Business challenge

CBA Strategic IT Ltd. wanted to develop a game-changing offering that would unlock the full potential of unstructured data, enabling better informed decision making.

Transformation

IBM Business Partner CBA worked with IBM® Watson® and IBM Cloud™ technologies to develop its new CAITO Knowledge Platform, an AI-based intelligence gathering, expertise management and knowledge transfer solution.

Christine Bear
Managing Director
IBM Business Partner
CBA Strategic IT Ltd.

Results

Increases accessibility
of unstructured information, leading to faster business decisions, risk mitigation and service delivery

Delivers real-time information
increasing productivity and cutting the costs associated with traditional searches

Simplifies knowledge transfer
freeing up the time of key subject matter experts (SMEs)

CBA Strategic IT Ltd.

Unlocking actionable intelligence, leading to faster, better decisions

Founded in 1992, IBM Business Partner CBA originally provided business strategy execution and software implementation services for customers around the world. But in 2011, the business spun off the CBA Strategic IT organization, focusing this branch on developing and implementing specialized AI and cognitive solutions. The company, with its corporate headquarters in Auckland, New Zealand, operates globally, catering to a diverse set of large enterprise customers, including commercial businesses and government agencies.

"What would change if subject matter experts could spend their time gaining or creating new knowledge rather than just transferring that knowledge?"

—Christine Bear, Managing Director, IBM Business Partner CBA Strategic IT Ltd.

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An open invitation

For the past several years, CBA had operated as an IBM Business Partner, incorporating IBM software into its solutions to help drive increased value for customers. But roughly three years ago, IBM reached out to the firm with an intriguing recommendation.

"IBM approached us stating that they thought we would be an ideal partner for their new Watson technology," recalls Christine Bear, Managing Director at CBA. "They told us, 'You've had a strategic IT business for over 15 years, and you've had a successful strategic consultancy business for even longer, which would make you a great fit.'"

With its interest piqued, CBA took time to examine this new platform, considering the possibilities of what it could do. In particular, the business was interested in exploiting how much more quickly the Watson™ platform could parse multiple pools of data to provide actionable business intelligence.

"Where there's knowledge, there's power," explains Bear. "And the ways of imparting knowledge at the moment rely largely on sharing that information from person to person. It's very inefficient. Right now, over 80 percent of global information is unstructured. But what would change if subject matter experts could spend their time gaining or creating new knowledge rather than just transferring that knowledge?"

Fond of questions, she continues, asking, "How would the world change if we could access and share knowledge in real time — no matter where we worked or were located? What could we do if people were empowered to individually explore information and learn across disciplines in ways that don't follow pre-set structures? What if we could always support key business decisions with information that was previously inaccessible?"

These questions and many more drove CBA to develop its new Cognitive Artificial Intelligence Technology for Organizations (CAITO) offering.

A challenge met

"We had some challenges," Bear continues. "But we were trying to do something that was fairly complex and involved expanding our technology capabilities — after all, we have two patents pending regarding our first solution. If it was too simple, like a quick search of files, it wouldn't have a big impact. We wanted to develop an enterprise-level, seamless solution that had many capabilities built into it."

"For one business we are working with, it would take one person a minimum of 3 - 7 days to search and compile information for just one straightforward report. With CAITO that information can be accessed in real time."

—Christine Bear, Managing Director, IBM Business Partner CBA Strategic IT Ltd.

The CAITO offering brings a company's vast unstructured data, including relevant external information, into a unified framework of knowledge repositories within the tool. Users can then search these repositories with natural language queries, focusing searches on a particular area of the business or expanding them across organizations, geographies and cloud environments.

Even better, SMEs within the user organization can quickly and easily train the AI-based solution with industry- and domain-specific knowledge that will improve the reliability, relevance and quality of information delivered. Similarly, other users can contribute to the training of the solution over time.

CBA built the new CATIO offering using various cognitive technologies, including the IBM Watson Discovery solution, which provides an adaptable, intuitive search and analytics engine that helps unlock actionable intelligence from users' unstructured data. And CBA also relies on the IBM Cloud Foundry and IBM Cloud Kubernetes Service offerings to help manage and monitor the surrounding cloud environment.

A rewarding journey

With the CAITO offering, companies can more easily unlock the valuable information that is contained within their business systems, leading to faster decision making and increased efficiency. "For one business we are working with," recalls Bear, "it would take one person a minimum of 3–7 days to search and compile information for just one straightforward report. With CAITO that information can be accessed in real time. The potential productivity and cost savings are huge."

Similarly, SMEs can disseminate critical business information more easily, training just the CAITO solution instead of several coworkers. And users can have access to this broad pool of knowledge from any solution-enabled mobile device.

CBA has also taken advantage of its position as an IBM Business Partner to bolster its marketing efforts and drive increased interest from potential buyers. "We are fortunate to be an IBM Business Partner and have behind us the credibility and expertise that IBM has," adds Bear. "And it's great for us to have a partner where we can say, 'They've invested millions and millions of dollars in this, you can trust it.'"