

PETBARN

PetAI - a generative AI-powered assistant that simplifies pet care through personalised advice and product recommendations.



PETBARN

 **Insight**

Petbarn, a leader in pet care retail and part of the Greencross Pet Wellness Company, is dedicated to making pet ownership easier for Australians. As part of this commitment, Petbarn sought to enhance its digital experience for customers by integrating advanced AI capabilities.

In October 2024, the brand launched PetAI, a groundbreaking generative AI solution developed in collaboration with Insight Enterprises and Microsoft. PetAI leverages Microsoft's AI technologies, including Azure OpenAI Service, Azure AI Search and Azure App Service, to deliver personalised pet care advice and product recommendations.

The AI assistant is designed to help pet owners manage their pets' health and wellbeing by providing expert guidance, tailored suggestions and seamless service integration – all within a single digital experience.

PetAI draws on Greencross's extensive veterinary expertise and proprietary product knowledge. The solution has been integrated into Petbarn's website and mobile app, ensuring a consistent and accessible experience for customers across digital touchpoints.

The motivation to create PetAI stemmed from Greencross's recognition that pet owners must often navigate multiple sources of information – such as vet clinics, online forums and retail platforms – to find solutions. The company wanted to create a unified platform where owners could access expert advice and relevant products easily and seamlessly.

PetAI bridges this gap by offering a holistic digital pet care experience that mirrors the interactions customers find in-store and at veterinary clinics.

When selecting a partner for the project to build PetAI, Greencross turned to Insight because of its extensive expertise in AI-driven solutions and Microsoft technologies.

“ PetAI represents a significant leap forward in our customer experience strategy, providing pet owners with expert advice and personalised solutions at their fingertips, directly from the knowledge of Petbarn and Greencross Vets.”

Mark Norris, Chief Information Officer, Greencross Pet Wellness Company

“ Insight's proven track record in delivering innovative AI solutions, combined with its strong partnership with Microsoft, made it the ideal choice to bring PetAI to life.”

Nathan Allsopp
Product Manager – Experience,
AI & Progressive Web App, Greencross
Pet Wellness Company



Building an AI assistant with expert guidance

Bringing PetAI to life required deep technical expertise and strategic planning. Insight played a crucial role in shaping the AI solution, ensuring it aligned with Greencross's long-term vision and customer experience goals.

From the outset, Insight provided critical support in refining the project scope and technical feasibility. It worked closely with Greencross and Microsoft to define the AI architecture and ensure the solution could fully integrate with Petbarn's existing digital environment. This included leveraging a multi-agent AI model, where specialised AI agents handle different functions, such as retrieving information from Petbarn's knowledge base, making product recommendations and processing booking requests.

One key challenge in implementing generative AI is ensuring that responses are accurate and relevant. Insight addressed this issue by implementing retrieval-augmented generation. This method enables PetAI to access real-time information from multiple sources, including its internal knowledge bases, to reduce errors and improve the quality of responses.

Additionally, Insight helped optimise the AI model's token consumption, which affects information processing costs. It also helped adjust the length of PetAI's responses to keep interactions informative without unnecessary complexity.

To enhance personalisation, Insight integrated PetAI with Greencross's veterinary practice management software. This allows PetAI to retrieve relevant data to provide more meaningful advice, whether it's suggesting dietary adjustments for a pet with allergies or reminding an owner about upcoming vaccinations.

“PetAI exemplifies the remarkable impact of real-world AI solutions in reshaping how businesses engage with their customers and foster engagement and loyalty. We are proud of the partnership with Greencross and Microsoft and believe PetAI signifies the beginning of brands like Petbarn recognising the transformative potential of AI to drive tangible return on investment across the customer journey. While we're at the start of this AI journey we are truly excited about the possibilities it holds.”

Veli-Matti Vanamo
Chief Technology Officer Asia Pacific at Insight

Security and responsible AI development were also key considerations. Insight helped Greencross implement Microsoft's AI safety filters and ethical AI safeguards to ensure PetAI operated within stringent data privacy and content moderation frameworks. By leveraging Azure's secure environment, all customer interactions and data related to pet health remain protected.

Insight's role extended beyond technical implementation to change management and training. The team worked closely with Greencross staff to ensure internal teams understood how to leverage and maintain PetAI. This knowledge-sharing approach has empowered Greencross to continue refining the solution, making incremental improvements based on real-world usage data.

Delivering personalised pet care advice at scale

PetAI is set apart by its frictionless role in the customer journey. Unlike some AI chatbots that require sign-ups or paid subscriptions, PetAI is freely accessible to all users. This ensures any pet owner can access expert guidance, whether they are browsing Petbarn's website, using its mobile app or shopping in-store.

The AI assistant's ability to provide contextual, relevant recommendations has significantly enhanced customer engagement. PetAI is engaging in thousands of conversations every week, helping address common pet health concerns, such as "When do puppy teeth fall out?" and product-specific queries, like "Which food is best for a Labrador with sensitive digestion?" This level of personalisation has increased customer satisfaction and conversion rates. However, the real value of PetAI lies in providing reliable and trustworthy information that empowers pet owners to better manage their pets' health and wellbeing.

“PetAI is not just about driving sales. It's also about building trust, providing quality advice and ultimately improving the lives of pets and their owners.”

Rory Watt
General Manager of Enterprise Product & Program,
Greencross Pet Wellness Company

The process of developing PetAI has also delivered broader value to Greencross. It has accelerated the company's AI adoption strategy by fostering internal expertise and opening the door for further AI-driven innovations. As a result, Greencross's engagement with Insight has accelerated its digital transformation and made it a leader in AI-powered retailing.

“Our collaboration with Greencross and Insight underscores AI's role in shaping the future of retail, enabling businesses to meet consumers' needs in more dynamic and responsive ways.”

Sarah Carney
National Chief Technology Officer,
Microsoft Australia and New Zealand

Looking ahead, Greencross has ambitious plans to expand PetAI's capabilities. Future iterations will introduce enhanced booking functionalities, deeper integration with veterinary services and expanded product recommendation logic.

As PetAI continues to evolve, it will play an increasingly important role in Petbarn's digital strategy, offering even more value to pet owners across Australia.

“The collaboration with Microsoft and Insight has enabled us to push the boundaries of innovation and deliver a truly unique experience for pet parents in Australia – one that they are already highly engaged with.”

Mark Norris
Chief Information Officer,
Greencross Pet Wellness Company

