

Reaching for the skies

One**point**

Your trusted companions for the digital journey™

When one of the world's largest travel management groups wanted to reimagine the data platform that would spearhead its digital transformation, they called Onepoint

We introduced a range of innovations that underpin the platform's architecture and helped transform how frontline teams deliver better customer experiences and insights.

This client story shares the journey and the transformation that followed.

Scope

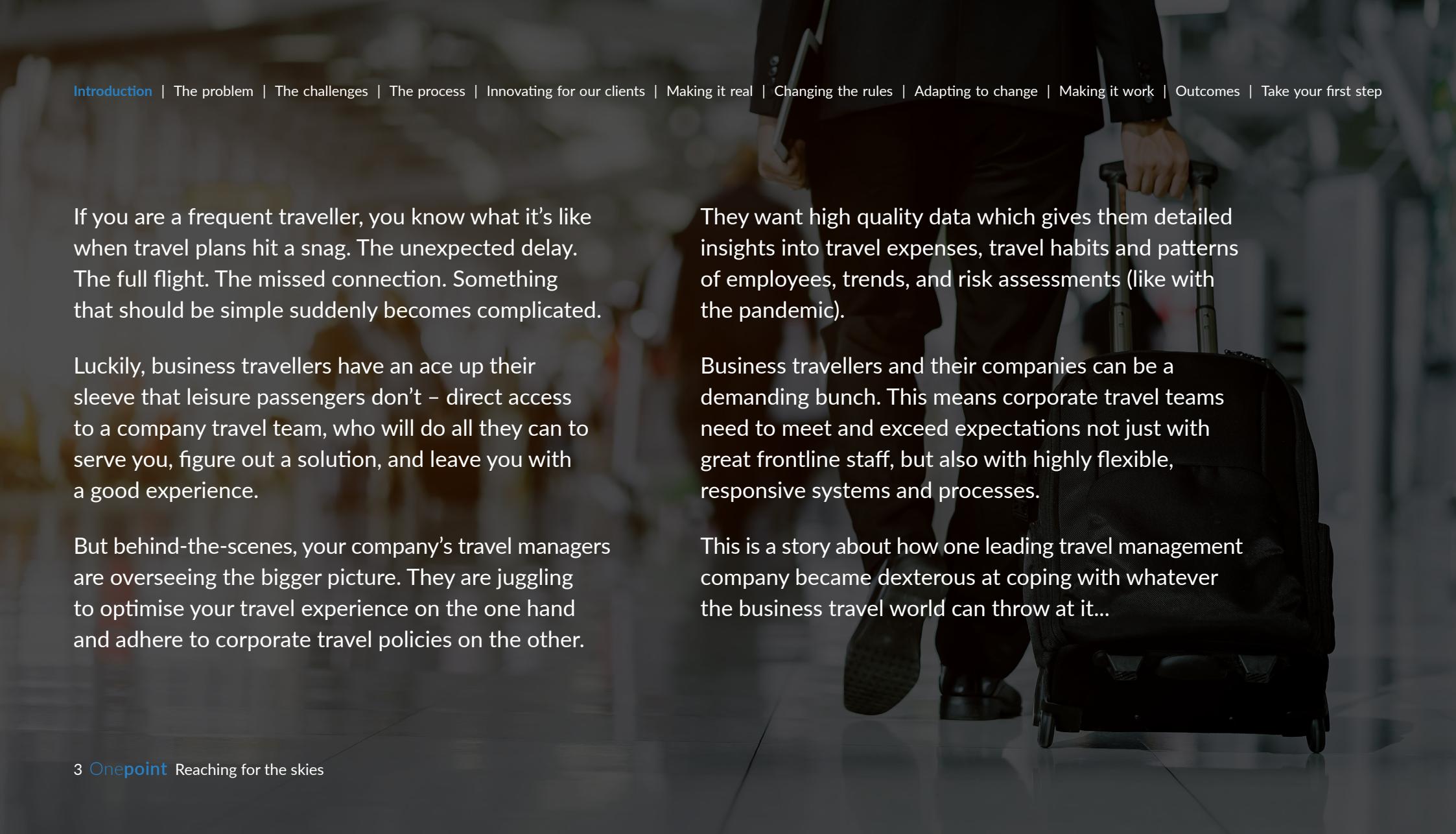
- Global custom reporting
- Data lifecycle management
- Data quality
- Business rules management
- Regulatory compliance

