ZEISS Enhances Data Transparency and Compliance with RudderStack

Industry 🏭	Company size 👥	Headquarters 🌐
Medical, Technology	Approx. 43,000 employees	Oberkochen, Germany

Highlights

▸ ZEISS improved its tracking capabilities, enhancing transparency and regulatory compliance

▸ The switch to RudderStack enabled seamless integration with Microsoft Azure, aligning with ZEISS's technology infrastructure

▸ ZEISS experienced improved data governance and a streamlined analytics process, facilitating a more robust data-driven decision-making culture

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Transitioning to RudderStack has revolutionized our data governance and tracking capabilities at ZEISS. This switch has not only enhanced transparency and regulatory compliance, but has also fostered a dynamic, data-driven decision-making culture within our organization, paving the way for our continued growth and innovation."

Alessio Brambilla,
Digital Tracking & Reporting Team Lead at ZEISS

Overview

ZEISS, a leading international technology company in the fields of optics and optoelectronics, faced challenges with Google Analytics regarding transparency, regulatory compliance, and data integration. The company's ambitious goals required tracking customer journeys end-to-end and establishing a data-driven culture,however, ZEISS found Google Analytics' deficiencies in transparency and regulatory compliance to be obstacles.

ZEISS is a globally recognized leader in optics and optoelectronics, serving a diverse clientele across multiple sectors, and offering abroad range of high-tech products and solutions. The company has made significant contributions to the advancement of optical technologies and has consistently been at the forefront of innovation in several industries, including medical technology, microscopy, semiconductor manufacturing technology, and consumer optics (such as camera lenses and binoculars).

ZEISS develops, produces, and distributes highly innovative solutions for industrial metrology and quality assurance, microscopy solutions for the life sciences and materials research, and medical technology solutions for diagnostics and treatment in ophthalmology and microsurgery. The company's commitment to excellence in science and technology has solidified its position as a market leader in its various segments. Because ZEISS servs a wide array of markets, the company's clientele ranges from individual consumers and small businesses to large corporations and governmental agencies, a testament to the company's versatility and the widespread application of its technologies. ZEISS is a company that leads in innovation and shows a strong commitment to ethical business practices, community support, and sustainability.

Challenge | ZEISS's journey towards transparency and integration

ZEISS aimed to establish a unified global stack while ensuring compliance with GDPR, HIPAA, and other regional data protection laws, underscoring the importance of data trust in its operations. However, they encountered significant obstacles with Google Analytics, which failed to meet these stringent requirements due to its lack of transparency in data collection, and its problematic history with regulatory compliance. This shortfall in Google Analytics' capabilities hindered ZEISS's ability to trust the data, crucial for informed decision-making. In order to adhere to the evolving demands of tracking solutions in the omnichannel user journey, ZEISS decided to engage with Velir, a data-focused digital agency, to evaluate options for more transparent and robust behavioral analytics. As part of this engagement, Velir's data team presented multiple options, weighed their benefits, and recommended Rudderstack due to its alignment with Zeiss' technology stack, data governance features, and ease of use.

ZEISS outlined two clear and ambitious goals for their transition away from Google Analytics:

▶ To enable end-to-end customer journeys tracking

▶ To establish a data-driven decision-making culture within the company using the insights from user journey tracking

Solution | Enhancing customer insight and data governance using Rudderstack and Mixpanel

To achieve these goals, Velir recommended deploying Rudderstack as the primary method for capturing customer journey data. The choice came down to Rudderstack's warehouse native architecture, strong data governance features, native integrations with ZEISS's technology stack, and accessible pricing. Additionally, Velir recommended Mixpanel as a product analytics tool to analyze the data collected by Rudderstack, chosen for its sophisticated analytical capabilities, user-friendly interface, and the ability to provide deep insights into user behavior and product performance.

