutions Integrators work alongside organisations to unlock data insights to make better business decisions, create new revenue streams, enhance customer or employee experiences and more. "As a Solutions Integrator, we're across all those worlds, but in the best possible way," Stan explains. "We have procurement capabilities and incredible partner relationships. But we also have the ability to innovate on top of those platforms and bring those platforms together in a very unique way to solve business problems."

To put it simply, a Solutions Integrator is the LEGO Master Builder of your technology ecosystem. And that level of mastery, experience and depth is an uncommon — and powerful — combination.

"At Insight, we have those three 'LEGO sets.' That's what's unique about us as a Solutions Integrator. We call it 'a category of one'



because when you think about partners that bring together all three of those areas, the competitive landscape completely melts away," says Stan.

Insight's journey to becoming the leading Solutions Integrator happened both organically and strategically.

Born out of a college business plan by Tim and Eric Crown in 1988, Insight began as a traditional technology reseller with a strong footprint in hardware lifecycle services, distribution and integration labs, and software licensing solutions.

Through the mid-2000s, Insight evolved into an IT services organisation to support the emergence of cloud and digital solutions alongside data center and workforce tool innovations.



> To put it simply, a Solutions Integrator is the LEGO Master Builder of your technology ecosystem. And that level of mastery, experience and depth is an uncommon — and powerful — combination.

Services and solutions capabilities were progressively added until Insight turned into something more than a traditional IT partner by around 2017. With its foundation in providing leading technology solutions plus a depth of industry and technology capability expertise, Insight now brings all the pieces together.

"For us, it's about proof of value faster," Stan says. "We want to demonstrate the impacts we can have through Minimum Viable Products (MVP) or through reference architectures. It's about having that meaningful business impact and showing value fast, to then earn that ability to do more for our clients. From the technology procurement side all the way through the innovation side, we're that partner that executes and can connect all those logical pieces."



Ambitious business goals?

As the leading Solutions Integrator, Insight can help you modernise, innovate and grow with confidence.



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4 REASONS to CHOOSE Microsoft Surface for Windows 11

Insight®

Microsoft Surface



The shift to hybrid work also shifted employee priorities. Flexibility is no longer a privilege, but an expectation — and businesses need to adapt.

Discover how Microsoft Surface® devices, optimised for Windows® 11 and available from Insight, meet today's worker expectations with powerful productivity, security, collaboration and management features.



PEAK PRODUCTIVITY

Equipped with Intel® processors, Microsoft® Surface devices deliver the power to handle heavy workloads and multitask between applications and presentations. And, with multiple configuration options, your teams can work the way they want.

74 hours of **increased employee productivity** over three years with **Surface devices**

STATE-OF-THE-ART SECURITY

Surface and Windows 11 protect from the chip to the cloud with a Zero Trust security model that enables complete control over access to information, applications and resources — without compromising user experience.

30% less employee time lost to security incidents





CONSISTENT COLLABORATION

Surface brings video calls to life with Smart Sound technology, AI-powered HD cameras and Studio Mics. And, Microsoft Teams® makes it easy to collaborate from anywhere, take notes and sketch designs on touchscreens.

32% faster boot time with 21% fewer reboots to keep employees working

MODERN MANAGEMENT

Zero-touch deployment with Windows Autopilot minimises IT complexity and saves valuable time — and Surface devices can be pre-configured for any role before deployment.

And, Microsoft Endpoint Manager lets your IT teams manage, deploy and secure devices across locations.

49% fewer incidents requiring IT support

40% less time IT spent on ongoing device management



Empower your workforce. Microsoft Surface devices boost productivity, security and collaboration from anywhere.

Understand the benefits of Microsoft Autopilot, modern workplace security and management, and the premium user experience with Microsoft Surface.
Talk to a Surface specialist today.

Source: IDC. Business Value of Microsoft Surface Devices.