Technologies

- Drools
- Kubernetes
- Microsoft Azure
- Talend MDM

Business benefits

- Improved customer and colleague experience
- Improved flexibility and agility of the business
- Enhanced data quality and richness



If you are a frequent traveller, you know what it's like when travel plans hit a snag. The unexpected delay. The full flight. The missed connection. Something that should be simple suddenly becomes complicated.

Luckily, business travellers have an ace up their sleeve that leisure passengers don't – direct access to a company travel team, who will do all they can to serve you, figure out a solution, and leave you with a good experience.

But behind-the-scenes, your company's travel managers are overseeing the bigger picture. They are juggling to optimise your travel experience on the one hand and adhere to corporate travel policies on the other.

They want high quality data which gives them detailed insights into travel expenses, travel habits and patterns of employees, trends, and risk assessments (like with the pandemic).

Business travellers and their companies can be a demanding bunch. This means corporate travel teams need to meet and exceed expectations not just with great frontline staff, but also with highly flexible, responsive systems and processes.

This is a story about how one leading travel management company became dexterous at coping with whatever the business travel world can throw at it...

The rules need breaking

These days, almost all large, global businesses outsource their travel arrangements to a travel management company.

Faced with a dip in experience scores and the recognition that they needed to adapt more quickly to corporate customer demands, a leading travel management company – let's call them TravelCo – approached us about a transformational initiative.

When kicking off a travel management service with a new corporate, TravelCo works with the business to agree on a set of rules to manage and govern all of their travel (booking, reservation) data.

Over time, these rules are updated. They are adapted to changes in business scenarios and where things haven't worked as intended. Making these kinds of 'business logic' changes is difficult when they are hard-coded into systems. It becomes time consuming – and expensive.

And businesses stuck with legacy systems and policies that can't evolve with business needs, are left with frustrated customers, poor colleague experiences, and overall dissatisfaction.

TravelCo decided a digital business transformation was essential. A significant investment was needed to reimagine a new data platform to replace their legacy tooling and technical debt.

The upshot? Rather than another evolution, it was time for revolution. It was an opportunity to build a competitive differentiator, a valuable asset from the ground up – a custom-designed data management solution with the customer and colleague (i.e. total) experience at its heart, and key business outcomes as its guiding force.

Data reimagined

TravelCo knew that the system would only be as good as the quality of the data, so they wanted a trusted partner to help them reimagine the way modern data platforms are designed and managed. The company set its sights on a range of game-changing features and improvements to systems and operational processes:

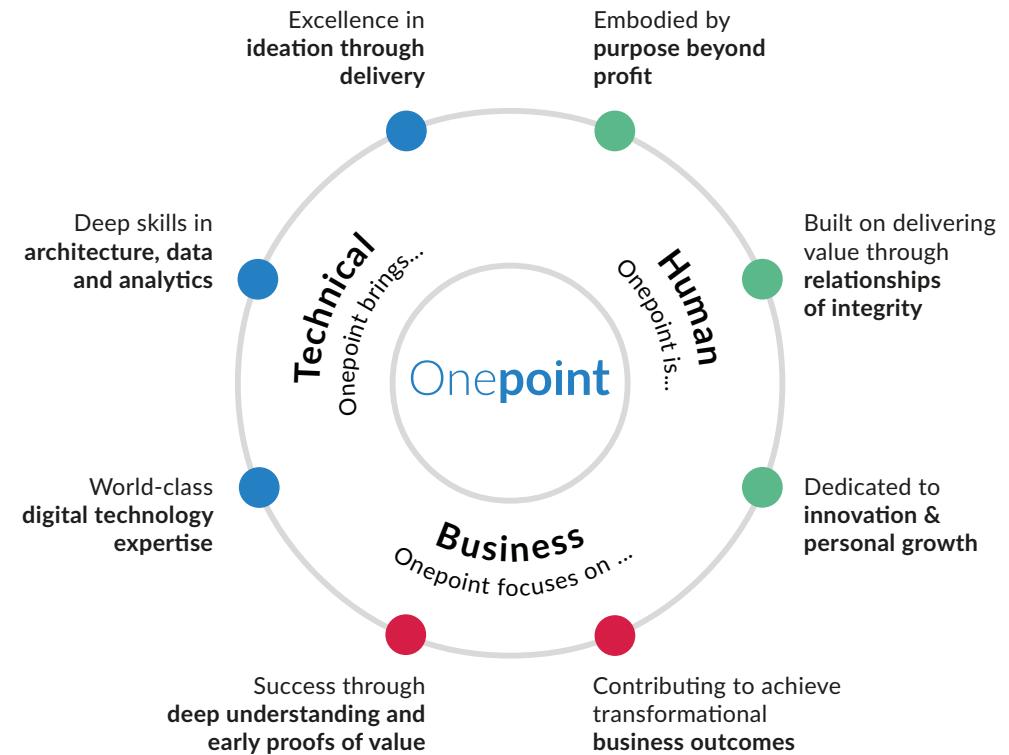
- **Significantly improved customer experience**
Build a platform capable of giving customers an unparalleled level of service and insight into their travel data.
- **Realtime reservation reporting**
Deliver accurate, enriched, and clear reservation data in realtime.
- **Conforming to regulatory requirements**
Incorporate 'data security and sovereignty by design' to comply with GDPR and other data privacy legislation.
- **Streamlined business, data, and IT**
Reduce dependency on technical staff, empowering business users to take control of the process.
- **Seamless colleague experience**
Make everything smoother and simpler, reducing manual processes, giving users the scope to adapt business rules on the fly.



Our DNA Wheel

These big, complex challenges are where we excel. For us, it's not just about selecting the right tool for the job. The technical side matters, of course, but we see challenges like this through the lens of our DNA Wheel incorporating technical expertise, human experience, and business outcomes.

There's no point having the best data platform in the world if it doesn't positively impact the business. And we know we can't help clients to our full capability until we've demonstrated our integrity and earned their trust. That's why our DNA wheel is at the heart of everything we do.



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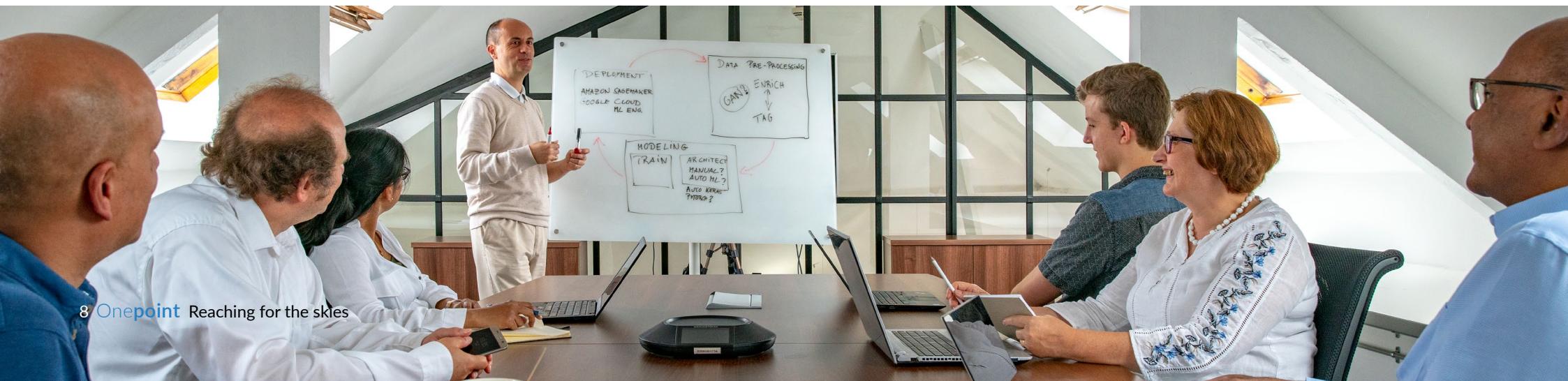
Onepoint always goes above and beyond
and is constantly looking for new and
innovative ways to help us achieve
our business outcomes.

