datacentrix

Serious about performance, passionate about value

infocentrix

First issue
2019

RESHAPING BUSINESS.

infocentrix

First issue 2019

Infocentrix is an official newsletter for the Datacentrix Group, its partners and customers.

Datacentrix is a complete ICT systems integrator, providing solutions and services across the full information value chain. The company's value-driven approach and proven execution capability reinforce its position as one of the top ICT players in the market.

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We would like to thank our technology partners for their support and input into this issue:

Fortinet
Hewlett Packard Enterprise
Lenovo
Nutanix
Red Hat
Tintri

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Introduction

Datacentrix is passionate about combining innovation and leading technologies to deliver deeply customised solutions that help business use technology to become fully connected, nimble and robust with the future in mind. Our heads-down focus on our customer centricity is tightly weaved into the makeup of Datacentrix, ensuring a unique digital journey for each customer.

It has been a productive 2019 at Datacentrix to date.

Partner awards and certifications
Datacentrix has received several technology partner accolades, which reaffirm the company's focus on the relationships with our technology partners; and underline our commitment to providing comprehensive technology solutions to our clients by teams of certified experts.

- F5 Partner of the Year 2018 award;
- McAfee Commercial Partner of the Year 2018 award;
- Four HPE Partner awards: two Aruba awards, namely Aruba Elite Partner of the year and Aruba Partner Sales Champion; and 'HPE Compute Partner of the Year' and an individual award, 'HPE HiT Service Delivery Engineer of the Year'; and
- Circle of Excellence individual award in the category of Multi-solution Cisco SD-WAN at Cisco Connect 2019.
- OpenText recognised Datacentrix as the Africa Partner of the Year for the second consecutive year at this year's Digiruption Indaba. Datacentrix is OpenText's largest partner in Africa. In addition, Datacentrix customer, SANParks, received the Visionary of the year award.

The company also reached Advanced Solution Partner status with Red Hat South Africa and has renewed its Cisco Gold Certification in South Africa.

Safety Health Environment Quality (SHEQ) – ISO certifications maintained
Datacentrix maintained the ISO 9001:2015 (Quality Management System), 14001:2015 (Environmental Management System), and OHSAS 18001:2007 (Occupational Health and Safety Management System) certifications, which it achieved in 2018.

Achieving and maintaining these certifications underscores the organisation's commitment to the highest standards of quality in the industry together with transparency with regards to the management system, which continues to reassure clients and other stakeholders.

Skills development reaches new heights
Datacentrix strives to influence the lives of the communities and the individuals in which it operates. Skills development is an integral part of Datacentrix and provides an opportunity to influence the quality of life for many individuals.

- 150 delegates in Gauteng and Cape Town have completed programmes in various operational sectors as part of the Datacentrix learnership and graduate internship programmes as well as its human capital development programme for existing employees;
- Over 700 delegates have completed the programmes since its inception;
- 110 disabled candidates have participated in the company's skills development programmes over the past 2 years.

New point of presence in the Middle East
Datacentrix has established a new entity, Datacentrix Solutions LLC in Qatar to support the Enterprise Information Management function in the Middle East region. This follows the establishment of Datacentrix Solution DMCC in 2018 in Dubai.

Empowerment acknowledgement
Datacentrix was nominated as a finalist in the 18th annual Top Empowerment Awards in the Top Empowered Company: ICT Companies Award and Skills Development Award categories for the second consecutive year.

We are proud of the achievements and thank every client and employee for being part of the journey.

The Infocentrix captures some of these and other noteworthy events from 2019.

Enjoy the read.

Ahmed Mahomed,
CEO

Datacentrix nominated as Top Empowerment Awards finalist

Datacentrix was recently nominated as a finalist in the 18th annual Top Empowerment Awards by Topco Media. As a transformation leader, Datacentrix, was nominated for both the Top Empowered Company: ICT Companies Award and Skills Development Award categories.

As South Africa's premier empowerment event, the Top Empowerment Awards recognises companies and individuals who have contributed to accelerating transformation and building an all-inclusive economy.

Datacentrix has shown a consistent commitment to the evolution of business in South Africa, achieving a Level 1 broad-based black economic empowerment (B-BBEE) contributor rating from EmpowerLogic, a SANAS accredited B-BBEE verification agency, for the past two years. The company is 51,15 percent black owned; 46,98 percent black women owned and with every R100 spent, customers receive a total value of R540 over the various categories and elements on the B-BBEE score card (normal recognition, above the black women-owned threshold).