CXO Corner:
For Business Leaders, Possibility Is in the Partnership



Q&A With Nina Harding, Corporate Vice President of Global Partner Solutions in the U.S., Microsoft

The relationship between technology brands like Microsoft and business-to-business IT solution providers has evolved exponentially in recent years — all to the benefit of the mutual clients these businesses serve. In this Q&A, Nina Harding explains why she's passionate about her role to foster stronger partnerships and how her focus on strategy, relationships and feedback help her show up as a better leader — especially during challenging times.



You’re currently the corporate vice president of global partner solutions for the U.S. What does your role look like today and how do you see it evolving?

My job is to collaborate with our partner ecosystem, to help differentiate their value to optimise the most customer success and innovation.

Today, I’m focused on driving the joint value proposition to our customers. We work closely with partners, innovating to deliver the best solutions to market. Partners are the fuel that drives the growth, satisfaction and innovation of our customers — they’re the pivotal contributors to customer value realisation. It’s through honed specialised skills, trusted expertise and ongoing curiosity that Microsoft partners seek to drive the next generation of innovation — sharpening their industry knowledge and solution experience to drive the solutions of tomorrow for Microsoft customers.

I anticipate that my role in the future may change to accommodate new technologies and global influences impacting our customers, but at the core, my focus will remain on helping our partners and customers achieve more. I will be working hard to deeply understand the true satisfaction of our customers and, together with our partners, ensure our efforts (how are we showing up, delivering the right technology, helping them implement, etc.) contribute to our reputation as the trusted choice today and in the future.



Your LinkedIn profile says you talk about #PartnersMakeMorePossible. What does that mean? What is the value of the partner community?

We believe Azure cloud is the strongest technical offering in the industry. We work with the best partners to be the most skilled and innovative advisers to our customers so we can make the impossible possible. Our partners are able to leverage the power of our cloud to specialise in industry-specific solutions. Together, we bring AI and data insights to energise the directions of companies and democratise decision-making to the end user. We can do more together than we can do independently, and it all accrues to the benefit of our customers. That's why I believe in the power of partnership.

This year, I believe it's paramount to focus on growing deeper skill sets with greater recognition of a partner's contribution and impact to the innovation of our shared customers. This will result in greater Microsoft-Partner-Customer collaboration, satisfaction and, most importantly, growth for all parties. I want to celebrate the pivotal contribution our partners make in



delivering success to our customers — and share their stories.

If we bring Microsoft technology with the talents, innovation, insights and IP from our partners, we could solve things for our customers that we couldn’t do alone. Together we are exponentially stronger than if we went to market alone. It essentially means that we make one plus one equal eleven!

If we bring Microsoft technology with the talents, innovation, insights and IP from our partners, we could solve things for our customers that we couldn’t do alone. Together we are exponentially stronger than if we went to market alone.

The economic climate of 2023 is rocky, and already we've seen companies make hard decisions — Microsoft among them. How do you navigate these uncomfortable moments and show up as a good leader for your team?

Yes, the tech industry has had a tremendous growth spurt in the last 3-5 years, and things are now balancing out based on the new reality. Lots of companies are making hard decisions. In this atmosphere, I go back to strategy — what is the goal, how are we going to do it? We are creating the framework, looking closely at what we are prioritising, deciding what we're going to do (or not going to do), and doing all of this in close collaboration with our employees and partners.

I think there are a few important things to keep in mind during these times. I believe my role is to help everyone see how they are contributing to the strategy, what we're going to do and what we will achieve. Our goals and priorities have to be super clear and people have to be connected to them.

The other thing that is of paramount importance is company culture. It would be easy to dismiss or ignore culture when things are difficult. But this is exactly when a healthy culture is most important. Our CEO has been known to say "culture eats strategy for breakfast," and that's what he's talking about.

My personal mentor taught me that people are essential to the success of anything. They are the essence. In every customer conversation, sales opportunity, partner conversation, internal conversation, you have to bring in the people component. Any relationship starts with trust.



What's your favorite technology right now?

I'm a fan of Artificial Intelligence (AI). I think the potential of AI is almost boundless. I see it as a complement to the talent — AI can answer the common moments and provide the process pieces. When the mundane and rote tasks are managed, it will provide freedom for people to focus on strategy, design and innovation.

