

Sara Assicurazioni Redefines the Customer-centric Insurer



50%

Faster claims processing

60%

Lower cost

85%

Data & apps migrated in one year



Why does a company with a strong financials and market share embark on total IT transformation?

In 2017, 70-year-old Sara Assicurazioni, with nearly 400 agencies and 660 staff, faced three catalysts for change: Customers expected the same compelling digital experiences they encountered on mainstream consumer platforms; the risk of obsolescence was looming due to new digitally native competitors; long-term success could only result from transforming the IT platform from a cost center to an innovation powerhouse.

Like many in the insurance industry, Sara was navigating radical change. New digital competitors were entering the market armed with the latest technologies and low overhead. In contrast, Sara's legacy infrastructure, built over many years, had become increasingly complex and expensive to maintain. Scaling the business and bringing new insurance products to market using its on-premises data center was virtually impossible. Rebuilding on a cloud foundation would help the company strongly compete and deliver stable, scalable, flexible infrastructure for innovating into the future.

With TIBCO, Sara built a multi-cloud enterprise application solution that connects all its data and systems. Newfound flexibility, scalability, and innovation supported reimagining the way its insurance services and products were developed and delivered. It shifted from all-in-one products to fast-to-market, highly personalized policies customized to customer habits, behaviors, and preferences. In Italy's insurance landscape, Sara Assicurazioni transformed from a 70-year-old traditional insurer into a head-turning, digitally-driven leader.

Rebuilding the Core from the Ground-Up

Sara Assicurazioni's many pain points were symptoms of an aging, rigid infrastructure. Support costs were skyrocketing. Service interruptions for required application updates, which were performed manually, caused hours of service downtime for both customers and employees. Lots of data was batch processed; New claims took 24 hours to show up in the system.

Further, developing applications was costly and time consuming, and new services weren't introduced fast enough. Integrating third-party services to improve the digital experience (digital signature services, smart digital assistants, digital payment services) was extremely complicated. The architecture also prevented developing now-expected mobile apps, and cybersecurity was limited to the perimeter.

The company needed to be more agile, scale up and down quickly, better control costs, and get innovative products and services to market faster. It needed its IT resources dedicated to driving the core business instead of maintaining infrastructure.

If Sara was to remain relevant and viable, a major transformation allowing experimentation and innovation was necessary. The company chose the TIBCO platform to rebuild its core business applications and deliver results: an agile environment for faster time to market, increased innovation, less downtime, greater scalability, and more.

Transitioning to a fully cloud-based company was impressively fast. In just one year, the firm's application architecture, including more than 60 applications, moved to the cloud. With TIBCO orchestrating the connections between Google and AWS cloud providers, batch processes were replaced by TIBCO connectors that update data instantly. Data now moves in real time to Sara's Salesforce CRM without any scheduled downtime needed.

In its first year with TIBCO, Sara migrated 85 percent of its data and applications to the cloud and reduced costs by nearly 60 percent. Its new on-demand hybrid cloud environment scales in real time according to load. The cost savings and seamless scalability allows experimenting with new product innovations at far less up-front investment and risk.

Additional benefits:

- Always-available data and applications. Instead of 2-3 hour scheduled service outages for software updates, hot deployments cause no interruptions.
- Time to market for new applications reduced from months, to deploying two or more applications per week.
- With greater capacity planning, instead of taking weeks, scaling up or down is instantaneous.
- Operating costs are half what they were before.

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- Sustainable innovation supports inventing new services without any upfront investment.
- Business transactions are completed, in half the time
- Modern apps can be developed with microservices and APIs, resulting in a stronger mobile-first approach.

Reimagining Insurance Services

By building a strategic, modern business platform in the cloud, Sara made its insurance processes better for customers, and it created an open, up-to-date, 360-degree view of the entire enterprise thanks to real-time integration of data and applications.

Previously, customers endured frustratingly inefficient policy management and claims processing. They had to contact an agent to file a claim, then wait 30 minutes for it to process. Besides the wait, they were frustrated by the confusing process and lack of visibility into claim status. They wanted policy access via their mobile devices. Sara could not comply with this request using its legacy infrastructure.

Underscoring this customer request, a recent Deloitte study estimates that the average person has 11 connected devices¹ including laptops to handhelds and IoT devices like smart speakers. Each of these must be supported to deliver a seamless experience. Users expect immediate access to information and the same experience no matter the device they're using at the time. Few traditional insurance companies have been able to provide this capability.

