



Collaborating for Innovation Success

DXC's Applied Innovation Hub realises significant benefits for client

Client: Leading Australian Insurer

Location: Australia

Industry: Insurance

Challenge

- Client lacked visibility of premium transaction information for key external stakeholders
- Important clients with large dollar value premiums needed answers to payment and value questions
- With information locked away on mainframe systems, the customer service approach to gain answers was manual, complex and lengthy

Solution

- Mainframe Cloud, a provider of mainframe solutions for the digital generation was selected to partner with DXC in the Applied Innovation Hub
- Underlying mainframe data was natively exposed to facilitate fast development of a new digital application to address the client's business problem - without any need for legacy code
- The solution unlocks mainframe data and allows application development in modern languages

Results

- The client has leveraged new technology more rapidly to solve a significant business problem
- The project highlighted the potential for a range of other similar projects to cost effectively expose mainframe data
- The DXC / Mainframe Cloud collaboration confirmed the Applied Innovation Hub can bring innovation to clients very quickly

The new Applied Innovation Hub is already realising significant benefits for DXC clients through collaboration with startups offering ground-breaking and emerging technologies. Providing a distinctive offering in the region, DXC partnered with Stone & Chalk, Australia's leading start-up community accelerator, to launch the Applied Innovation Hub in April 2018.

At the time, Seelan Nayagam, Managing Director Australia & New Zealand, DXC Technology described collaborating with startups as important, with the DXC Applied Innovation Hub driving the conversion of innovation ideas to tangible solutions. DXC Technology's vision is clear in the following remark from Daniel Biondi, CTO Australia & New Zealand: "The Applied Innovation Hub was designed to create an ecosystem that included startups, scaleups, technology partners and customers to solve real business problems. Innovation is easy when the right people, with the right ideas have a seat at the table."

Commenting on the partnership at the time, Alex Scandurra, Stone & Chalk CEO, framed the collaboration as a step change in both the awareness and recognition by corporate Australia that a key part of future success lies in the huge potential of partnering with top quality startups and scaleups.

Collaboration with the innovation ecosystem is critical

DXC already works with partners to solve its client's business problems, however wanted to extend that by harnessing the power of emerging technologies and startups. Facilitating collaboration, the Applied Innovation Hub supports startups and scaleups in developing and commercialising new solutions for clients, reducing the time to market for innovation in emerging technologies, and allowing direct interaction with larger enterprises.

The partnership includes the capability for DXC and client teams to collaborate and work alongside startups and scaleups to apply real innovation to client businesses and further develop those solutions for commercialisation.

Matthew Gusti, Program Manager for the Applied Innovation Hub explained, "it introduces a completely new way of working together with our clients. By collaborating with the startup community at Stone & Chalk, we leverage not only the cutting edge technology being created in this space, but also the mindset and thinking of entrepreneurs to challenge our own ways of working."

Solving business problems is the goal

One of DXC's long term clients recently presented an important business issue they needed addressed. The client, currently in the early stages of a substantial digital transformation, will make significant changes to business operations. Paul Cronin, Account Chief Technologist, Insurance at DXC commented, "Everything about the way this client currently does business is changing - with most of their existing processes affected. And as is often the case, the client needed to deliver a quick win in the early stages of the transformation."

Success Story: Leading Australian Insurer

The use case in question lacked visibility of premium transaction information for key external stakeholders. These stakeholders are primarily important clients with large dollar value premiums, who needed answers to premium payment and value questions. Since the information was locked away on mainframe systems, the required approach by customer service personnel to gain answers was manual, complex and lengthy.

Incubate and innovate

The usual Applied Innovation Hub approach involves issuing the challenge to the community and selecting a startup to proceed. The startup then works to solve the problem during an agile program up to 12-weeks of open ideation, design thinking and rapid prototyping. In this case, the client needed to see very quick wins, so the partner was given a deadline of just five weeks.

The partner selected was Mainframe Cloud, a provider of mainframe solutions for the digital generation. Mainframe Cloud creates solutions that expose mainframe data and other business critical information via a RESTful Gateway. By natively exposing underlying data, digital applications can be developed rapidly in modern languages which negates the need for legacy code.

Ben Pearson, CEO and Co-Founder of Mainframe Cloud explained, “We established Mainframe Cloud to make the mainframe more accessible to the digital generation. It’s estimated that between 70-80% of the world’s data originates and resides on mainframes, but the programming languages that underpin mainframe applications are largely obsolete. There is a massive skills shortage looming in the mainframe space and organisations are simply not able to respond.”

In response to these issues, Mainframe Cloud developed a solution to unlock mainframe data and allow application development in modern languages using programming skills readily available in today’s market.

DXC and Mainframe Cloud worked together within the Applied Innovation Hub to collaboratively focus on the task. In this case the client was not able to work on site, however the interaction was daily. Pearson continued, “Mainframe projects are typically slow and cumbersome, but we needed to demonstrate how our solution offered a fast and cost-effective alternative to the current paradigm. Our teams sat together and worked in an agile environment with a number of defined sprints and daily stand-ups to track progress against milestones, and re-plan where necessary. We were in constant liaison with the DXC project team, and visited the client at their premises twice. This level of interaction was entirely necessary for a project of this nature and the Applied Innovation Hub facilitates that.”

Learn fast and iterate

A clear definition of expectations established up front means that all parties understand exactly what success looks like. If designs throughout the program don’t meet the success criteria, they are quickly closed and re-assessed, preventing prolonged investment and time wasting. Pearson said, “We were able to achieve our tight deadline and very quickly showcase how the technology would work in the client’s environment. As a result, we gained the client’s confidence that the tech was viable; perhaps more importantly it highlighted potential for a range of other similar projects designed to cost effectively expose mainframe data.”

Success breeds success

This offering is very exciting for DXC - moving from talking about innovation to actually applying innovation and achieving a very quick and significant win for the client. Paul Cronin said, "This project has demonstrated that we can solve complex client problems and that's our main goal. It's helped lift us outside of the traditional services that we're providing and demonstrated to the client that we're a viable player for inclusion in their overall digital transformation strategy. The initial engagement and success has confirmed that the Applied Innovation Hub has addressed a gap in the marketplace".

Ben Pearson continued, "From our perspective, it underlines the importance of collaboration - we would never have access to this type of client if it wasn't for this partnership. But likewise, the client wouldn't have access to our technology either."

DXC Technology's relationship with this client extends back some 25 years managing their mainframe environment. If Mainframe Cloud wasn't able to leverage that existing relationship through the Applied Innovation Hub, it would have been difficult to approach the client directly.

Pearson concluded, "Working out of Stone & Chalk with access to the DXC team, and seeing the other incubations coming to life is also an important part of the process. The Applied Innovation Hub is a really important initiative and one that has positioned DXC as a thought leader. It's providing an ideal avenue for Australian entrepreneurs to showcase new technology where previously they might have been perceived as too risky for large companies to partner with."

About DXC Technology

DXC Technology [DXC: NYSE] is the world's leading independent, end-to-end IT services company, serving nearly 6,000 private and public-sector clients from a diverse array of industries across 70 countries. The company's technology independence, global talent and extensive partner network deliver transformative digital offerings and solutions that help clients harness the power of innovation to thrive on change. DXC Technology is recognized among the best corporate citizens globally. For more information, visit www.dxc.technology.