With a history of honouring industry leaders, finalists and winners at the Top Empowerment Awards have been a source of inspiration for sector peers. With its many accomplishments, Datacentrix hopes to do the same.

Says Ahmed Mahomed, Datacentrix CEO: “Datacentrix has been committed to socio-economic transformation for over two decades, dedicated to supporting our surrounding communities, skills development and transformation at all levels. This dedication is ingrained in our company culture, and we will continue to place a strong focus on our ongoing empowerment objectives.

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> This dedication is ingrained in our company culture, and we will continue to place a strong focus on our ongoing empowerment objectives.

“We are gratified to have received this recognition from the Top Empowerment Awards for our endeavours,” Mahomed adds.

The Top Empowerment Awards ceremony took place on 11 April 2019 in Johannesburg.

Datacentrix recognised for outstanding performance with four HPE awards

Datacentrix is pleased to announce it has gained further recognition from Hewlett Packard Enterprise (HPE), taking four awards at the recent HPE Partner Awards 2019, in Sandton, Johannesburg.

The organisation holds a Platinum Partner HPE accreditation, and is also a Platinum Hybrid IT and HPE Pointnext partner, a Gold HPE Pointnext Services partner, and an Aruba Platinum partner with ClearPass Policy Management competencies.

This year's award ceremony saw Datacentrix walk away with two Aruba awards, namely Aruba Elite Partner of the Year and Aruba Partner Sales Champion. This follows the company's recognition as 'African Partner of the Year' by Aruba late last year.

"The Elite Partner of the Year award recognises the substantial investment that Datacentrix has made over the past year, ensuring that our team is always up to date with the latest in Aruba certifications, and acknowledges the biggest and best Aruba support structure in South Africa. It also draws attention to Datacentrix's local installed base and revenue gains," explains Tony de Sousa, enterprise business unit manager at Datacentrix. "The second accolade was awarded to Datacentrix technical specialist for networks, Marc van der Poll, as the brand's greatest local champion."

In addition, Datacentrix was named as 'HPE Compute Partner of the Year' based on its server sales strength, while Franz Pienaar, enterprise technical consultant at Datacentrix, received the title of 'HPE HiT Service Delivery Engineer of the Year' for his exemplary work on a high-availability, fault-tolerant system that was not only demonstrated at a popular local mining conference, but has also become a test case for HPE, with a related white paper.

“These awards stand testament to Datacentrix's dedication to and investment in the HPE brand within South Africa," De Sousa adds. "We will continue to focus on this strategic partnership for Datacentrix with the same vigour and commitment into the future."

Intelligent storage solutions from HPE

Data — and what you can do with it — never stops evolving and is at the centre of everything we do today. It's a massive resource that you can use to fuel innovation, steer the business with greater insights and enable people to do their best work. But data overload, unpredictable workload demands, and growing maintenance and security requirements can stall important initiatives when storage systems lack the performance, scale, agility and efficiency to keep up.

Intelligent storage is a storage system or service that uses Artificial Intelligence (AI) to continuously learn and adapts to its hybrid cloud environment to better manage and serve data. It can be deployed as hardware on-premises, as a virtual appliance or as a cloud service. Intelligent storage can move data where it needs to be and proactively optimises data through its life cycle. It provides data protection and encryption to eliminate potential security threats.

A hybrid cloud world means an increasing amount of data is being generated all the time. This data can be incredibly useful, but only if it can be accessed, organised and analysed. Traditional data storage systems were not designed to effectively handle this task, meaning valuable data is hidden or overlooked and enterprise and IT resources are strained. Intelligent storage systems remove the barriers that keep customers from taking advantage of their data by understanding what workloads need, adapting to changes in real time and simplifying management and support.

"Intelligent storage solutions from HPE allow data to be unlocked from its silos of complex infrastructure to deliver improved insights. This means the burden of managing infrastructure is reduced and data is easily managed, moved and protected through its life cycle so it can be in the right place at the right time and its full value can be extracted," says Marco Vieira.

Marco Vieira, country manager: Hybrid IT

HPE's Intelligent Storage solutions include:

HPE InfoSight
"Our intelligent storage incorporates HPE InfoSight for advanced analytics and machine learning. Self-manage and optimise your IT, reducing operating costs by up to 79%, while predicting and preventing 86% of problems before you even notice them," adds Vieira.