> I think the potential of AI is almost boundless. I see it as a complement to the talent — AI can answer the common moments and provide the process pieces.

A difficult but essential skill in leadership is the ability to give and receive feedback. What's your approach to feedback?

I LOVE feedback. I seek it out. I can tell who is actually invested in my success because they give me candid feedback. One of the greatest lessons I learned in graduate school is about the feedback loop. The thing to do, right when you walk out of the meeting, is talk with the person next to you — your colleague, peer, boss, direct report — any of them. Ask what you did well, what could you do differently or better. I think of it as an always-on



feedback loop. I believe the truest form of support is constructive feedback. When people give me constructive feedback, it means they care about my success. They want me to be the best I can be. They wouldn't give feedback if they didn't care.

At Insight, we're all about giving our teammates and clients the support and confidence to be ambitious. What's an ambition of yours? Have you achieved it yet?

Someday I want to be the Chief Customer Storyteller. I believe in the power of customer storytelling and making them the ambassadors of what you're doing and driving. Our partners are the hero motion. My ambition is that we don't go to market talking about the "what." I want us to go to market by highlighting the success our customers are experiencing, not the functionality we provide. This is something I'm always working on and I believe it will be a constant goal.

What advice would you give to business leaders in 2023?

If we learned anything from the pandemic, it's the importance of agility. We all had to shift to be successful — restaurants started focusing on take out, retailers enabled curbside pickup and telehealth became a common way to help patients. I think this is going to be a lifelong skill business leaders should try to develop.



Leaders should be looking for opportunities to meet the shifting needs of their customers, their supply chains, their employees and their partners. Instead of staying comfortable with "how we've always done it," we should be challenging ourselves to rethink what's possible.

Instead of staying comfortable with "how we've always done it," we should be challenging ourselves to rethink what's possible.

Be inspired by other ambitious leaders. Browse our full CxO Corner collection.

