

NatWest: unlocking insights and value from MSc placement students

Case Study



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NatWest Group is the largest business and commercial bank in the UK, with a leading retail business. The Group's Data & Analytics and Performance Insights teams rely heavily on data science, engineering and analytics to drive innovation and put the customer at the centre of its operations. NatWest unlocked insights from a new and highly skilled, junior talent pool from the MSc students in The Data Lab's Placement Programme.

The Challenge

NatWest Group employs hundreds of data scientists, engineers and analysts within its Data & Analytics and Performance Insights teams. Working with data covering financial transactions, customer interactions, applications and products, the primary goal of these teams is to generate insights and build new data-driven products and solutions that will improve the customer experience in diverse areas such as fraud detection, customer contact channels and protecting those in need of support. Heavily relying on skilled individuals to collate, analyse and interpret data, NatWest Group recognised that it needed a strong pipeline of talent to continually transform and achieve its aim of being a fully customer-centric organisation.

The Solution

To support this ambition NatWest Group has partnered with The Data Lab since 2017, taking on several MSc students each year across its Data & Analytics and Performance Insights teams.

NatWest Group takes a collaborative approach to assigning projects to MSc students, with these being selected by a committee based on the level of impact they will have on the business. Students are embedded in their teams from day one. They receive regular catch-ups with their line manager and can draw on the wider team's experience to help resolve any issues they encounter in their day-to-day work.

The Outcomes

NatWest has seen several benefits since joining The Data Lab's placement programme, taking on several MSc students.

It has allowed the organisation to help more graduates understand what the bank does and how it operates, ultimately helping the business to tap into a new and highly skilled, junior talent pool by identifying individuals that fit its purpose-led strategy. It also ensures the organisation keeps on top of the latest data science techniques, tools and processes by working with graduates straight out of university. Several of the MSc students that have worked at NatWest Group over the last five years have secured full time roles within the business and, due to the success of the programme, the bank is continuing to partner with the Data Lab, as well as investigating links with other universities.

"I'd recommend any business that is committed to using data to unlock insights and value across its organisation to get in touch and see how The Data Lab can help"

Greig Cowan

Head of Data Science for Data Innovation, NatWest Group



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