Sara's new cloud foundation enables it to deliver the omnichannel experience that today's consumers demand. One of its crowning achievements was the launch of a powerful new mobile app. Customers can view their policy on their smartphone, laptop, tablet, or other device. Renewing policies, reporting an accident using recordings or notes, and processing claims through the app is all self-service, convenient, and saves both policyholder and agent time. Services—including easily modifying a policy, reporting an accident, and accessing agent information—are now available 24/7. Customers can respond to personalized promotions or use the Sara Chatbot to help them check claim status. The chatbot provides greater transparency of the process, the same information that agents have, and timely, accurate updates across multiple digital channels. It's a consistent, user-friendly experience.

¹ <https://www2.deloitte.com/us/en/pages/about-deloitte/articles/press-releases/deloitte-launches-connectivity-mobile-trends-survey.html>

Sara developers created an Alexa smart assistant skill so customers can query their device for information: “When does my insurance expire? What kind of premium? How much premium am I going to pay?” Without its TIBCO cloud infrastructure, that highly customer-centric perk wouldn’t have been possible.

Sara Assicurazioni also significantly improved system reliability, giving customers confidence that services will always work. Customers don’t suffer through hours of outages any more, and service enhancements are introduced faster, rolling out from once a month to multiple times per week.

The new platform promotes developer collaboration and far easier third-party service integrations, which will further expand app features. For instance, Sara developers created an Alexa smart assistant skill so customers can query their device for information: “When does my insurance expire? What kind of premium? How much premium am I going to pay?” Without its TIBCO cloud infrastructure, that highly customer-centric perk wouldn’t have been possible.

Building a Multi-cloud Foundation for Greater Agility

One of the reasons Sara chose TIBCO was its ability to connect applications and data, including legacy data, across multiple cloud platforms. It wanted to use containers for flexibility and to avoid vendor lock-in, and now, with TIBCO, Sara has infinite flexibility to build once and deploy anywhere and change clouds based on pricing, speed, and demand.

Companies often find the right fit using multiple clouds because each will launch differentiated capabilities or provide more flexibility. When combined, these platforms address unique needs. TIBCO’s cloud neutrality supports flexible, agile choice, helping companies like Sara ensure business continuity, matching use case to best environment.

Transforming the Workforce

IT leaders at Sara believed that omnichannel engagement shouldn’t be limited to customers, and that providing these capabilities internally would support a fully connected experience for all. Agents armed with all the information can create the best customer experience—and, with up to the minute data, more easily foresee problems and answer customer questions. Staff was equipped with a digital tablet and collaborative tools including Google Workspace and WebConference.

Collaboration and improved communication across the firm allowed for closer internal and external partnerships. Additionally, the company launched tech training and company hackathons, helping employees across the company become fluent in cloud-native skills.

Sara is a great example of how successful digital transformation requires more than technology. It also needs a culture shift, companywide effort, and a thoughtful combination of people and process.

Meeting New Customer Demands with Flexibility and Speed

Sara's modern platform adapts quickly to fast changing business needs, and today, it digitally brings its 70-plus years of industry expertise to market, essentially tilting the playing field in its favor. Unlike before, the insurer can experiment, take risks, and innovate. By intelligently connecting data and using its insights, it's become known for new digital offerings that competitors with rigid legacy architectures simply cannot offer.

One unexpected benefit Sara found came with the COVID-19 pandemic. Adapting and pivoting operations with elastic scalability and automatic release deployments, Sara ensured that services are always-on so its people could focus on creating just-right customer-centric services for the times. Near the beginning of the pandemic, it introduced SaraCheckUp, a comprehensive health policy that helps provide peace of mind. In under a week, it transitioned to all-online payments, which would have been impossible before the transformation. And customers are selecting new products like Bici2Go, insurance specially for cycling enthusiasts. These successful innovations show how core infrastructure can drive new business value.

One of the Most Customer-centric Insurers in the World

TIBCO empowered Sara Assicurazioni to put the customer at the center of its business. Before the transformation, Sara would develop a handful of one-size-fits-all insurance policies that customers could either take or leave. Everything—accessing policy information, making policy changes, reporting an accident—was on Sara's terms. That's all changed. Now the customer dictates how they engage—when, where, and how the insurance company serves them.

The success of its digital transformation shows in the accolades it received. In both 2019 and 2020, Sara received the German Quality and Finance Institute's Digital Star award for digital insurance innovation.

Sara continues to work with TIBCO, adding master data management capabilities to further enhance collaboration across the firm and third-party partners.

Sara pivoted from a reactive company to a modern digitally-driven provider that leads with advanced technology and data to predict and satisfy customer demands, made possible by TIBCO.



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