Transformation Initiative Leader of TravelCo

Understanding the challenges

The journey began with a Springboard Workshop™. It's a custom-designed workshop that brings together a cross-functional client team with a selection of Onepoint colleagues. In the exploratory discussions it became clear that TravelCo's challenge was going to touch on multiple elements of our portfolio. So we brought our diverse architectural, engineering, and data compliance skillsets to the table.

The workshop helps everyone understand the root of the problem. We can experience the frustration the customer-facing staff feel when the rules won't flex to fix an issue. We can see the emotion as an account manager explains how they have to apologise to customers who want data that is incomplete or unavailable.



Exploring solutions

The process helped us to understand the business issues that are being caused by technical constraints. And its impact on people – TravelCo's and its clients'.

By putting ourselves in the shoes of the end user, we develop a human, emotional connection with the issue, and begin to see how we can play a part in finding a transformative solution.

With this client, it was clear that the issues would call on a wide spectrum of our portfolio.



A wide scope

TravelCo's solution called on eleven offerings within Onepoint's portfolio

Power better total experiences	Prove & power products and services	Realise value from data, analytics, AI / ML	Transform, scale & deliver IT
Digitise / optimise customer and colleague experience operations	Digitise / optimise product and services operations	Define data strategies, architectures and operating models	Define IT strategies, architectures and operating models
Identify prospect and customer value	Prototype digital product viability	Implement data foundations / repositories	Engineer rapid + robust software solutions
Personalise customer offers and services	Architect & implement digital platforms	Implement analytics and accelerate insights	Implement IT modernisation and legacy replacement
Deliver better total experiences through accurate customer views	Get digital foundations as-a-service	Perform data assurance	Get IT solutions as-a-service
Deliver better total experiences through rich user interfaces		Get data solutions as-a-service	Lead and assure complex technical delivery programmes
		Reduce analytics burden / get insights as-a-service	

Experimenting with possibilities

With a clear understanding of the issues TravelCo was facing, we brought the challenge to our world-class research and development initiative, Onepoint Research.

Onepoint Research is an experimental playground where our team tries out and tests the latest innovations in Artificial Intelligence, Blockchain, Internet of Things, and other cutting-edge technologies. This helps us not only to innovate for the now, but also to future-proof our clients' digital decisions.

The Onepoint Research process starts with getting a diverse range of people around the (virtual) table to consider the issue from multiple different angles.

This is where we fuse our proficiency to understand business drivers with technological possibilities.

It's a creative exploration of the issue and potential solutions.

What are our options? Has anything like this been done before?
What are we missing? And in TravelCo's case, what commercial or open-source solutions would allow non-technical staff to make rule changes rapidly?



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The diversity of thought and experience around the table at this critical idea generation stage is key. It allows us to consider the issue in ways that other firms simply can't. Our culture means everyone is empowered to speak up – okay ideas can be built upon to become good ideas. Good ideas might spark great ideas. Great ideas lead to innovative solutions.
It's incredibly exciting to be involved in.

