



As featured in
The CEO Magazine
 For more info visit
theceomagazine.com



Problem solved

Like a solutions supermarket, online business iSelect has everything you need in one place and delivers products and services tailored to individual needs.

IMAGES ELIZABETH BULL

The point-and-click generation are a demanding lot—wanting information on anything they can dream of in an instant. Google has solved many a dinner-party dispute over who kicked the winning goal in the 1989 Grand Final, or who played the original Batman. It seems any question can be answered by simply whipping out a mobile phone and asking the internet. It makes sense then, that when a big life event occurs—such as a new home or a new baby—and it means a change in insurance requirements or other services, the internet is often the first port of call.

What should be a simple exercise in 'shopping around', however, can easily turn into a nightmare. The options in the Australian health insurance market alone are too numerous to fathom for most people, who are already time-poor and hoping for a fast solution. iSelect has managed to solve this problem, embracing the digital age and harnessing the power of data to provide quick, easy, and tailored solutions for its customers. >>



Name Scott Wilson
Company iSelect
Position CEO
HQ Melbourne, Australia
Employees 705

CEO Scott Wilson says that last year, iSelect had more than 7.6 million visits to its website, leading to more than six million product comparisons between the 100 product partners and 140 brands that it represents. “We call it the iConnect system,” he says, “using our proprietary technology that matches individual customers and their needs, based on the demographic information that we are asking of them, to discover what sort of features are important to them. We then take that information and match it individually to the right product that suits their needs. If you look at the iSelect customer, they are typically white collar, well educated, affluent, and time-poor, and are looking for a trusted adviser to help them work through complex products. Also, these are the types of products that are really only looked at every three to five years, so although you might be savvy and might be able to back yourself to make a decision, customers find the market rather complex, because it’s something they don’t deal with every day, and there are so many choices out there.

“We have more than 12,500 products on our site. If you look at health products alone, there are 10,500 health product combinations that we have to choose from, but we have more than 100 questions that we can ask to make sure the customer ends up with the right solution for their needs, and that can drive over 100,000 possible product combinations. Leaving a consumer to try to figure that out themselves is a pretty tough challenge. That’s where we come in using our proprietary technology in the iConnect system to intelligently match customers’ needs to the individual product provider that’s right for them.”

Scott knows that the key to his business is simplicity. The customer experience needs to be fast and simple in order to be enjoyable. The digital



age helps enormously in this regard, as does a healthy appetite for disruption. “We have a great team of people,” he says. “When you look at iSelect, we were the original disrupter, so the type of people who tend to come to us are high achievers and want to make a difference. They don’t want to just be a cog in the wheel at a multinational and told what to do. Here they actually get the opportunity to influence, take ownership, and innovate. Digital is their domain. >>

“If you have a great customer platform, and it’s easy to use, then people will use it. That’s the key—being able to embrace the digital disruption, and understand it.” - Scott Wilson



MACQUARIE



Beautifully uncomplicated

Macquarie Bank Mortgages



At Macquarie we know mortgage products, pricing and processes can be complicated. That’s why Macquarie Bank Mortgages are all about focusing on untangling all the tiny details so we can make the

biggest difference when it comes to better serving brokers. To find out more, simply visit macquarie.com/au/advisers/solutions/mortgages, or give our business development managers a call.

FORWARD thinking



“If you are still pretending digital is not here, I think you have bigger issues to worry about,” Scott says. “Take a company like Uber—they started out around six years ago and now they are a multibillion-dollar global company. If you have a great customer platform, and it’s easy to use, then people will use it. That’s the key—being able to embrace digital disruption, and understand it.

“These days, customer expectations are set by experiences in every single category in their lives, so it’s no longer just your direct competitors you should be looking at and worrying about, saying: ‘Right. What’s this competitor doing and how should I respond—how do I beat them?’ You should be looking further afield—and this is the process that iSelect uses. We look at and try to learn from lots of different areas and lots of different experiences within Australia and from overseas and try to discover how can we

“We should constantly be asking questions around what the best possible service for our customers is. In this digital age, you are only a couple of clicks away from being able to find an alternative.”

- Scott Wilson

make the customer experience the best. Because, if a customer experiences Uber for the first time, they might think, ‘Why can’t I get an Uber for real estate agents?’ The expectation has just been reset in the customer’s mind—it’s not that you are doing anything wrong as a company, but the customer’s expectations have changed. We should constantly be asking questions around what the best possible service for our customers is. In this digital age, you are only a couple of clicks away from being able to find an alternative.”

Part of improving the service at iSelect has been an internal restructure.

When Scott took over as CEO, he split the business into separate core units, each with its own group executive who reports directly to him. These include Health, Insurance (both general and life), Financial Services (home loans and infochoice.com.au), and Energy and Telecommunications. There is also another business unit whose focus is growth, via verticals as well as >>

“At TAL our business is based on partnerships and we’re proud to be one of iSelect’s first life risk insurance partners. We value our strategic collaboration as we mutually grow from strength to strength and look forward to an exciting future.” - Niall McConville, General Manager, Retail Distribution, TAL

Insuring life for over 140 years.

Our commitment to partnership means we provide life insurance to 4 million Australians.



Visit tal.com.au to find out more about the benefits of partnering with Australia’s leading life insurer.

TAL Life Limited ABN 70 050 109 450 AFSL 237848



potential new market opportunities. Scott selected executives who, like him, realise the importance of clear lines of communication and being very open and transparent with their teams. This was especially important in his early days when iSelect hit a rough patch and its share price suffered as a result.