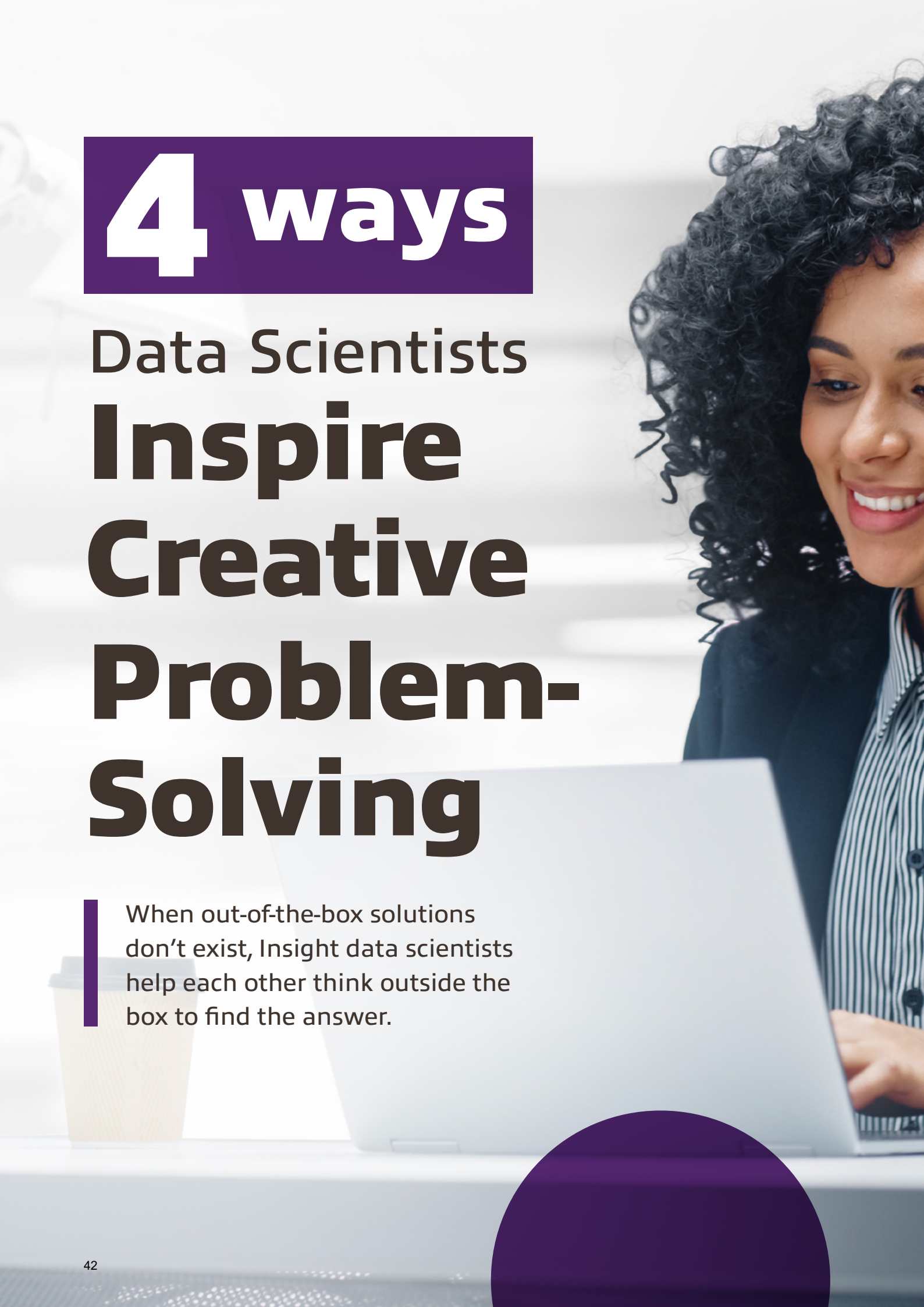


Microsoft

4 ways

Data Scientists Inspire Creative Problem-Solving

When out-of-the-box solutions don’t exist, Insight data scientists help each other think outside the box to find the answer.





The phrase "think outside the box" is an invitation to be creative and take the lead with innovative ideas. However, those of us working with cutting-edge methods and technology can sometimes default to comfortable and familiar approaches.

To break out of the mold, our Artificial Intelligence (AI) team at Insight uses a handful of high-impact practices to encourage "out-of-the-box" thinking to solve unique challenges for our partners and clients in novel and effective ways. Here are four ways we unlock creative problem-solving.

1



Dedicate time for collaborative innovation.

Creative solutions take time to cultivate. Our Innovate@Insight program is a framework we use to allocate time and resources to credit and celebrate inventions from all Insight teammates, at every level. Innovate@Insight offers a psychologically safe environment to share and test new ideas to a network of industry and legal experts who help inventors capture their intellectual property and apply for patents. Each week, our teammates meet to seek and provide support to novel approaches that often turn into repeatable solutions for clients.

2



Use lessons learned across industries.

