

How Les Mills Strengthened Data Governance with AI-Powered Lifecycle Management



Les Mills is on a mission to create a fitter planet.

Famous for its group fitness classes and high-intensity interval training, Les Mills incorporates movement and music to create fitness experiences that help people love working out.

For over 50 years, Les Mills has been developing innovative, science-backed workouts, ranging from its strength & weights-focused BODYPUMP® class to its cutting-edge Immersive cycling workout THE TRIP™.

The family-owned business has grown from a small gym in Auckland into a global fitness revolution with its high-energy workouts. Les Mills helps millions of people love fitness every week in over 21,000 locations across 110 countries with the help of 140,000 passionate Les Mills trained instructors.

Part of the secret sauce is that each of their 23 different workout programs are updated every three months, so the movements and music are always relevant. Collaborating on this content from anywhere is mission-critical and a challenge that required their IT leaders to re-think how the business manages and shares content across its distributed workforce.

AT A GLANCE

100TB
data

1.6M
duplicate files
identified

140,000
instructors



The Challenge:

As Les Mills expanded into cities in Asia, Europe, North and South America, Mike Mason, Global Infrastructure Tech Lead, found himself regularly traveling the world standing up Exchange servers, file servers, backup and recovery systems, and VPNs to support the collaboration needs of its distributed workforce. Even small regional offices were becoming complex networks with legacy On-Premise infrastructure that required regular “watering and feeding” from local IT staff and remotely from Auckland.

“If you think of the old model of file servers, you need to maintain that equipment all the time. Having to go through three-year replacement cycles with physical infrastructure is a pain. As the company grew, so did our IT complexity,” said Mason.

Without a centralized system that was easy for staff to use across different devices, apps, and locations, teams resorted to storing files on desktops, external hard drives, and various consumer cloud file shares. This created content sprawl, duplication of files across cloud and on-premises repositories, and left the company exposed to unwanted security threats.

I wanted the user experience working from home to be exactly the same as working at the office. I have intentionally made sure that those experiences are the same and Egnyte has helped us break down that barrier.

—Mike Mason | Global Infrastructure Tech Lead, Les Mills

The Solution:

Mason decided to bring a cloud-first approach to Les Mills and its file services. He rolled out Egnyte globally in 2014, established a single source of truth and consolidated multiple content repositories into a centralized, flexible, and secure cloud environment.

Today, every laptop at Les Mills is built with the Egnyte Desktop Application installed, and users are given access to the Egnyte



Mike Mason is the Global Infrastructure Tech Lead at Les Mills and is responsible for managing the company's core IT infrastructure. He has been with the business for 20 years and played a pivotal role in bringing Les Mills fitness experiences into new markets. His goal is always to be looking up and out, not bogged down with administrative work.



web and mobile app, giving users the ability to securely share and collaborate on files on any device, and from anywhere in the world. The intuitive Egnyte platform, was rapidly adopted across the organization, and now has become a key part of Les Mills' core content infrastructure.

"What I needed when I chose Egnyte was to physically replace all of our file servers around the world. I wanted the user experience working from home to be exactly the same as working at the office. I have intentionally made sure that those experiences are the same and Egnyte has helped us break down that barrier," said Mason.

All satellite offices are now able to operate without on-premises infrastructure. This allows Les Mills to enter or exit markets nimbly, without having to invest millions of dollars committing to an office location and number of employees before understanding the market's potential. At the headquarters in Auckland, the company can run a very lean IT operation and maintain low overhead.

Mason learned early on that business can change on a dime. Having flexible technology in place like Egnyte allows Les Mills to be ready for change and adapt quickly when it occurs, which happened when the Covid-19 pandemic suddenly impacted the health and fitness industry in 2020.

Egnyte is looking at unstructured file data in a completely different way. They are looking at the whole picture of content management and all of its challenges. It is not just about storage and sharing, Egnyte is genuinely listening to its customers to help them solve much broader challenges.

—Mike Mason | Global Infrastructure Tech Lead, Les Mills

Results:

While the global health crisis had a negative impact the fitness industry as a whole and on Les Mills core customers (gyms), some areas of their business such as their Ondemand subscription



COMPANY

Les Mills is on a mission to create a fitter planet. This doesn't mean making people work out. It means helping people fall in love with fitness so that they want to work out.

LOCATION

Global Headquarters in Freemans Bay, Auckland. Workouts licensed by 19,500 partners in 100 countries around the world.

INDUSTRY

Health, Wellness and Fitness

service and equipment sales increased dramatically.

Les Mills needed to very quickly shift focus, reduce operating costs and focus on the areas of the business that would lessen the impacts of Covid-19. They also had to very quickly transition the entire global workforce to work from home.

“Literally within days, gyms around the world were closing their doors. It happened so rapidly and was an eye-opener to see the impact on gyms around the world and on our business,” said Mason.

With all team members working from home, they needed to quickly bring more workout content online and shift focus to the on-demand side of the business to meet customer needs.

“We’ve always been about the long game, it’s not about this little blip on the road, we’re on a bigger mission than that.” said Mason. “We reached out to EgnYTE in our time of need. We reached out to lots of suppliers and lots of people came to the party.”

One of the challenges of shifting the business to more on-demand content was managing the growth in storage. Les Mills has about 100TB of data and took quick advantage of EgnYTE’s AI-powered lifecycle management capabilities to identify 1.6M duplicate files across their environment.

To solve this problem, they have created retention, archive, and deletion policies that lowered storage costs and reduced risk exposure. Rather than manually setting reminders, comparing project dates, and deleting thousands of files, Les Mills is accomplishing all three by setting up automated lifecycle policies in EgnYTE.

“EgnYTE is looking at unstructured file data in a completely different way. They are looking at the whole picture of content management and all of its challenges. It is not just about storage and sharing, EgnYTE is genuinely listening to its customers to helping them solve much broader challenges,” said Mason.



EGNYTE

In a content critical age, EgnYTE fuels business growth by enabling content-rich business processes, while also providing organizations with visibility and control over their content assets. EgnYTE’s cloud-native content services platform leverages the industry’s leading content intelligence engine to deliver a simple, secure, and vendor-neutral foundation for managing enterprise content across business applications and storage repositories. More than 16,000 companies trust EgnYTE to enhance employee productivity, automate data management, and reduce file-sharing cost and complexity. Investors include Google Ventures, Kleiner Perkins, Caufield & Byers, and Goldman Sachs. For more information, visit www.egnyte.com