Sangeetha Viswanathan Head of Delivery and Operations, Onepoint

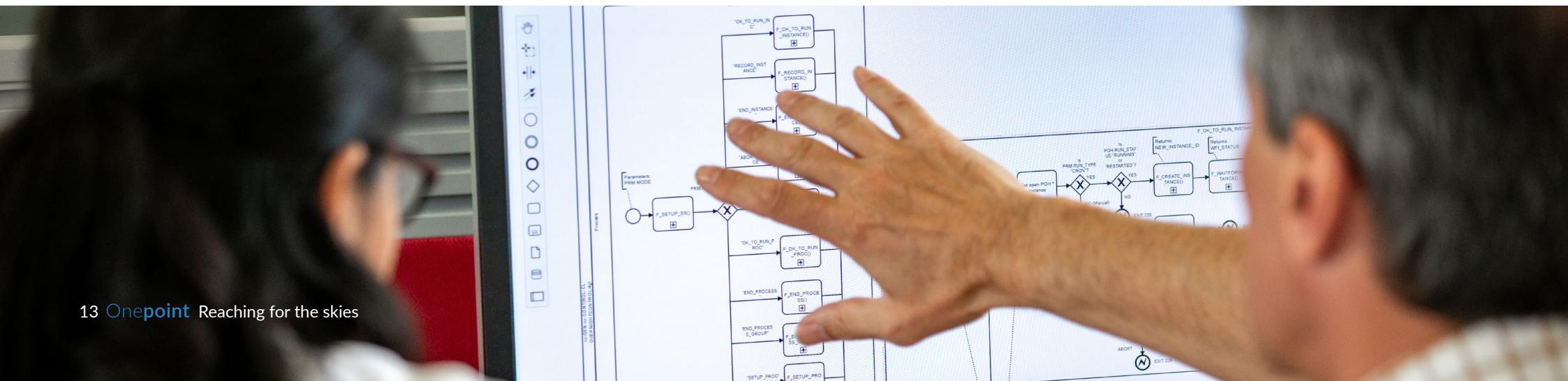
A rapid working prototype

Once we had developed the ideas for several potential routes, our Onepoint Valuepath™ approach kicked in. It was time to make the ideas real.

We built a robust and independent Proof of Value prototype using Drools, an open-source business rules management system. This allowed TravelCo to see, feel, and experience a working prototype

that covered many of the business outcomes, in just four weeks and for a minor upfront investment.

This made it much easier for the business sponsors to give the green light to proceed and to justify TravelCo's significant digital transformation investment. They also got to know our team and experienced first-hand what makes Onepoint different – all with little risk.



Empowering business users

Drools uses a business-friendly rules language. And it allows rules to be centrally-managed by business users, so they can be distributed easily.

Collectively, those features mean that TravelCo is now able to create and modify rules quickly, adapting to changing customer needs.

No more embarrassing phone calls. No more apologising because the rules won't allow the required adjustment. No more time-consuming and costly manual overrides when a changing travel situation (like the pandemic) suddenly means the rules aren't working.

