



How the **YMCA of Greater Toronto** leveraged a Data Fabric to rapidly deliver a solution that allowed members to safely return to their facilities during COVID-19

[#JustAnotherDataFabricSuccessStory](#)

## The Challenge

The local government gave the YMCA of Greater Toronto notice that they could soon reopen their doors... if they could meet strict new policies that had never before been considered and that none of their systems were ever designed to facilitate.

## The Outcome

“Cinchy allowed us to quickly deliver a solution to the association to facilitate all of this within a couple of weeks, which we would never have been able to do before. We’ve been able to deliver something that previously would have been fantasy.” -Craig Bradley SVP, IT

The YMCA of Greater Toronto is the largest YMCA market in Canada, using its multimillion-dollar budget to operate nine complexes health and fitness centres across the Greater Toronto Area. Each centre offers multiple programs to boost well-being for more than 150,000 members of all ages.



Website  
[www.ymcagta.org/](http://www.ymcagta.org/)



Industry  
Health & Fitness





# Adapting quickly to new customer experiences due to COVID

When it was time to reopen their doors after four months of COVID lockdown, the YMCA of Greater Toronto knew they needed to work quickly to deliver a solution that would make their membership happy and meet strict government guidelines. They needed to be nimble and agile, leveraging existing data to optimize build times. Speed was essential; they needed to be ready to facilitate a safe return for their members by the time the government-mandated reopening date arrived.

The YMCA of Greater Toronto planned to provide a single interface for members to reserve facilities ahead of time, starting with their health and fitness facilities as a pilot program and eventually rolling out to all of their other services. They also wanted to provide members with a way to see a room's capacity at any given time, , and to include predictive modeling for no-shows in order to allow for walk-ins. Rapid digital transformation would be the driving force in all of this.

Speed was of the essence. Not only were YMCA members eager to get back to the facilities, but the YMCA of Greater Toronto was spending significant resources to manually monitor entries. They required a staff member to be on hand from open till close, checking IDs and cross-referencing reservations to make sure visitors were entering and exiting at their reserved times. These necessary operations took staff away from their regular roles and strained operations.

“As a result of COVID, everyone has had to modify their work habits and be more open to quickly adopting technologies and products that they may have been hesitant to adopt before. It's forced people to think and work differently, and they understand that it's just the new norm. They have to be open to doing things differently in today's day and age. It's an opportunity to do things that we previously might not have been able to do, to accelerate solutions that people may have been resistant to.”

**-Craig Bradley SVP, IT**



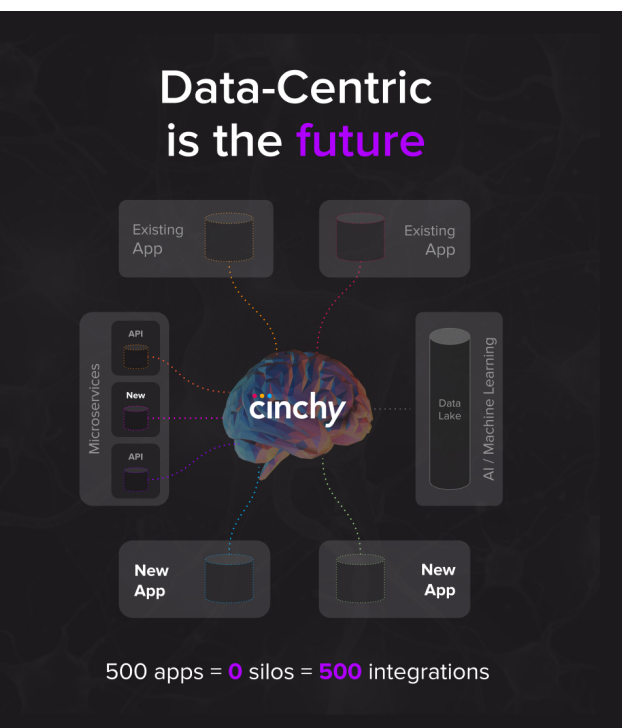
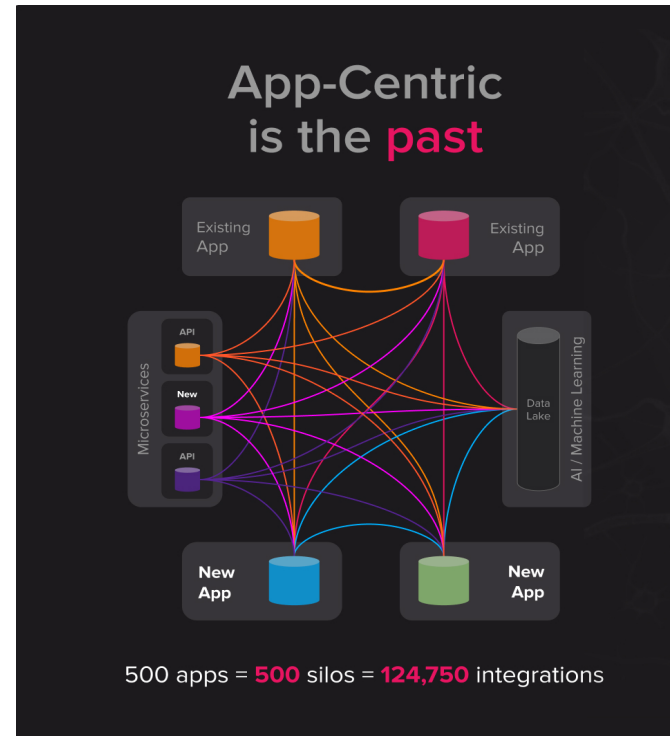