HPE All-Flash Hybrid Storage
All-flash and hybrid storage with intelligence makes it smarter and simpler for you to use — AI-driven and built-for-cloud, delivered as-a-service. Unlock the full potential of your data and achieve mission-critical service levels with HPE All-Flash Hybrid Storage solutions.

HPE Nimble Storage
Leveraging flash storage and predictive analytics, you can get a radically simpler experience with fast and reliable access to data — all without the effort required of other storage platforms. Powered with AI, HPE Nimble Storage redefines how storage is managed and supported.

Hewlett Packard Enterprise

HPE 3PAR Storage
Built for the extreme requirements of mission-critical workloads, HPE 3PAR Storage enables the highest levels of resiliency, performance and capacity for enterprises and service providers. Protect your apps with full stack predictive analytics.

Transforming to intelligent storage has never been easier. Leasing equipment instead of buying can be a smart business move, especially in an age of IT disruption. HPE has a suite of consumption-based IT solutions — designed, delivered, and operated by HPE Pointnext — to offer a simple, industry leading pay-as-you-go IT financial model, leveraging HPE GreenLake Flex Capacity.

Turn to the experts at HPE Financial Services to build IT investment and life-cycle management strategies that accelerate your digital transformation today and help you stay flexible for future technology needs. Together we can turn your goals into a reality.

Regardless of where you are on your journey, contact our experts to see how intelligent storage can help you with your cloud journey.

> Intelligent storage solutions from HPE allow data to be unlocked from its silos of complex infrastructure to deliver improved insights. This means the burden of managing infrastructure is reduced and data is easily managed, moved and protected through its life cycle so it can be in the right place at the right time and its full value can be extracted.

www.hpe.com/storage

Datacentrix becomes Citrix

Platinum Solution Advisor, receives emerging markets cloud award

Datacentrix has achieved Citrix Platinum Solution Advisor status, one of only three local companies currently at this level.

The Citrix Solution Advisor designation offers channel partners a wide range of marketing, sales and technology tools to build partners' technical and sales expertise, win a larger share of the market and surpass the competition. As a Solution Advisor, partners work side by side with customers to plan, design, implement and maintain Citrix solutions. These solutions power business mobility through secure, mobile workspaces that provide people with instant access to apps, desktops, data and communications on any device, over any network and cloud.

Membership in the programme is the best way for partners to help customers transition to a software-defined workplace, uniting virtualisation, mobility management, networking and SaaS solutions to enable new ways for businesses and people to work better.

"Datacentrix' rise up the Citrix partner programme ranks has been rapid to say the least, moving from Silver, through Gold, to Platinum level within three years," explains Tony de Sousa, enterprise business unit manager at Datacentrix. "We have taken this journey with Citrix very seriously, ensuring that the required specialisations and related certifications are in place, as well as working closely with Citrix as a trusted advisor.

"Becoming one of only three local Citrix Solution Advisor-Platinum (CSA-Plat) partners in South Africa demonstrates that Datacentrix has the ability to provide the highest level of expertise and commitment to the entire Citrix portfolio of products."

In addition, Datacentrix was named as Citrix' Cloud Partner of the Year for emerging markets. The award was given at the Citrix Summit partner conference, held in Orlando, Florida in January this year.

"Datacentrix has made serious investment over several years to position itself as a specialist provider of highly agile, next-generation cloud services," De Sousa continues. "To receive recognition for this hard work from Citrix is most gratifying."

“We are proud to recognise Datacentrix's excellent contribution to furthering Citrix growth in South Africa, by naming them as our Cloud Partner of the Year," says Brendan McAravey, Citrix country manager for South Africa. "Our partners are invaluable to Citrix as we enable our customers to manage complexity, and embrace hybrid multi-clouds while supporting legacy technologies. Congratulations and thanks to the team at Datacentrix."

Sherif Seddik, senior vice president, EMEA at Citrix; Piotr Faderski, emerging market channel director at Citrix; Craig Margison, pre-sales specialist at Datacentrix and Eric Kline, COO, EMEA at Citrix

McAfee names Datacentrix as Commercial Partner of the Year for 2018

Datacentrix was recently named as the Commercial Partner of the Year 2018 for device-to-cloud cybersecurity company, McAfee.

The award was presented to Datacentrix based on its contribution to McAfee's local bottom line, according to Wayne Olsen, security business unit manager at Datacentrix.

