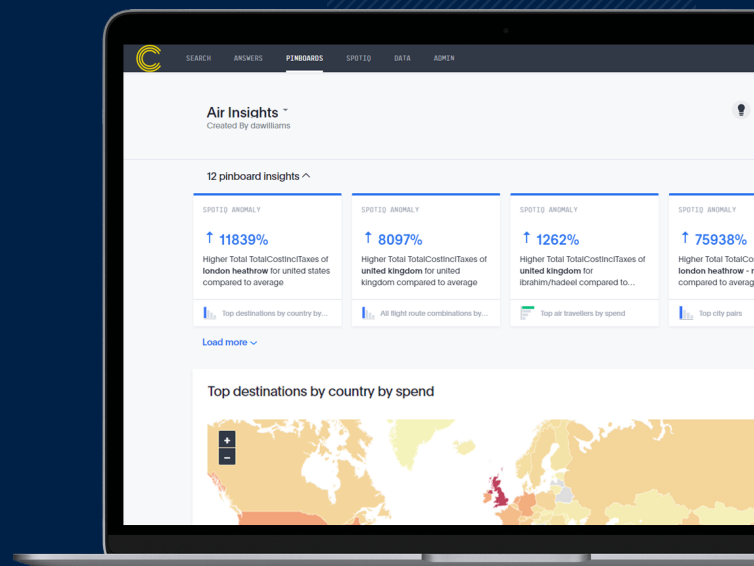# Clarity Travels to the Future with AI-driven Analytics from ThoughtSpot

The UK travel industry faces enough challenges these days - from Airbnb to Brexit to growing security threats. Travel Management Companies (TMCs) could certainly do without the additional burden of having to rationalise legacy BI and analytics software. However, when Clarity merged with Portman Travel in 2017, one of the stated aims was to take advantage of both companies' market-leading technology, including BI and analytics software.

Prior to the merger, Portman ran a Cognos-based BI system and Clarity's used an industry-specific system. IT's usual integration approach is to interview stakeholders, develop functional briefs and then rationalise the incumbent technologies. However, Darren Williams, Clarity's then newly appointed Head of Management Information (MI) and Data, wanted to take a step back and think about how the company could provide joint customers with a truly visionary and competitive service.

With multiple systems already in place, Darren wasn't thinking of introducing yet another analytics platform into the mix. However, that's exactly what Assimil8, Portman's technology partner of six years, recommended.
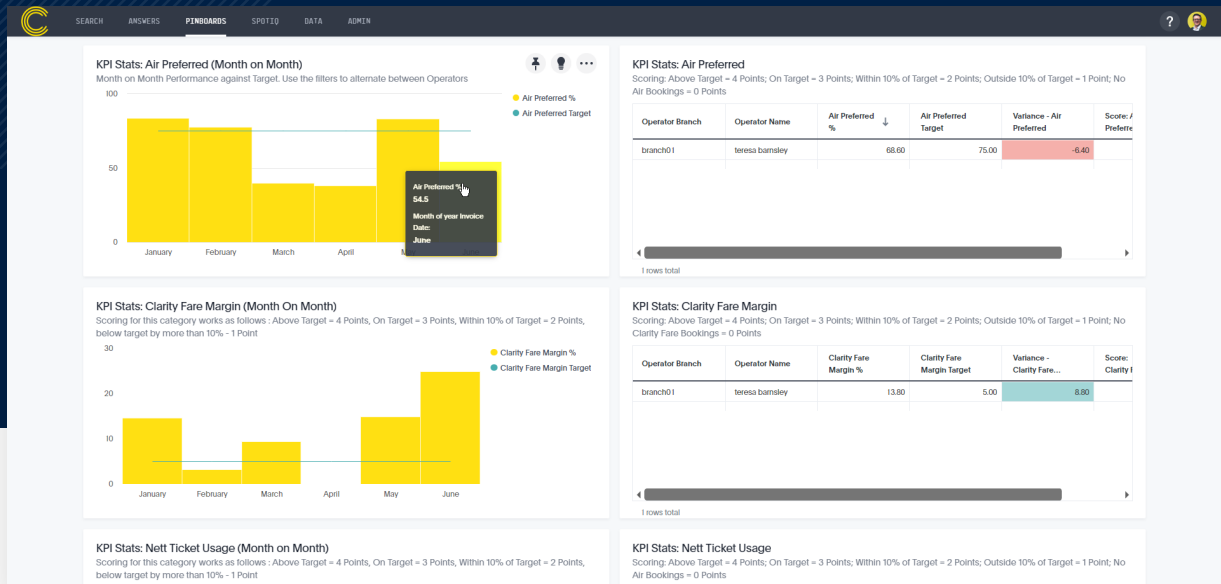
"Assimil8 showed us a demo of the analytics platform ThoughtSpot and I was immediately blown away. It seemed like a completely unique search and AI-driven tool that we could apply in countless different ways"