ZEISS' strategic partnership with Microsoft also played a crucial role in their decision to choose Rudderstack. With Google Analytics, ZEISS had to use a legacy data pipeline to route data from GA through BigQuery and finally to Azure Synapse. With Rudderstack, they were able to integrate seamlessly with Azure infrastructure. Now, with direct access to the raw data underpinning their customer telemetry, ZEISS can make data-driven decisions with confidence.
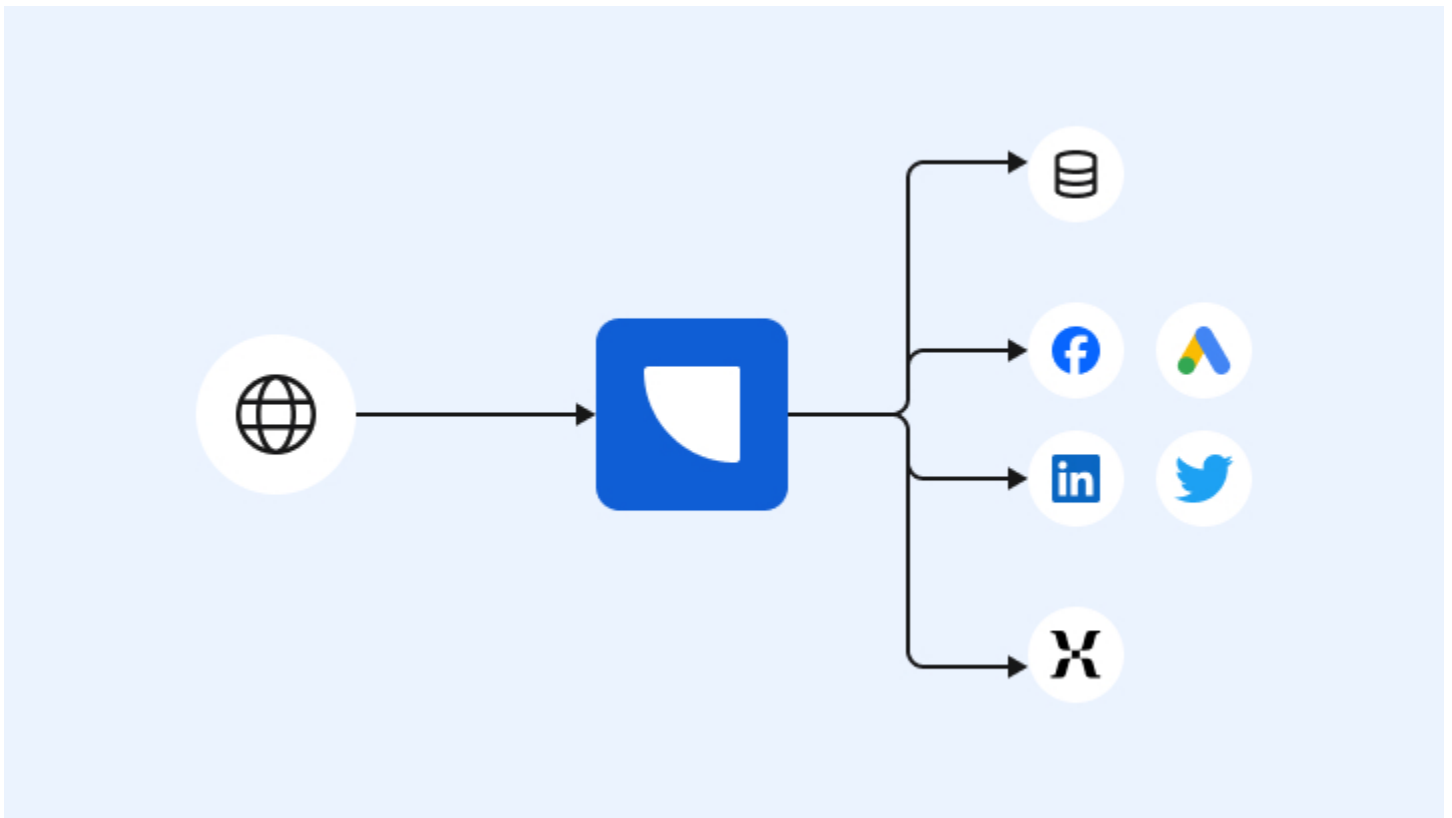
Rudderstack functions as an effective analytics conduit, taking data from point A and sending it to multiple endpoints. It acts as a temporary data conduit, holding onto the data only for the minimal time necessary to ensure accurate delivery. Whenever there is a need to store data, it is securely stored within ZEISS's own infrastructure, granting them complete authority over their data management and security.

