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Customer Case Study: Virgin Australia

Airline Embarks on a Journey to Become Data-Driven

Virgin australia

- **Industry:** Travel & Transportation
- **Headquarters:** Brisbane, Australia
- **Interesting Fact:** Virgin Australia's 94 -aircraft fleet is the largest to use the Virgin brand

The Launch of Data Governance

Virgin Australia Group is a major Australian airline operating scheduled domestic and short-haul international flights, charter and cargo services, and the award-winning loyalty program Velocity Frequent Flyer. The Group has been a competitor in the Australian aviation landscape for more than 20 years, carrying tens of millions of passengers in that time. Virgin Australia is now embarking on an exciting new chapter having simplified its structure to an all-Boeing 737 fleet and making significant investments in technology and customer experience.

As the company has grown, so has their IT infrastructure. Historically, business units addressed their growing technology needs independently. This led to a heavily siloed architecture and communication gaps between lines of business. Executives were getting inconsistent information from different areas of the business, which made decision making challenging.

When Virgin Australia's Data Platforms team began investigating these disparities they knew exactly what needed to be done. "The issue was that business areas interpreted their data differently, with different definitions. The first thing we needed to do from a tooling

Business Results

Facilitates Data Discovery:
Analysts can find data faster so they can spend more time on analysis

Improves Data Literacy:
A common set of definitions helps users understand which data to use

Builds Data Governance:
First-ever governance framework helps address data usage & quality issues

point of view was get a [data dictionary](#) and a [data lineage](#) tool," says a data lead from the Data Platforms team.

Embracing and Improving Data Literacy

The Data Platforms team began searching for the right tool to meet Virgin Australia's needs, however, many of the options they considered simply required too much technical knowledge. "Virgin Australia is on its path to become a data-driven organisation. To do so, we need a tool that is business-oriented, easy to use, makes it easy to find information and has good collaborative tools. That's why we picked Alation," says the data lead.

With that key decision made, the Data Platforms team set out to develop Virgin Australia's first [data governance framework](#). Up to this point, the company handled governance on a case-by-case basis, using a variety of tools and software features to manage data. Now, Alation will support the new framework by applying standards, policies, and glossaries to data at the point of consumption. As a result, everyone who uses data at Virgin Australia will be working from a common set of definitions, and their data access will be governed by a carefully developed set of policies.

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> Data Platforms Team, Virgin Australia

Further bolstering Virgin Australia's data governance framework will be the ability to trace data lineage all the way to the source. If analysts or other data users have questions about a particular data set, or if [data quality](#) investigations are required, it will be a simple matter to determine where the information came from and, if necessary, address the discrepancies so they don't crop up again in the future.

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Together, these capabilities will contribute to better data literacy throughout the organisation – not just among analysts and other technical users, but among people from business roles, too. Virgin Australia's Data Platforms team believes that Alation's user-friendliness will draw in people who might not have been comfortable looking at data in the past, while Alation's collaboration tools will make it easy to ask questions and discuss datasets. As people from across the organisation begin to use Alation, data will become a natural part of business conversations.

Faster Reporting with Better Data Quality

As the implementation progresses, Virgin Australia anticipates numerous benefits to their Data Platforms team and the organisation as a whole. With Alation's user-friendly data discovery tool, data scientists and reporting analysts will be able to devote more of their time to analysing the data, developing reports, and providing executives with actionable insights into the business.

> *"Alation will bring transparency to the business and help us avoid duplication when it comes to data quality investigations."*
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> Data Platforms Team, Virgin Australia

The solution will also change the way Virgin Australia addresses data quality issues. "At the moment, there is no consistent data quality issue management approach. Alation will bring transparency to the business and help us avoid duplication when it comes to data quality investigations."

Preparing for a Strategic Cloud Migration

Like many companies today, Virgin Australia is planning to migrate all its data from on-premises servers to the cloud. They will be moving from a Greenplum database to Databricks on the Amazon Web Services (AWS) platform. Virgin Australia's Data Platforms team expects Alation's data catalogue to help analyse and curate the data before moving it. "We want to see which data is the most utilised and flag the data that may have quality issues. There's no point in moving data that's not going to be used," a spokesperson from the Data Platforms team says.

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About Virgin Australia

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Data Environment

- AWS
- Greenplum
- Databricks
- Cognos
- Power BI
- SAS