DARREN WILLIAMS
HEAD OF MANAGEMENT INFORMATION (MI) AND DATA

Go2Insight: the best of visionary and traditional analytics

In addition to recommending ThoughtSpot, Assimil8 proposed wrapping all of Clarity's MI tools into a new system called Go2Insight based on its customisable "Theia" portal. Theia provides a single and fully integrated experience, letting users access the capabilities they need and grow their data literacy without having to worry about the underlying tools. Assimil8 inspired Darren to think about Clarity's MI evolution in a whole new way. He saw the potential to serve a wide spectrum of users and scenarios instead of having to settle for the 'lowest common denominator' and manage expectations.

"By developing Go2Insight with Theia and integrating ThoughtSpot we could offer our customers really pioneering AI and search-driven analytics and still provide traditional reporting facilities to those who need them. We could be bold and visionary, but without leaving any users behind."

DARREN WILLIAMS
HEAD OF MANAGEMENT INFORMATION (MI) AND DATA

ThoughtSpot-powered search and AI-driven analytics
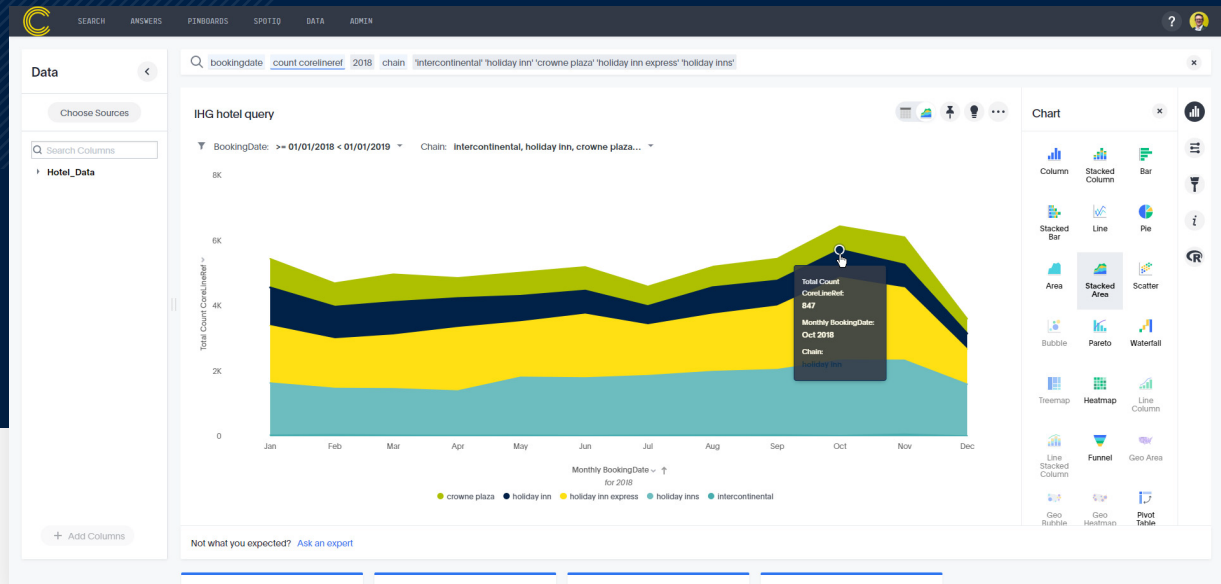
Clarity worked with Assimil8 over approximately six months to develop three versions of Go2Insight - Basic, Plus and Pro - that cater to different customer needs. The premium service, Go2InsightPro, draws on ThoughtSpot's AI and search-driven capabilities to support the widest range of customer use cases. For example, in a typical case where an HR managers are negotiating a new traveller insurance contract, they need to provide the insurer with the number of nights spent away by travellers, by country. Using ThoughtSpot's powerful data search capability, they instantly get the information they need using a natural language search query. They can find the answer using the solution without any special training or raising a custom request with Clarity's data team that would take days or weeks using a traditional BI tool to answer.