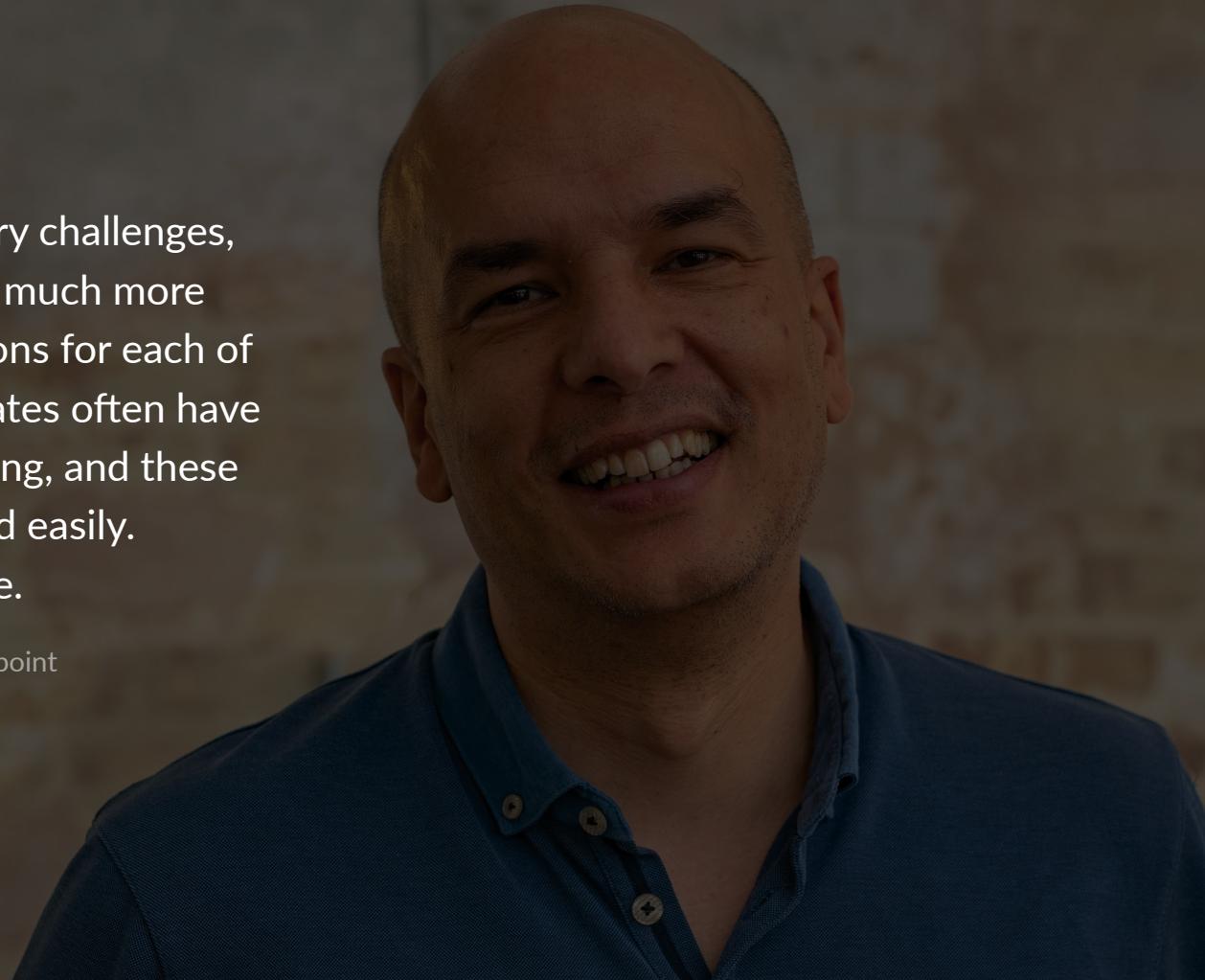
The implementation has proven to be a game changer for TravelCo. The governance and maintenance of business rules is now where it belongs — with the account teams who engage with and support their corporate clients every day. Data quality and richness is also greatly enhanced. Business users can now create rules that validate the data at the source, without the need for expensive data quality tools, manual work, or complex technical assistance.

Rules are now being managed in the right place. We've always believed that data quality reflects the health of a system as a whole. TravelCo's data quality is greatly enhanced, eliminating the need for additional expensive data quality tools, manual work, or complex technical assistance.

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In addition to solving the client's primary challenges, the rules engine (Drools) also made it much more straightforward to create tailored solutions for each of their corporate customers. Large corporates often have bespoke requirements for travel reporting, and these needs can now be met quickly and easily.
It's a competitive advantage.

Allan Schweitz Director of Engineering, Onepoint



Ready for anything?

