Beyond reading tea leaves - predicting with big data

2017 Partner of the Year Winner
Business Analytics
Neal Analytics is the “crystal ball” for businesses across the globe, reading streams of data to solve business problems by accurately predicting the future. From flavors to fashions, data tells us what people are eating, drinking, and buying, as well as the when, where, and how of each transaction. Imagine using a combination of your internal data and your customers’ sales data to dramatically improve both their experiences and your bottom line. Neal Analytics did exactly this for Coke One North America, helping them drive innovation across their bottling partners.

Coke One North America, or CONA for short, is an IT and innovation organization serving Coca-Cola bottlers across North America. Neal Analytics, Microsoft’s 2017 Partner of the Year for Business Analytics, helped CONA target the most impactful scenarios in their business. Of the solutions envisioned by the CONA team, the most impactful was product portfolio optimization using Microsoft Azure Machine Learning. Today, Neal’s algorithm, customized to fit CONA’s business logic, helps the company put the right products in the right stores at the right time—all while presenting recommendations on interactive dashboards tailored for each role in the operations and analytics organizations. The result? A big lift in same store sales and a new way of tracking business and driving growth.

“CONA, a large beverage industry customer, wanted to make sure the bottlers they work with are selling the right products for each market. Even though this company is already very successful, they knew there were incremental gains that could be achieved that would be measurable and quite sizeable in some cases. So, one of the projects we did with them was to use advanced analytics to understand which are the right SKUs to put in stores at the right time to effectively meet customer demographics and preferences. This immediately generated several novel insights and resulted in a resounding impact across their bottler ecosystem.”

Greg Gomez, VP of Sales
We help ensure that companies are putting the optimal mix of products on the shelf so to maximize revenue and profitability, to improve customer loyalty and to enhance the overall experience.

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Partner to partner insights:
- Apply a business-first approach to driving technology transformation
- Design repeatable solutions and managed services
- Build a strong partnership with Microsoft
- Create value based pricing: customer should see 10X the value of the price charged
- Maximize customer success: customer success is partner success

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Neal Analytics’ success story with CONA could have been a typical “one and done” solution. But leaders within the company looked at the bigger picture and had an epiphany. If this customized solution was such a rousing success with one company, then why not invest and create something scalable? “Every company is trying to solve the same core set of needs: customer engagement, consumer insights, better planning of inventory and forecasting demand,” says Dylan Dias, Co-Founder and Chief Innovator at Neal Analytics. According to Dias, data science can deliver insights on all fronts because, “data is the new oil, the lifeblood of an organization.”

Based on the work delivered to CONA, Neal Analytics designed SKU Max, an algorithm for retailers and consumer goods companies that makes inventory data actionable. Built on Microsoft Azure, the solution employs Azure Machine Learning to run big-data processing routines which were prohibitively expensive and difficult prior to cloud computing.
Leveraging Microsoft AppSource to generate customer leads

Since first deploying SKU Max, Neal Analytics has continued to evolve the solution. The goal was to take the solution from a project delivery model to a more repeatable SaaS configuration where it can be deployed in a matter of days or weeks instead of months.

Microsoft’s Cloud Solutions Provider (CSP) licensing model gives Neal Analytics access to the entire data analytics stack available through Azure’s own billing platform. This access enables Neal to strategically deliver bite-sized insights with less effort while protecting valuable IP. Another key to the product’s success comes from Neal Analytics’ access to Microsoft AppSource, a solution showcase website that shows Microsoft Partner offerings for customers, helps Neal Analytics deliver its product to a wide audience. “In the first few weeks of SKU Max’s release in AppSource, we saw a pipeline of more than 100 leads,” says Dias.

Enabled by Microsoft’s CSP licensing model and served by Microsoft’s AppSource marketplace, Neal Analytics continues to transform its business—moving away from custom projects and towards a managed services model that focuses on more rapid time-to-value. According to Dias, “managed services are a key component of how to bring value in the age of the cloud and in the age of software as a service.” Neal Analytics relies on Microsoft programs to help foster repeatable services that can be delivered in a managed service modality.

“Managed Services is a much better place for us to be going forward. I see much of our revenue shifting away from custom projects towards these types of projects.”

Greg Gomez, VP of Sales

“We’ve doubled revenue...we see explosive growth ahead of us in 2017 and beyond.”

Dylan Dias, Co-founder and CEO
Artificial Intelligence, Internet of Things, and Neal’s Future

Growth and change are constants in technology, and Neal continues to evolve, embracing Microsoft’s innovations and using them to drive tangible change and mature the state-of-the-art capabilities around analytics. Recently, Neal has engaged in exciting projects involving Artificial Intelligence, and predicting the future through data analysis, as is referenced in Deschutes Brewery’s publications.

“Machine learning is becoming even more prevalent and useful, and with Microsoft’s modern advances in AI, it’s becoming even more easy to access” says David Brown, Neal’s Alliance manager. Currently, Neal is developing and using Azure IoT Suite and IoT Hub as a part of current projects and ongoing practice development. Neal has delivered several projects using Microsoft’s BOT framework and Cognitive Services, in unique and transformative ways, demonstrating how these technologies are becoming more mainstream. Bolstered by Microsoft’s advancements, Neal Analytics further pursues innovative solutions in the world of big data and advanced intelligence.

“With Microsoft as our partner, Neal Analytics has been able to bridge the gap between providing consulting services, which limit scale due to complexity and resource requirements, and products, which are well defined offerings that are repeatable and easy to deploy. With the help of programs like AppSource and CSP, we can scale better and engage with customers in entirely new dimensions, all while protecting our Data Science IP better than ever before.”

David McClellan, Practice Director

Partner to Partner Insights:

- Create a clear direction of where a solution is headed and what kind of transformation, digital or otherwise, you can bring to a customer’s business
- Recruit talent that has a passion and interest in doing this kind of work
- Create fulfilling work environments and interesting work scenarios, be it with a project, or with new technology

Learn more about Neal Analytics Solutions
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