"As a certified Platinum Partner, which is the highest tier of McAfee partner accreditation, Datacentrix has already proven that it has the right, certified engineers, consultants, support staff and sales people in place, and an expert knowledge of the McAfee products and technology suites," explains Trevor Coetzee, regional director for sub-Saharan Africa at McAfee. "By assisting McAfee with such excellent growth in the local commercial market, Datacentrix has also shown that it continues to focus on this relationship as a strategic partnership, while remaining cognisant of excellent customer results."

Olsen continues: "The past year has shown in particular that Datacentrix' service-centric approach is paying off, as more and more clients move away from traditional box-drop vendors to find a solutions-dedicated partner.

The past year has shown in particular that Datacentrix' service-centric approach is paying off, as more and more clients move away from traditional box-drop vendors to find a solutions-dedicated partner.

Wayne Olsen, Datacentrix security business unit manager receiving the award from Trevor Coetzee, McAfee vice president

"Cloud security is a key focus area at Datacentrix, as we see increasing numbers of South African companies looking to move fully to cloud or hybrid-cloud environments. We are consistently developing solutions that will enable us to ensure client data is protected, no matter where it resides within the cloud.

"The McAfee partnership has always been an important one for Datacentrix," Olsen states. "We will continue to invest in this relationship, as part of our commitment to delivering solutions that address the risks businesses face in the dynamic cybersecurity world."

Olsen adds that, over 2019, Datacentrix will intensify its investment in artificial intelligence (AI) technology for the cybersecurity space. "The speed and frequency of today's cyberattacks is extremely high, and as computing power far surpasses a human's ability to spot and identify attacks, this move will bolster our ability to respond and remediate against such incidents."

TREND

Facebook in the office, for the office

The world's largest social media company wants in on your workplace communication.

By Lauren Kate Rawlins Brainstorm

The way we communicate in our personal lives has changed drastically over the last few years. An email or SMS to invite a friend or family member to dinner seems outdated, when you can WhatsApp message or nudge them on Facebook Messenger.

The same isn't necessarily true for business, however. Most organisations are still entangled in email threads that date back months and often don't include all the relevant parties, or company announcements made on clunky intranets that only the staff know how to use.

There are a few companies out there trying to change the way corporations interact internally, unifying all communication channels into one amalgamated secure experience – a bit like social media.

In fact, one of the biggest players in the game is social media giant Facebook. Workplace by Facebook is a reskinned version of the Facebook that everyone is familiar with, but with a closed network filled with only people within an organisation. It's separate from Facebook proper, as users don't have their Workplace and personal Facebook pages linked and they'll need login details provided by their company to access their Workplace profile. It features a newsfeed, messenger, groups, events, and live-streaming video – all adapted for business.

There's a free version and a paid-for version. The free version doesn't include any of the enterprise level features such as monitoring tools for IT teams, IT support, APIs for custom integrations and bots, and integrations with e-discovery and compliance providers. The paid-for version costs business $3 per user, with discounts for more than 5,000 users.

Locally landed

The platform was first launched in the US in 2016, and in October last year, local ICT solution provider Datacentrix was appointed the first South African Facebook Workplace reseller.

Rudie Raath, chief digital officer of Enterprise Advisory Services at Datacentrix, says Facebook Workplace disrupts the current paradigm of unified communication in the workplace. "Having an engaged workforce that uses the corporate communications platform as the preferred method of communication, as opposed to email, is just one of the immediate quick wins provided by this solution.

"Facebook Workplace offers a platform that's familiar to most corporate users, which ensures adoption," he says. "It delivers a personalised experience for each employee, with an information feed relevant to the company through a news feed portal. There's also a chat application for instant messaging, VoIP calling, in both audio and video formats, for one-to-one or multi-party."

The platform also integrates with other business solutions such as SurveyMonkey, Microsoft OneDrive, SharePoint, HubSpot, Salesforce and Box.

Businesses around the world are finding a number of different ways to make use of the platform to streamline

> Having an engaged workforce that uses the corporate communications platform as the preferred method of communication, as opposed to email, is just one of the immediate quick wins provided by this solution.

procedures. Vedanta Resources, a mining company headquartered in the UK, but with operations across the globe, including South Africa, is using Facebook Workplace to simplify its procurement process. The procurement team uses a chatbot, created by Workplace partner Leena.ai to clarify queries related to taxation, documents, and detailed profiles of people, which means the team members don't have to wade through lengthy documents and can easily find the right expertise in the organisation.