In another typical situation, procurement managers want to ensure their company is consistently getting the best value from rail travel on a key route. ThoughtSpot's capabilities allow the manager to build a bespoke Pinboard in a matter of seconds that shows "Advance" vs. "Anytime" ticket usage, complete with booking horizon and average price

paid - all visualised from different perspectives. This allows them to proactively and continuously select rail fares that offer considerable savings with no negative impact on the traveller's experience.

According to Darren, AI capabilities in ThoughtSpot's SpotIQ also proactively flag exceptional activity: "We noticed that one of our customers' travel habits altered dramatically. Due to a change in role they started travelling from Heathrow to Belfast 2-3 times a week. Since the system spotted this new behaviour quickly and flagged it up we started booking their trips 8+ days in advance and were able to generate 15 percent in savings."

However, it's not all about saving costs. Safety is among the top concerns of corporate travel departments today. Go2InsightPro is also connected to geocoded police crime statistics (provided by data.police.uk) loaded into ThoughtSpot. This means that travel procurement managers can see on a map where the most dangerous hotel locations are and make better informed decisions.

"The power that ThoughtSpot is adding to Go2Insight really takes our service to the next level. It's not enough anymore to say we can build our customers any types of reports they need on a monthly basis. These days most people want to be able to explore, drill down into and play with their data to get the information they need on-the-fly so that they can make better, more profitable decisions. Few have the time or patience to wait for weeks, days or even hours anymore."

CLARITY
The Business Travel Experts

DARREN WILLIAMS
HEAD OF MANAGEMENT INFORMATION (MI) AND DATA

Improved productivity

Besides having added advanced capabilities to Go2Insight that benefit customers, Clarity is also realising major productivity savings. Since ThoughtSpot is truly enabling customer self-service, service desk tickets into Clarity's MI team have dropped roughly 25 percent over the previous year's and this number continues to increase. Darren also explains, "We've been able to reduce our team effort through the launch of Go2Insight by about 30 percent overall, largely due to ThoughtSpot. This has allowed us to redeploy two IT people who had been spending all their time just churning out reports. Now they can devote their time to adding new product improvements, integrating new data sets and doing other more valuable and interesting work."
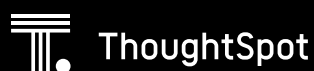
About Clarity

Based in Manchester, Clarity, which merged with Portman Travel in 2017 is the UK's tenth independent travel management company. The company employs more than 650 employees in 16 offices in the UK, Ireland and the Netherlands. As an independent travel management company with global reach, Clarity offers vast knowledge and local expertise on an International platform. The company can help with anything from global travel programme development and long term business planning, to driving savings across multiple markets.

About Assimil8

Based in Nottingham, Assimil8 has been delivering world class, award-winning data, analytics and AI-based solutions for more than two decades. Assimil8 works with clients to become insight-driven by defining, creating and executing data strategies and concentrating on the business challenges and solutions. Assimil8 was ThoughtSpot's first UK channel partner and reseller.