CDAIO 2026 · PLATFORM TRANSFORMATION TO ENABLE VALUE

Data Engineering, Governance and Architecture Walk Into a Bar.

What happened next?

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NZ Post

SETTING THE SCENE

From possible to proven

You've spent this conference seeing the art of the possible.

Here's how we're **enabling it** — and what's real so far.

CONTEXT

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185 years old — and still reinventing.

- **From letters to parcels.** 158 million letters a year, down from a billion. **Now up to 580,000 parcels in a single day.**
- **A more competitive landscape.** How we use data now decides how well we compete — so our data function had to evolve.
- We had the capabilities and the platform. **That isn't what changed.**

THE SETUP

Three disciplines. Three silos.

Data Engineering
Builds the pipelines.

Governance
Manages the risk.

Architecture
Designs the future state.

Valuable work. Often **disconnected from the people** actually solving business problems.

THE SHIFT

What we chose to do differently

Brought the three together, deliberately

We'd had the capabilities for years. We hadn't run them as one ecosystem.

Made governance the enabler

Guardrails across data and AI, so opening things up got safer — not riskier.

Changed the engagement model

A deliberate move from reactive to partnering with our colleagues.

Treated AI as part of the kit

Not a special project. Part of how we approach problems.

THE FOUNDATIONS

One ecosystem — and where AI fits

ONE INTEGRATED DATA ECOSYSTEM

ACTIVATION LAYER

Where value is created with our colleagues

Data Consultants | Data Scientists | Self-Service

⇅ AI IN THE FLOW OF WORK — NOT A FOURTH DISCIPLINE

Data Engineering

Reliable, reusable foundations.

AI-ASSISTED BUILD

Guardrails

Defining a safe playground for innovation.

DATA & AI GUARDRAILS

Architecture

Scalable, compliant patterns.

AI-READY PATTERNS

SELF-SERVICE WITH OVERSIGHT

Taking the handbrake off

HANDBRAKE ON

Data kept closed, because **the governance wasn't ready**. Every use case risk-assessed on its own. Nobody exploring.

HANDBRAKE OFF

Governance and guardrails **built into the ecosystem**. Non-technical people reach governed data directly; technicians have freedom to build.

Considered, deliberate — and honestly, only a start.

HOW WE ENGAGE NOW

> **No longer building *for* our colleagues.**
> **Building *with* them.**

BEFORE

A request came in, we built it alone — so colleagues had no reason to give us their time.

NOW

We start with the problem and define the solution together. Their operational knowledge is in the room.

THE RESULT

More engagement, more trust in the data — and the question is allowed to change.

CURIOSITY

> **“This is the first time I've seen curiosity being actively encouraged as part of a project.”**

— LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT TEAM

Our engagement model and ecosystem have sparked curiosity.

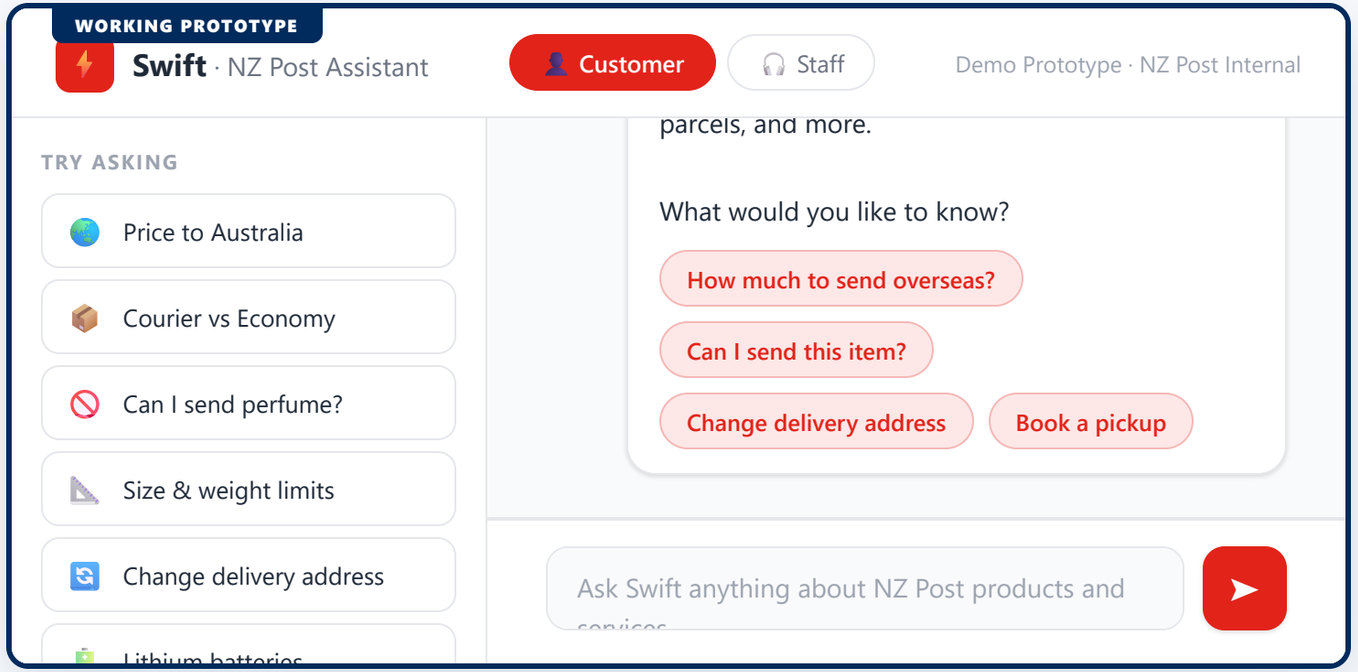
- **More people than planned.** Sessions drew 5x the expected turnout.
- **Problems brought to us.** Domain experts brought more questions than we could answer.
- **New questions.** Our insights sparked conversations the business had never had.

The demand is there. Colleagues want to be curious *with* us.

OUR ENGAGEMENT MODEL IN PRACTICE

Product teams and data professionals, solving problems together — and quickly.

- **Together.** Product, commercial and data people in one room, defining the problem jointly.
- **Quickly.** From opportunity to working prototype in an afternoon.
- **Enabled.** The ecosystem made it possible; AI supported it.



REFLECTIONS

Lessons so far

LESSON 1

Bring the three together — deliberately.

The value came from intentionally running them as one ecosystem.

LESSON 2

Curiosity needs safety.

People explore when it's OK to get it wrong. The engagement model accelerates it.

LESSON 3

Where we stubbed our toe.

Not building alongside colleagues early enough. Build with, from day one.

LESSON 4

Transformation is evolution.

It never stops. We're reinventing — again.

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So what did happen when data engineering, governance and architecture walked into a bar?

Come find us.