In the travel industry there is a foreseeable ebb and flow, with predictable shifts in travel activity at peak times. While Drools solved the business rules challenge, we still needed to ensure that TravelCo's next generation data platform was agile enough to cope with the unexpected.

The Gatwick drone closure typifies the complex, uncertain, and high-impact business landscape TravelCo operates in.

On Friday 21st December 2018, Gatwick airport finally reopened. The airport had been closed for 33 hours. More than 1,000 flights were cancelled. Over 140,000 passengers' travel plans affected, resulting in an unfathomable amount of data flowing through the entire industry during the disruption.

We needed a way to scale our reimagined data platform to cope with an event like this. TravelCo's corporate customers wanted to know that TravelCo was ready and able to quickly adapt, no matter what was impacting global travel.

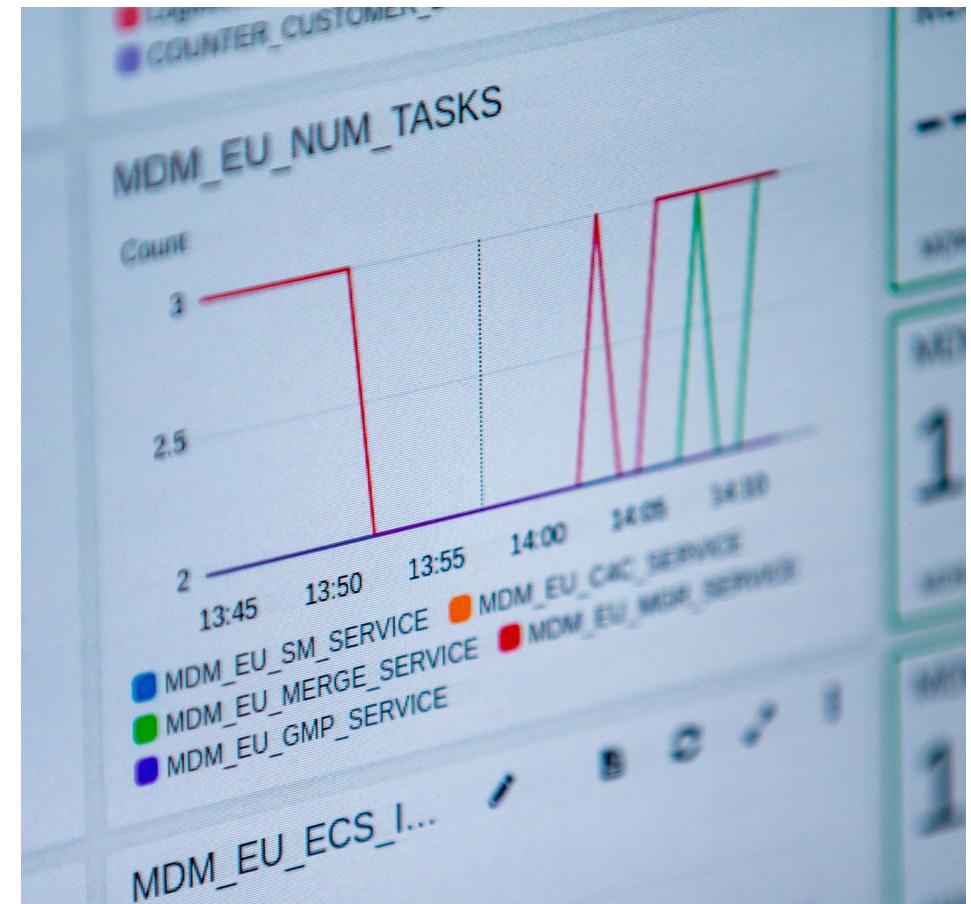
On the face of it, this challenge seemed straightforward enough to solve — put extra servers in place, ready to come online during periods of high demand. But this approach quickly hit constraints, with our testing showing that servers took too long to be ready, required additional maintenance, configuration, and support, and sent budgets spiralling up.