# How Application Augmentation allowed for a robust solution without replacing legacy systems

The YMCA wanted to connect their membership database, their mobile app (VirtuaGym), and their swipe-card entry system in order to give members a contactless method for reserving and entering facilities.

To those outside of the IT department, like the YMCA of Greater Toronto employee who suggested the solution to management, linking these different systems probably didn't seem too difficult. They all use variations of the same member data, right? So why can't they talk to one another?

Unfortunately, this is exactly the sort of complex integration project that traditionally takes months to implement—the complete opposite of what a business needs when opening its doors after COVID. Fortunately, YMCA of Greater Toronto wasn't taking a traditional approach. They were using Cinchy.



Their members can now reserve a facility at their desired time using the mobile app and enter the facility 15 minutes before their reservation by swiping their ID card at the door. It's worth noting that this interval was originally set for five minutes, and that the YMCA was able to easily make the change to 15 when they found their returning customers needed a little more time to prepare for their workouts.

Because the systems are all linked on the Data Fabric, reservation times and membership numbers are automatically cross-referenced when the user swipes their card. If everything lines up, the doors unlock and the Y member is granted entry to the facility. They don't need any additional devices or technology; everything works with their current ID cards and existing mobile app, allowing them to get back to enjoying their memberships.





## Using a Data Fabric quickly leads to compounding benefits

If the YMCA were relying on a traditional data integration-based approach to creating new solutions, it would have been a challenge to deliver even a rudimentary solution in time. With the flexibility and real-time capabilities of Cinchy's Automated Data Fabric, they've unlocked compounding benefits beyond the scope of their initial project.

In addition to automating the entry process by combining data from the membership database, entry system, and mobile app, the YMCA of Greater Toronto is now able to take advantage of the following capabilities:

### Attendance Reporting

Facilities can track and report exactly how many people are present, and how many showed up at any given time. This information is valuable to members, and essential for meeting government safety guidelines.

### Seamless Capacity Tracking

Membership and staff both report feeling safer with the new system in place. Not only does it eliminate a point of close contact from manually checking IDs at the entry, but it makes facility capacity far easier to track.

### Flexibility to Respond

Leadership can quickly respond to the changing requirements of local government, including closures, reducing or increasing the number of people allowed in the facility, or restricting access from hot zones into non-hot zone locations.

### Controlling Facility Access

By restricting facility access based on reservation times, the YMCA was able to eliminate the need for members to wait outside the facility. This is great for both social distancing restrictions and inclement weather conditions.

### Data Cleanup

The Autonomous Data Fabric facilitated data cleanup throughout the project. They've been able to prevent false reservations and otherwise streamline operations.