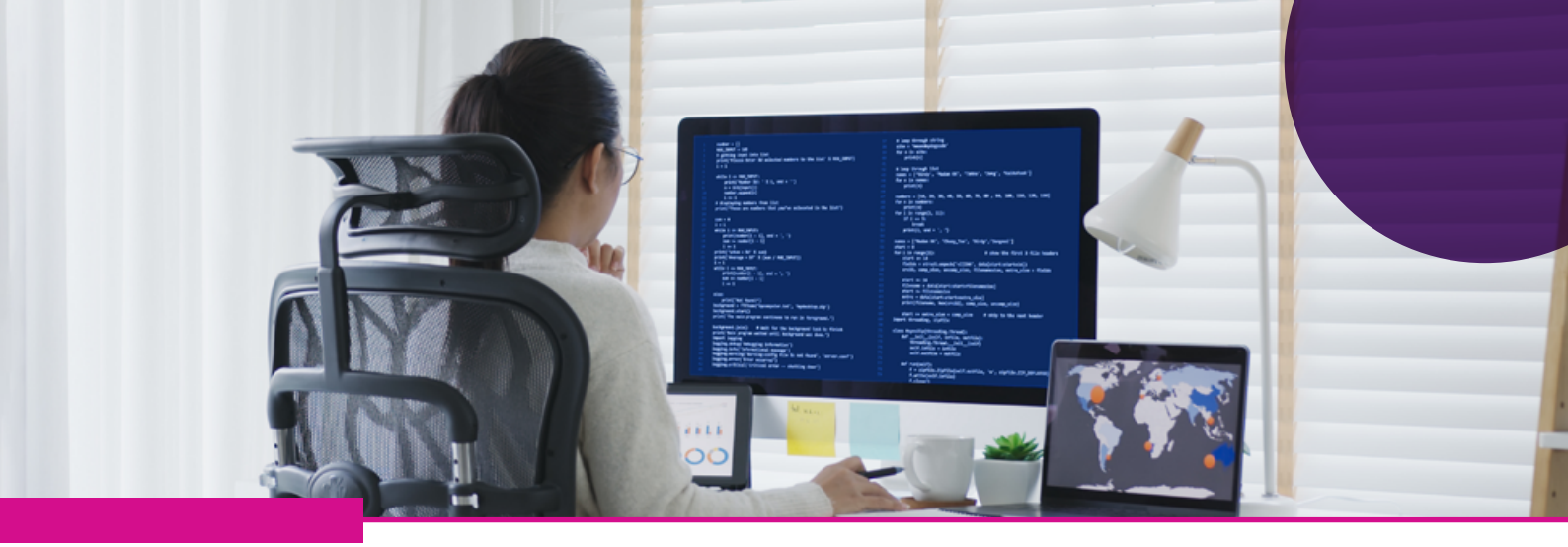
When we develop AI solutions for a given industry, we sometimes forget the value of the lessons we've learned from applied AI in other industry verticals. Coming together as a team can revitalise those transferable use cases.

> When we develop AI solutions for a given industry, we sometimes forget the value of the lessons we've learned from applied AI in other industry verticals. **Coming together as a team can revitalise those transferable use cases.**

For example, we created a computer vision solution for one of the world's largest brewing companies to improve manufacturing line operations and product quality by spotting misplaced labels on cans and bottles in real time. Using the same computer vision technology, we partnered with a U.S. nonprofit academic medical center to detect spinal fractures from x-rays.

Another example: The forecasting techniques traditionally used to predict downturns in stock prices are the same techniques that are successful at preemptively warning a driver their tire pressure is critically low.

Recently, our team applied machine learning to optimise staffing for improved airport baggage transport — but the same automation system could be plugged into several other problems in other verticals, such as barista planning for optimal coffee order fulfillment, or customer tech support allocation for optimal ticket resolution.



We owe this cross-industry innovation to the diversity of our team's professional background in both data science and a variety of verticals.

3

Stay human-centric.

As data scientists, we're thrilled when we identify opportunity to use the latest and greatest in AI technology. However, directing too much focus to technology is a common mistake that can prevent us from understanding the business problem, which is a human experience problem at its core.

At Insight, we start with design-thinking workshops with our clients to identify the root user experience needs.

One workshop we conducted with a commercial construction components manufacturer started with a seemingly straightforward but critical problem definition: improve time to shipment of finished goods. After only one day of dedicated focus on interviewing and empathising with over 20 roles across the organisation, we identified root causes for the time-to-shipment problem. This enabled us to define 10 refined problem statements that were actionable with small, targeted investments in AI and the Internet of Things (IoT), including novel technology combinations for product tracking, tools for human resource management and real-time analytics enabled on the plant floor.

Not only do we arrive at more effective innovation with a human-centric approach, we've found that data science projects often fail when we neglect this step.

4

Solution with responsibility.

When AI experts begin solutioning, we often start with the question "Can we solve this problem with AI?"

