



# Customer Case Study: Loyalty NZ

Loyalty NZ unlocks the power of data intelligence with Alation



- **Industry:** Business Services
- **Headquarters:** Wellington & Auckland, New Zealand
- **Interesting Fact:** New Zealand’s first and favourite loyalty program Flybuys has over 2.8 million members across 80% of New Zealand households.

## Turning Data into Business Outcomes

As the loyalty, marketing, and data analytics powerhouse behind New Zealand’s Flybuys program, Loyalty NZ has been the custodian of an extensive customer behavioural dataset spanning more than half the population for 26 years. Flybuys, New Zealand’s most loved loyalty program, rewards customers for their purchases at participating retailers and service providers. Customers redeem Flybuys rewards for discounts on products and services, travel rewards, and experiences.

The loyalty and data-driven customer engagement sector has become increasingly competitive, making marketing automation and personalised customer engagement more critical than ever. The company needed to gain a deeper trust in their data to connect more effectively with members at the right time and place and with the right incentive via their preferred channel.

With a mission to be the country’s leading data-driven customer engagement business, Loyalty NZ recognised the need to modernise its marketing automation and personalisation capabilities. They began to transform their tech stack; they introduced a new marketing automation platform, Braze and a machine learning platform, DataRobot.

## Business Results



**Enables Customer Engagement:** Centralized data intelligence fosters informed, data-driven customer engagement



**Matures Data Culture:** Transparency and ownership create new levels of data literacy and enable data democratization



**Minimises Data Risk:** Reducing data errors and enabling automated processes

At the same time, the leadership team knew that success depended on a foundation of highly accurate and trusted data. This would require them to ramp up [data governance](#) and data validations to lower risk parameters around leveraging data in highly automated and real-time systems where there is no margin for error or opportunity for human intervention.

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Delivering a robust data foundation at scale raised an interesting issue for Loyalty NZ – how could they provide visibility of data quality and the data context so that it could be trusted by the business? The answer, they learnt, was a [Data Catalog](#).

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James Wood  
Head of Data Platforms, Loyalty NZ

## Visualising Success with Alation

Following a thorough review by a cross-section of the user community, which rated the technical capabilities and user-friendliness of a range of solutions, [Alation Data Catalog](#) was short-listed for a proof-of-concept program. This proof of concept gave the Loyalty NZ team the insights they needed into Alation’s ability to connect data and its lineage to documentation, helping it to produce a robust data integrity outcome.

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Adoption commenced, and onboarding was simplified with the Alation Right Start program. Integrating Loyalty New Zealand’s extensive customer dataset needed a very hands-on approach to understanding the provenance, classification, and authority around the data so that it could be used appropriately. The Alation team delivered a comprehensive implementation – one with a deliberate long-term plan and rollout to manage the contribution and curation of the data intelligence platform on a day-to-day basis.

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## Becoming NZ’s Leading Data-driven Customer Engagement Business

Loyalty NZ believes that data is at the forefront of informed, intelligent decisions that will drive personalised customer engagement. Launching a new marketing automation platform is a crucial use case for Alation. With a focus on self-service capabilities, the marketing campaign owners undertake the groundwork needed to devise a campaign, build an audience, and control a lot more of the campaign



delivery process than ever before. These activities previously depended on highly technical analysts that are time-poor and often caused a bottleneck in the process. Enabling a greater level of independence for Loyalty NZ’s campaign owners means that campaigns are more flexible and can be deployed faster leading to better outcomes for Loyalty NZ’s partners and members.

With the implementation of its new marketing automation platform, Loyalty NZ anticipates that the risk-reduction capabilities of Alation will become crucial to its data-driven strategy. For example, Alation can help the company avoid inappropriate data sharing and PII exposure by ensuring that practitioners follow policies on data use. Alation supports putting privacy and access controls in a single location, without impeding the ability of practitioners to work.

Alation can also prevent the misinterpretation of data. For example, email preferences are governed by a chain of tools and processes, introducing significant complexity. Without a data catalog, information and context are lost, and users often must manually search for and discover information or risk causing errors. Finally, Alation can pinpoint data source errors and pipeline breaks before inaccurate or inappropriate data is used in campaigns.

"We see Alation as an effective enabler of our strategy," says Daryl Short, Senior Business Outcomes Analyst. "Alation is the central data intelligence platform that provides a solid risk avoidance solution for automation."

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Daryl Short  
Senior Business Outcomes Analyst, Loyalty NZ

"Alation allows us to devolve the operating responsibility to the campaign owners in our marketing team, and this is an exciting journey," Short continues. "Key to this is the strong documentation pathway that Alation provides, which gives our marketing team a new level of independence. They'll also know the quality of the data at hand."

## Addressing Data Quality with a Modern Data Stack

Loyalty NZ built a modern data stack, and has recently deployed DataRobot and Braze alongside the Alation Data Catalog and [Governance app](#). The company is also transitioning from its existing data quality tool to an open-source tool, Soda, to ensure everyone can find, analyse, and take the right actions to resolve data issues. With a goal to unlock data health capabilities into the data catalog, using Soda will foster greater trust in the data and accelerate data query resolution, adding more power and trust into its data intelligence strategy.

The Loyalty NZ team has embedded the data quality results into Alation from Soda and set up instant messaging alerts across email or their in-house Slack channels. Alation is at the core of their data stack, fundamentally enriching the data to become more valuable every day.

"We expect Soda to deliver the data quality assurance that is really important for us and having these quality metrics surfaced in Alation means everything is central, transparent, and quality assured," says Wood.



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## **Creating a Strong Data Culture by Building Connections and Capturing Retained Knowledge**

Now with a strategy to build the data intelligence the organisation needs, Loyalty NZ can focus on

maturing its data culture by using Alation to build new levels of data literacy. Adopting Alation is reducing barriers between everyone in the organisation. It supports a broad range of conversations and connects people to concepts and useful discussions around data. New connections are being formed, transforming the idea of what data means to the wider community.

“Data is complicated. There is no doubt about that, and when you have the variety of data we have in our loyalty program, it means when we used to lose a member of the team, onboarding and upskilling a new team member took three to six months,” concludes Wood. “Now, if someone leaves, we retain the data knowledge, and it’s a much faster ramp-up for new starters. This is a huge shift.”

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Alation is helping to create an environment where every member of the team can be data literate. Data owners have a complete understanding and appreciation

of the data they own and their role, while data practitioners have a greater awareness of data health and the policies that surround the collection and use of data.

## About Loyalty NZ

Since 1996, [Loyalty NZ](#) has been helping New Zealand businesses build lasting customer relationships. They specialise in using data to help New Zealand businesses know more about their customers, so they can meaningfully engage with them. Their two brands – Flybuys and Lab360 – allow them to incorporate NZ’s favourite loyalty program with the richest customer dataset in the country under one roof.

### Data Environment

- AWS Data Lake
- Tableau
- DataRobot
- Braze
- Soda