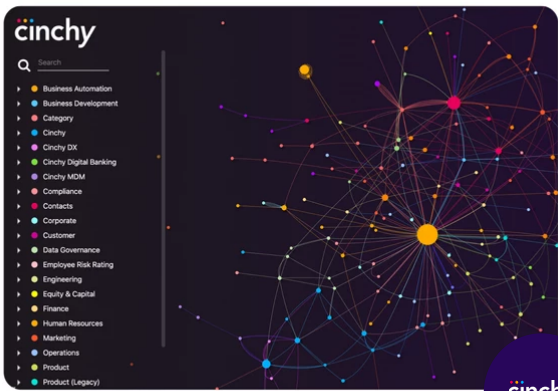
**“Traditionally this would have involved a lot more engineering effort to build the appropriate integrations between systems. By using Cinchy, we were able to stand something up and do it without having to bring in additional staff (data engineers, software engineers, etc). It really shortened our time to market and reduced the typical costs we would have incurred to build something of this nature.” - Craig Bradely, VP, IT**



# Network effects for IT delivery: the more data you connect to Cinchy, the more powerful it becomes.

There's one simple reason Cinchy's Autonomous Data Fabric was the perfect solution for the YMCA of Greater Toronto: network effects. Network effects are a phenomenon where systems become more effective and efficient as they grow, and that's exactly what happens with Cinchy. Thanks to the ability of schema evolution, YMCA's fabric will continue to grow and evolve over time to satisfy new use cases, using the already connected data. The more data sources they connect to Cinchy, the faster they'll be able to build outcomes.

This is the exact opposite of the old IT paradigm, where connecting more data adds complexity in regards to its control. With a Data Fabric, controls are set at the data level and universally enforced without having to modify them for new projects.



As the YMCA of Greater Toronto evaluates their backlog of requests and use cases, they are quickly finding many more use cases for Cinchy. For instance, having built a better view of their membership base they're now exploring ways to identify hot leads and those most likely to return. These advanced analytics will be enhanced by using Cinchy to build 360o views of members, allowing innovative approaches for both building new membership and encouraging inactive members to return. The key components of this solution are already in place thanks to the added membership insight they've gained from using Cinchy.

They're also able to generate a 360 view of their reopening process, including new sales and renewals, which they weren't able to do previously. Again, all of the heavy lifting for this project has already been done, because they can leverage the data that has already been connected to the Cinchy Data Fabric.



## The new solution has empowered employees to bring more ideas forward.

The solutions created by the YMCA of Greater Toronto are the perfect example of technology that “should be easy,” but rarely is. The initial scope of the project, connecting three data systems to automate entry, actually came from the staff who were manually monitoring the doors, and it’s highly unlikely they knew that a traditional approach to this solution would require months of IT work. They simply saw they had the capabilities if they could just get those different systems to work together.

With Cinchy, the stuff that should be easy actually becomes easy. The automated entry solution has been incredibly well received, and the staff feels excited about what they’re now able to do. There’s a general positivity around the direction they’re heading, which is no small feat in the age of COVID-19. And in this excitement, new ideas are already starting to germinate, such as restricting parking lot access based on reservation times, similar to what they’ve just accomplished with their entry system.



**“We have control and insight into our data that we didn’t have before, and the ability to manage and manipulate our data in a new way. As a result of that, we’re able to deliver value and impact to the association in a way that we couldn’t previously.”**  
-Craig Bradely, VP, IT





## IT is delighting and delivering on both internal customer and external member needs faster than ever thought possible.

In short, the YMCA of Greater Toronto has been able to expand their product portfolio, create a better member experience, manage facility access in a new and more efficient way, and allow members and staff to feel safer in the facilities during COVID. And, perhaps most importantly, they've made their staff feel like they've been heard and are valued. They've managed to instill excitement and positivity in their enterprise by using Cinchy to tackle a "should be simple" tech request and say, **"yes, that'll be a cinch."**

**Don't wait, book a live demo to see how the YMCA of Greater Toronto achieved these results!**

With tight restrictions on how their facilities could operate, the YMCA of Greater Toronto required a solution to meet the requirements of local health authorities that also provided a comfortable and safe experience for their members.

[Schedule demo](#)

# ABOUT CINCHY

Integration is obsolete. Cinchy, the world's first Autonomous Data Fabric, is leading the world into the connected data revolution. By managing data as a network, Cinchy replaces the time-consuming and costly 40-year old approach of integrating applications using ETL, APIs, and microservices. Global banks, telcos, public sector agencies, and healthcare providers use Cinchy to take control of their data, cut IT delivery costs in half, and unlock network effects.

Cinchy was voted best-of-show at Finovate NY, won top pick at TechCrunch Disrupt SF, and "Best Solution for Improving Operations" by Bank Director magazine. Our technology has been featured in numerous industry analyst reports, including Gartner's "Cool Vendors in Data Management" publication in May 2020 and Forrester's "Now Tech: Enterprise Data Fabric, Q2 2020".



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