Because Insight is committed to upholding responsible AI practices, we challenge the question "Can we?" with a more important question: "Should we?"

The use of AI in decision-making raises important ethical questions, such as how to ensure AI systems are fair and unbiased and how to protect people's safety, privacy and security.

Thinking outside the box is sometimes an exercise in knowing when to use AI and when to lean on alternative methods for decision support.

For example, mortgage loan approvals are a use case for AI, but historical data often introduces discriminatory biases that are difficult to systematically detect in AI models.

Instead of solutioning a stand-alone AI model, we might instead engineer a "human-in-the-loop" step in the final decision support system so that a loan officer can observe the historic factors that influence the AI-produced approval or denial. Even state-of-the-art AI models may lack the transparency or sophistication needed to protect us from unfavorable outcomes.

Creativity is a building block of ambition. Learn how our innovators are patenting solutions for the world.



About the author

Meagan Gentry
National AI Practice Manager, Insight



Azure Guardian

Visibility and cost optimisation of your Azure estate



Strike the right balance for a governance model on Azure usage and billing management that still fosters enterprise cloud agility and innovation. As a specialist, yet lightweight service, Insight specialists will provide regular reporting to summarise findings on costs and potential remediation activities.

Key Benefits:

- **Cloud Governance & Cost Optimisation:** Proactive reporting of Azure tenant and subscriptions.
- **Confident Azure ownership:** Assurance that your cloud infrastructure is aligning to best-practices for workload right-sizing and assistance with remediation of quarterly findings.
- **Easy access to Expert Assistance:** Insight's Customer Success Manager will engage Insight's Azure experts, including consultants and architects to deliver the findings and assessments and help you on the road to uplift your cloud maturity in-house.
- **Cost-effective, lightweight Service:** Minimal oversight and engagement required in this lightweight service as a fast start to uplifting your organisation's cloud management maturity

Learn More about Insight's Azure Guardian service

Insight®

CASE STUDY

The University of Sydney

Evolving the software asset management maturity of Australia's first university



OVERVIEW

Australia's first university, The University of Sydney, has around 73,000 students and 8,100 continuing and fixed-term staff.

To fulfil its mission of contributing to a better world, the university provides each of these staff and students with access to the software they need to do their best work, wherever they are.

Managing such a diverse collection of software—across different faculties and users, and from a wide range of vendors—was proving to be a major challenge for the university's vendor management team, which had recently assumed responsibility for SAM.

Without any SAM solution in place, or data-led insights, the team was essentially flying blind. It was extremely difficult to keep up with licensing refresh cycles, ensure seamless compliance with vendor software audits, and minimise software-related costs and risks for the university. Recognising the clear need for change, the university called on Insight for help.

Insight worked with the university to develop and implement a new SAM solution that provides detailed and at-a-glance visibility regarding the software utilised by the university. Insight was also engaged to provide continuous support and strategic advice via an ongoing SAM-as-a-Service (SAMaaS) contract.

This new approach to SAM has completely evolved how the university consumes and manages its software—saving over $AU1 million in unnecessary licensing costs, streamlining its software refresh and auditing processes, and delivering essential insights and visibility.



THE UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY

FACTS AT A GLANCE

Industry: Education

Challenge: Providing software to 80,000+ users across different locations, departments and faculties—and from a diverse selection of software vendors—was complex, costly, and hard to control.

Solution: Insight partnered with The University of Sydney to implement a new software asset management (SAM) solution and provide ongoing management services to help with licensing, vendor management, risk minimisation and cost optimisation.

Results: A far more consolidated and data-led approach to SAM which has saved the university in excess of AU$1 million a year, de-risked the software auditing process and delivered crucial visibility and insight.

THE CHALLENGE

Enabling innovation while managing the complex software requirements of 80,000+ users.

One of the world's most prestigious educational institutions, the University of Sydney has eight academic faculties, and offers the widest range of academic programs of any university in Australia. Its teachers, researchers and leading thinkers are paving the way for solutions to complex global issues which affect our health, environment and culture.

