

# CIALFO TURNS TO DATA TO MATCH UNIVERSITIES WITH STUDENTS THROUGH THE DATA CLOUD

## EDUCATION



**COMPANY** Cialfo  
**LOCATION** Singapore

### SNOWFLAKE WORKLOADS USED



Founded in 2017, Cialfo is a fast-growing global edtech company, providing data-powered products that help guide high school students towards the universities that best meet their needs. Cialfo has experienced rapid growth with approximately one million users currently on its platform, including counselors, universities, and students, with expectations to grow the user base 10x year on year. Cialfo's employees are based at its Singapore headquarters, and in China, India and the United States.

### STORY HIGHLIGHTS:

#### Ensures Cialfo teams operate with a single source of truth

With Snowflake, Cialfo has established a single source of truth to deliver meaningful internal reporting, improve decision-making, and develop more relevant products for customers.

#### Enables Cialfo to use big data to improve products and services

With a 42TB data warehouse, Cialfo analyzes and queries big data to improve customers' ability to guide students to the universities that best fulfill their needs.

#### Enables Cialfo to invest in product development rather than data management

Snowflake enables Cialfo to reduce data administration costs and allocate the savings to product development, customer analysis, and improved service.

### CHALLENGE:

#### Meeting customer and internal requests for deep insights

Cialfo's mission is to help students and everyone who supports them (including counselors, parents, and university recruiters) to think differently about their education options, reducing traditional barriers and enabling students to realize their ideal future. The business works with students and high school officers to drive a more efficient application process and with universities to identify the best student candidates. However, competition for university places is growing as more students apply and the profiles of accepted students are increasing in quality.

To service its customer cohorts, Cialfo needed to refine its data management, analysis, and reporting. For example, to help measure the success of students, universities, and high schools, the business's internal teams had to view how many university applications had been generated within a given timeframe.

Cialfo also had to consolidate data from a range of sources into a single location to inform its customer-facing products. For example, high school marketing teams need to access data about student university applications to develop campaigns promoting their school's performance. In addition, counselors use the profiles of students most likely to successfully apply to a certain university to provide advice to other applicants.

Furthermore, counselors and marketers need to report outcomes to high school leadership teams at the end of university application cycles. At tertiary level, universities needed access to data and insight to improve performance against their key metric: number of offers relative to the number of enrollments.

## 75%

Reduction in data warehouse costs off-peak

## 99.99%+

Availability of a business-critical data warehouse

## SOLUTION:

### Snowflake delivers data on demand to internal stakeholders and customers

To deliver near real-time data on demand to internal, school, and university stakeholders and students, Cialfo reviewed cloud data products including the Amazon Redshift data warehouse and determined Snowflake was best-in-class for data management.

The business's data architecture comprises a Hevo data pipeline that loads raw data into a Snowflake data warehouse to be transformed into trusted datasets through a dbt Labs development framework. The standardized data—protected from unauthorized access and with its source identified by unique IDs—is assigned into a range of tables within the warehouse.

## RESULTS:

### Delivering a data-driven organization

With Snowflake, Cialfo has transformed into a data-driven business that delivers timely, relevant insights to internal customers and compelling products to high schools, students, and universities.

Snowflake-managed data powers a range of Cialfo products—enabling high schools to, for example, compare their success in preparing students to apply to their preferred university against other schools in their district. High school marketing teams are now using Cialfo to develop and run campaigns to build enrollments based on their school's success in helping students secure university offers, while counselors are better able to guide applicants to the ideal university for them. Cialfo also enables universities to minimize the number of offers relative to enrollments, reducing administrative cost and workload.

Meanwhile, Cialfo's sales and marketing team uses Snowflake to develop campaigns to win more business. Data identifying customers, innovators, and prospects is exported to a Salesforce CRM system to help the team generate leads and improve sales conversions.

### Optimizing queries to reduce costs

The business also uses Snowflake and dashboards through Snowsight data visualization to build organizational KPIs. "We use the Snowflake dashboards and data warehouse to help optimize our costs," explains Ankit Khanduri, Lead Data Engineer, Cialfo. "We have established a detailed set of internal KPIs, including organizational usage trends, which queries are running the longest, and the number of jobs executed per warehouse." This enables Khanduri to work with business teams and engineers to optimize queries to reduce inefficiencies and lower costs.

The ability to generate Snowsight dashboards easily enables Cialfo to save an estimated USD\$50,000 otherwise needed to pay a specialist to help the business manage its data warehouse costs. Its optimization measures have saved up to 75% during off-peak periods alone. In addition, with 99.99%-plus availability, the business ensures customers and internal teams do not experience frustrating instability or outages.

### Impacting teams across the entire business

A total of six teams within Cialfo—including marketing, sales, finance, and others—have immediate access to key business KPIs within the Snowflake Data Cloud, enabling the users to be more focused and perform better in their roles. The business uses Snowflake to enable a wide range of use-cases: for example, reporting KPIs help drive management decision-making around clients, leads, and opportunities, and Khanduri can generate new dashboards in just five minutes to support internal requests.

### Delivering a single source of truth to build out new products

Snowflake acts as a single source of truth from which Cialfo's teams can build out new capabilities and offerings. "With Snowflake, we can develop and create reports incredibly quickly, and overall we are nimble and flexible, which thrills our customers," says Charles Carrier, Product Owner, Cialfo. "We update data every 30 minutes to keep our teams and customers abreast of the latest developments."

The reliability of the Snowflake-powered data architecture also means Cialfo's teams can focus on customer service and business development rather than administration. The data warehouse has grown from less than 1TB of data to 42TB of data without disruption or capacity constraints.

## FUTURE:

Cialfo continues to work with Snowflake to build out reporting, data science, and analytics capabilities, and to develop and meet business KPIs. The business is developing a data lake and creating a data mesh to shift the ownership of data to individual teams.

**“As we grow, we are evolving our use of Snowflake to become a more data-centric organization. This transformation enables us to continue driving greater student equity in an increasingly competitive education sector.”**

**—ANKIT KHANDURI,**  
Lead Data Engineer, Cialfo

## ABOUT SNOWFLAKE

Snowflake enables every organization to mobilize their data with Snowflake's Data Cloud. Customers use the Data Cloud to unite siloed data, discover and securely share data, power data applications, and execute diverse AI/ML and analytic workloads. Wherever data or users live, Snowflake delivers a single data experience that spans multiple clouds and geographies. Thousands of customers across many industries, including 590 of the 2022 Forbes Global 2000 (G2K) as of April 30, 2023, use Snowflake Data Cloud to power their businesses.

Learn more at [snowflake.com](https://snowflake.com)