“The group executives had all been with iSelect for many years, so they knew the business very well and were able to get the focus back onto the organisation very quickly,” Scott says. “Basically, it’s important to be open and transparent with your teams; tell them what’s happening and what to expect. That way, if you get some bumpy media, you’ve been warned that it’s coming and you understand what it is, because you know what is happening within the company. The best way to focus on the shareholder value is to get back on

track and keep running the business. That’s how we have managed the first six months—open communication with the team.”

The business is now back on its feet and looking to grow further by working closely with its product partners to develop some more products. “We are heading in the right direction,” Scott says. “When you look at iSelect, we do more than 20 per cent of all health insurance sales in the country; more than 10 per cent of all energy sales; and our broadband business is flying along—we have increased sales tenfold in the last year, so we are seeing that as a third core area of growth.

“We have a number of products, brands, and items that are exclusive, and we are constantly working on expanding that,” Scott says. “A lot of people look at product comparison sites and say they

are all the same, that it’s all about price. Effectively, we are a marketplace for our customers and product partners to find each other. There are some businesses out there you could call a price comparison table. All they do is return a price—usually the lowest price—and a rate table. That is not a very sustainable business model, and it also doesn’t match customers’ needs.

“Often, with things like protecting your health, life insurance, your family home, or even finding the right energy provider, it’s not just about price. There are numerous benefits, features, and needs with these products, and it’s often not until it comes time to make a claim that you find out what the true cost of value is. At iSelect, we are always trying to match products based on value—making sure we find the right product, the right level of coverage based on customers’ needs, and at the right price.

For example, you might be very happy to pay \$5 more for health insurance if you get value by claiming for an optometrist or dentist because it’s something you use and you value. It might not be the cheapest or the lowest price in the market, but it’s better value for you personally.

“That is what makes iSelect unique—we are constantly working with our partners by using our data. We have kept every piece of data since the business started, so we know the market really well—people’s likes and dislikes, what’s important to them and what’s not, as well as postcode demographic information. We use all

“The essence of the partnership between iSelect and Zurich is a shared and unwavering commitment to putting customers first. Culturally we are very aligned too, with both organisations characterised by a collaborative, transparent, and innovative mindset.”
- Andy Marshall, Head of Sales Strategies and Research, Life Risk, Zurich

“Often, with things like protecting your health, life insurance, your family home, or even finding the right energy provider, it’s not just about price.” - Scott Wilson

of that in our data mining to help look for product opportunities, and we’ll often go to our product partners and work with them to consider the type of customer they are looking for and then how we can help develop new products that actually meet their customers’ needs.”

As for the future, iSelect wants to be the first port of call for people researching services, so that rather than starting with a Google search, customers will go straight to the iSelect website because they know and trust that their needs will be met quickly, efficiently, and—most importantly—easily. It wants to be known as the go-to problem-solver for complex financial issues that pop up

throughout people’s lives. The company is also expanding its offering, recently announcing a move into travel insurance, credit cards, and mobile plans. These new products are actually a direct result of customer demand. Enough people have searched for those services on the iSelect website for Scott and his team to heed the call and give customers what they want.

“When it comes down to it, if our customers are happy, then our shareholders are happy and the business is growing, so that’s what we are focused on. The customers and our product partners come first—those are the two aspects that will always drive iSelect.” ■

**Take charge
of your
health and
wellbeing.**



Join AIA Vitality, the scientifically backed program that rewards you for adopting a healthier lifestyle. There are over 20 well known brands, like FitBit, Myer and Woolworths, so you’ll enjoy reduced premiums, great benefits and discounts on gym memberships, flights, fitness apparel and more.

By improving your health and wellbeing, AIA Vitality will help you feel more energised and stay on top of your game.

To find out more, contact your trusted insurance specialist or visit aiavitality.com.au



AIA Vitality

Copyright © 2016 AIA Australia Limited (ABN 79 004 837 861 AFSL 230043). All rights reserved. AIA Vitality is available with eligible products issued by AIA Australia. AIA Vitality partner information shown here is current as at April 2016 and is subject to change at any time. For full terms and conditions of AIA Vitality partners, benefits and rewards, and to view the AIA Vitality Terms and Conditions and Benefit Guides see aiavitality.com.au. Partner terms and conditions may also apply. AAU0047



**RISE
ABOVE THE
TURBULENCE
WITH OUR
GLOBAL
GROWTH
SHARE FUND**

Zurich’s Global Growth Share Fund invests in stocks with sustainable earnings acceleration. That’s why it has generated 11.78% p.a. return since its inception in 2009 to the end of February 2016 - ahead of global benchmarks.

To send your investments to another level contact us now.

1800 004 480

zurich.com.au/globalgrowth

ZURICH INVESTMENTS.


ZURICH®

This publication is intended for the general information of licensed financial advisers, is dated March 2016, is given in good faith and is derived from sources believed to be accurate as at this date, which may be subject to change. It should not be considered to be a comprehensive statement on any matter and should not be relied on as such. The general information does not take into account the personal investment objectives, financial situation or needs of any person. Investors should always consider these factors, the appropriateness of the information, and the relevant Zurich Investments Product Disclosure Statement available from their financial adviser or Zurich Investments when making their financial decisions about any Zurich Investments fund. Past performance is not a reliable indicator of future performance. Zurich Investment Management Limited ABN 56 063 278 400, AFSL 232 511, GIIN FVHHKJ.00012.ME.036 5 Blue St, North Sydney NSW 2060. LLIN-011149-2016