To deliver on its mission of contributing to a better world—and to drive critical innovation—the university provides both staff and students with access to the



software they need. However, managing such a diverse collection of software—across different faculties and users, and from a wide range of vendors—was proving very difficult.

The university lacked a dedicated in resource for software asset management (SAM), and it had become the responsibility of their vendor management team, which already had other priorities. Keeping up with licensing refresh cycles and volumes was very complex, especially with so many diverse employment contracts and technology requirements.

The team lacked detailed insights as to where money was being spent, and whether or not the university was over- or under-paying for its software licensing.

Meeting the requirements of vendor software audits was also very time-consuming and laborious as the data required was not readily available. There was also the ongoing risk of unintentional non-compliance, which would bring hefty fines and penalties.

The university called on Insight, their established IT partner, for help.

THE SOLUTION

Access to the right data combined with ongoing expertise and service

After working closely with the university's vendor management team to understand its requirements, Insight developed and deployed a SAM solution—providing stakeholders with ready access to all of the details they need, at-a-glance, via a clear interface. Members of the vendor management team can now see where money is being spent, and can access data on refresh cycles, licensing volumes and potential issues of non-compliance.

> *"Insight's expertise, understanding of our business and clarity in delivering information has been outstanding. I cannot fault them. They have gone above and beyond to deliver."*
>
> **Emiliano Fisanotti**
> Head of Vendor Management
> University of Sydney

However, as time went on, the vendor management team realised that the time associated with SAM was still considerable, and they lacked the internal expertise to get the most out of the solution.

"We originally started by engaging Insight to roll out a solution to help with software asset management. However we soon realised that just by implementing a solution doesn't mean you instantly get the best out of it," says Emiliano Fisanotti, the University's Head of Vendor Management.

"It was like we'd bought a fancy new car, but didn't really know how to drive it properly," he adds. "This is where Insight has been able to add enormous value".

Insight was therefore engaged to provide integrated Software Asset Management lifecycle delivery as a monthly continuous service to the university, which involves the provision of several key services:

- Day-to-day license management, including updates and renewals.
- Software vendor liaison and management.
- Support with vendor software compliance audits.
- Identifying opportunities for cost-savings and risk reduction.
- Supporting with SAM policy and process development

"We have a really great relationship with Insight – it's the reason we keep extending our contract. We very much rely on them to help us make our SAM more sustainable, and to identify opportunities for risk and cost reduction," says Emiliano.

"Insight helps us ensure we're prepared for whatever the future holds, while also ensuring we have what we need right now. Insight lives and breathes the practice of SAM. This goes way beyond simply knowing how to interpret an interface and use data. It's about making intelligent observations and decisions that work for both staff, students and the university as a whole," he adds.

> *"Universities have complex software requirements and organisational structures making software lifecycle management difficult. Emiliano understood that maintaining an in-house SAM team with fresh knowledge across all the major software publishers is not easy. With Insight, the University of Sydney has access to specialist IP across all the major software publishers. The University of Sydney has also been able to call on our SAM strategy expertise and operational know-how to further their continuous improvement agenda to reduce waste, reduce risk and optimise software and SaaS spend. "*
>
> **Natalie Rice**
> Practice Lead



THE RESULTS

Vastly reduced risks and costs and a more streamlined and effective approach to software asset management

Insight has completely transformed the university's approach to SAM—saving money, reducing risk and alleviating the burden of ongoing management from the vendor management team.

By right-sizing software licensing, the university has been able to save around a million dollars a year alone.

The risk and negative marketing associated audits has also been eliminated, and the university now has absolute confidence their licensing is current and accurate.

"It's hard to put a monetary value on the impact of a poor audit response, but the fall-out from not meeting requirements would have a very negative impact on our reputation," says Emiliano. "With Insight providing ongoing SAM services, this is something we don't need to worry about anymore," he adds.

"It's been a pleasure working with Insight. They genuinely understand our university and how we work, and have done a smashing job – especially given there are so many complexities involved with how we utilise software across our university

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