Mastering volumes

Enter, Kubernetes. Kubernetes is an open-source system for managing workloads on the server side. It allowed us to architect a next-generation cloud-based solution, scaling server capacity without the need to invest in expensive server technology and software.

Think of it like this. Imagine you're standing at the gate, ready to board a plane. If you're the only passenger, it's going to be a seamless, straightforward experience – just walk down the gangway. But what about if 10,000 people are trying to board at the same time? Kubernetes enables us to add the equivalent of 10,000 gangways to 10,000 planes – a seamless experience no matter how many people are trying to board.

By combining Drools and Kubernetes, we were able to meet all of the architectural requirements, and equip TravelCo with a data platform that would cope with whatever volume of transaction traffic the travel industry could throw at it.



Cloud-based global data

By integrating Drools and Kubernetes, we were confident that the platform would cope no matter the scenario. But there were still other things to consider.

For example, TravelCo operates across 90+ countries, with each country or region having its own data privacy legislation. That meant our solution not only needed to meet multiple data sovereignty

requirements, but it needed to do so while still existing entirely 'in the cloud'.

This is the kind of challenge we thrive on. By building the new data platform entirely on Azure, the cloud computing service operated by Microsoft, and utilising data centres in several regions, we were able to rise to the challenge.



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I have to say the team at Onepoint has made it very easy for me over the past couple of years. They have always genuinely wanted to understand the business and not just blindly build to requirements. This, combined with seeing ourselves as one team, has really been the key to our success. We couldn't have achieved that without the tremendous support from the Onepoint team.

Transformation Initiative Leader of TravelCo

Business outcomes

The new data platform had an immediate impact on the TravelCo business – a fact that was recognised at board level.

- The overall quality and richness of the data has significantly improved. Data quality is often a reflection of the health of a system – maybe even the company.
- The customer and colleague experience has improved. For example, onboarding a new customer is now 10x faster.
- Implementing a business code change used to take weeks. For example, if one of TravelCo's clients was hosting a global conference, with employees flying in from across the group, it's now over 10x faster to set up a code specifically linked to the conference, giving clients greater control over the associated travel costs and budgeting.
- The speed of obtaining insights from data is now at least 3x faster, and reports can be generated weekly in addition to monthly.

- Operational efficiency has increased, particularly through the improvements to business workflows enabled by our solution.
- The technology stack is now more fit-for-purpose to the strategic priorities of the business.

Perhaps the biggest demonstration of our value to the strategy and digital business transformation of TravelCo is the fact that during the pandemic, when most other investments were grounded, we were asked to continue with our project.



Improved
data
quality



10x faster
to onboard
new customers



10x faster
to implement
business code
changes



3x faster
to generate
data for insights



Improved
operational
efficiency



Modernised
technology
stack

Take your first step with Onepoint

If you want to experience what makes Onepoint the go-to consultancy for clients seeking innovative, enterprise-grade technology services, then get in touch and let's start talking.

Maybe you're thinking about a digital business initiative that needs a quick proof-of-value? Or are you looking for independent validation of your digital architecture decisions?

We have over 15 years of experience in equipping our clients to achieve transformational business outcomes powered by digital advances. We're a values-driven, business-orientated technology consultancy, proud to be called trusted partners by our clients.

Drop us a line at firststep@onepointltd.com and let us show you our approach, share some projects that might be similar to what you have in mind, and give you some ideas to get you started.

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It has been my absolute pleasure in working with you all at Onepoint. You should be very proud of all your people, they represent your company very well. I do hope I will get an opportunity to work with you all again in the future.

Initiative Sponsor of TravelCo

About Onepoint

Onepoint is a **boutique, values-driven, business-oriented** technology consultancy based in London, UK and Pune, India.

We **architect, prototype, build, deliver, and manage** enterprise-grade solutions for global clients looking for high-impact, business outcome and business-value driven digital innovations to power deep, transformative change.

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