One of Rudderstack's most appealing features is its ability to transform data on the fly. With RudderStack Transformations, users can modify, add, or remove parameters to events before they reach their endpoints. Transformations make it easy to customize payloads for various destinations such as Data Warehouses, social media platforms, and CRM systems. Distributing consistent data with customized payloads ensures data consistency across all connected platforms.
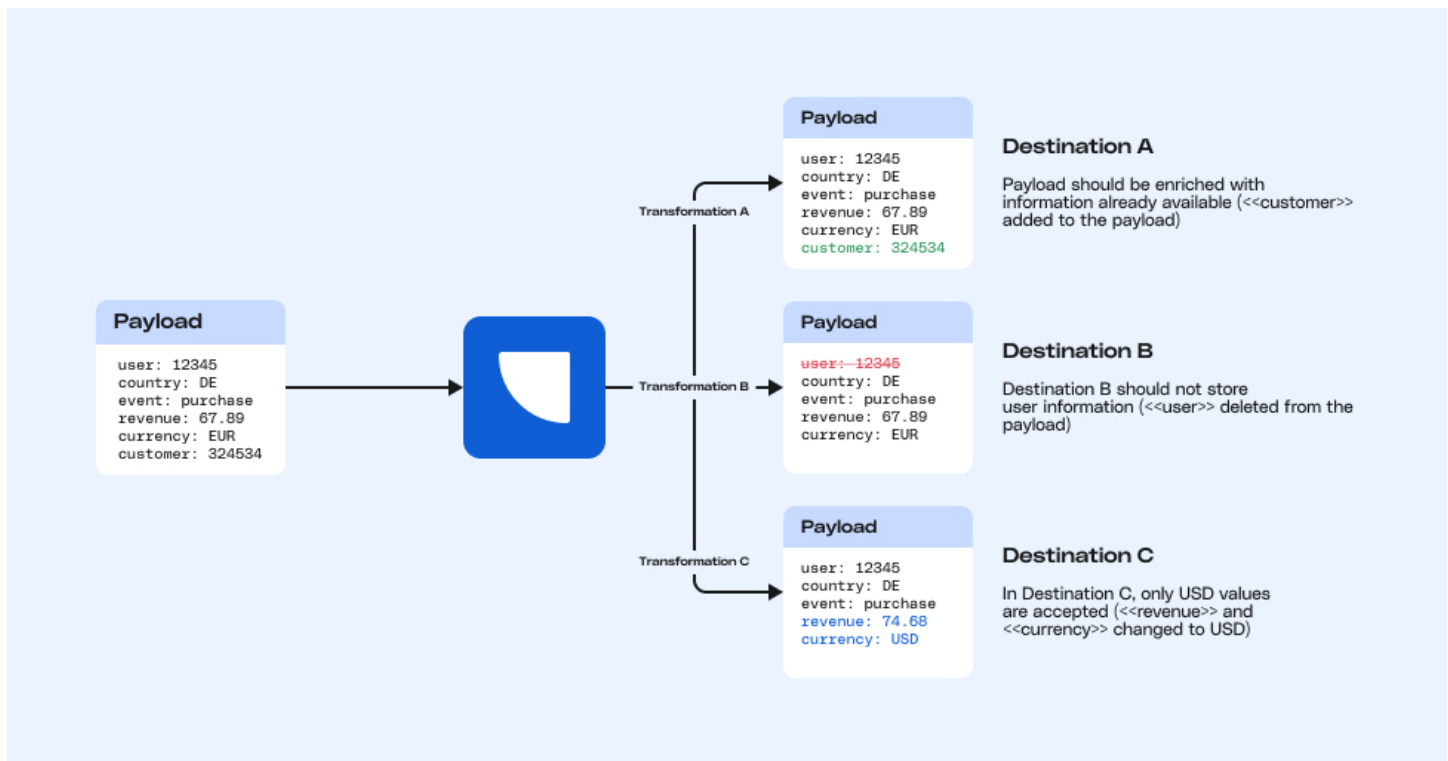
Rudderstack's real-time data processing capability also stood out, providing an advantage over the delayed data processing observed with Google Analytics.

RudderStack Implementation

The implementation of Rudderstack involved three steps:

▶   Defining the tracking goals

▶   Implementing the Rudderstack SDK on ZEISS websites

▶   Preparing downstream destinations like Azure Synapse and Mixpanel

To integrate Rudderstack into their web properties, the ZEISS Analytics team followed behavioral analytics best practices and properly instrumented the Rudderstack SDK. The SDK was deployed using a tag manager on the ZEISS website pages to accelerate the overall initiative and reduce dependency on back-end developers.

ZEISS had two key takeaways from the project:

▶   Standardization is the key to flexibility, allowing for easy transitions between tools and ensuring data consistency and scalability.

▶   Selecting an analysis tool like Mixpanel for non-technical users is paramount to encourage adoption of new analytics tools.

Results | ZEISS's success with RudderStack's Flexible Analytics solution

▸ Enhanced trust and credibility in data through transparent collection and processing.

▸ Streamlined integration with Azure, improving efficiency and reducing reliance on legacy data pipelines.

▸ Enabled a more agile, data-driven culture within ZEISS, leveraging insights for strategic decision-making.

RudderStack significantly enhances ZEISS's operations by streamlining data collection and distribution. By consolidating data into a unified stream for multiple destinations, the Analytics team reduced the number of tags on the website, improving overall performance. This consolidation not only ensures data integrity across all platforms, aligning with ZEISS's emphasis on data trust, but also moves them closer to achieving their goal of a unified global data stack. Moreover, ZEISS plans to leverage Rudderstack's reverse ETL technology to refine audience segmentation and improve integration with other marketing tools, to create audiences.

Moving from Google Analytics to Rudderstack was transformative for ZEISS. The Analytics team overcame the limitations of Google Analytics and gained deeper insights into their customer data, enabling the entire company to make more informed decisions. RudderStacks flexibility, scalability, and adaptability allowed them to create a customized solution while complying with HIPAA requirements.

Implementing and scaling new technologies can be challenging, but in today's rapidly changing digital landscape, it is essential to stay ahead. The analytics team at ZEISS improved its ability to generate insights and positioned the company for future growth by implementing Rudderstack and Mixpanel.

ZEISS made the switch from GA to RudderStack and Mixpanel in 2 months and is actively exploring new use cases with RudderStack. The company is better positioned than ever to accomplish their goals to develop a deeper customer understanding, optimize their digital experience, and ultimately drive revenue.

Sources	Destinations	Warehouses
RudderStack JavaScript SDK	Azure Synapse, Mixpanel	Microsoft Azure