Miroglio, an Italian high fashion retailer, created a group on Facebook Workplace to bring together its employees as well as external design consultants to conduct design-related discussions.

The marketing team at IIFL, an integrated financial services group in India, uses the platform to test adverts in-house first, leveraging its 12,000 strong internal audience to get feedback on planned campaigns before scaling up and spending on external channels.

Raath says Datacentrix has seen a broad uptake of Facebook Workplace by larger companies. Unable to give exact numbers, he says one of the largest local banks has adopted it, with a number of other medium to large organisations currently in process. There's a broad mix of local companies using the platform, such as MultiChoice, Jumia, Starbucks SA, and Vodacom (as part of the Vodafone Group).

Datacentrix has itself deployed Workplace internally to 1,350 users. Facebook Workplace competes with the more established collaboration platforms such as Slack, Asana, Microsoft Teams and Monday.com

Workplace challenges other platforms, not on features, but on user adoption, security, compliance and integration," he says.

Should it be trusted?

While Facebook proper is used by 38% of all South Africans, according to the latest data from research firm World Wide Worx, it hasn't shown itself to be a platform that users can trust implicitly to safeguard their personal data. Early last year, it came to light that private information from 50 million Facebook users worldwide was harvested by data analytics firm Cambridge Analytica to develop techniques to support president Donald Trump's 2016 election campaign.

The social media company also had to pull a VPN app, Onavo, from Apple and Android's app stores after it was discovered that it was being used to monitor a user's behaviour outside of the Facebook app.

Raath says that all data on the paid-for version of Facebook Workplace is solely owned, entirely controlled and monitored by the business and not Facebook. Companies using Facebook Workplace will have to decide for themselves if they believe this and are willing to have all their internal company communication potentially exposed to Facebook.

Rudie Raath, chief digital officer, Enterprise Advisory Services at Datacentrix

PARTNER

By Alan Browning,
Lenovo Hyper Converged Solutions lead solutions leader HCI META

Living on the "Edge"

Over the past few months I have been incredibly fortunate to be afforded the opportunity to present to over a 1,000 people throughout South Africa and the greater Southern African development community. I've used this opportunity to poll the audiences with the question: "What do you see as the future of architecting one's data centre with the emergence of the public cloud". Consistently I've received the same response.

While some say that they will move all compute to the public cloud within the next two to five years and some say they will remain on premise; the overwhelming majority of people agree that the future of Information Technology (IT) is a hybrid model. They foresee that some services will remain on premise and the services that make sense to run on the public cloud will move in time to the public cloud platform. Many have already started this journey.

When Microsoft announced on 6 March 2019 that ZAN and ZAW are now live and publicly accessible via one's Azure portal, this seemed to validate the early adopters decision to move lock, stock and barrel to the public cloud platform. Many quick wins can be realised by moving services that make sense to the cloud, however studies have shown that over a five-year period it can be up to 250% more expensive to run on a public cloud platform than on premise and many of the "bleeding edge" companies that moved to the public cloud globally are now busy with a strategy to reinvest in traditional data centres, which is proving incredibly complex.

However, Lenovo still believes that the public cloud is of great benefit to businesses and in actual fact we embrace it. Lenovo has identified three major use cases that will continue to gain traction as the public cloud gains momentum, these are:

1. Disaster Recovery as a Service (DRaaS);
2. Content Delivery Network (CDN), which is the transportation vehicle that is needed to move large amounts of data around the world; and
3. Algorithmic processing. As high performance computing, artificial/augmented intelligence and machine learning gain traction the need to get answers to complex compute problems will mean that it will become uneconomically viable to invest in infrastructure to get potentially once-off results and therefore spinning up servers on a public cloud platform makes perfect business sense.

It is important to remember that cloud computing is not a destination, but a business model. For all other services it will become more and more important to architect one's data centre with Edge Computing in mind.

Edge Computing is defined as:
A distributed computing paradigm in which computation is largely or completely performed on distributed device nodes. Edge computing pushes applications, data and computing power (services) away from centralised points to locations closer to the user.

As data growth explodes and the Internet of Things (IoT) becomes a reality ensuring that the data is collected and/or processed as close to the source as possible, the IT architecture of the future will look something like the diagram below.

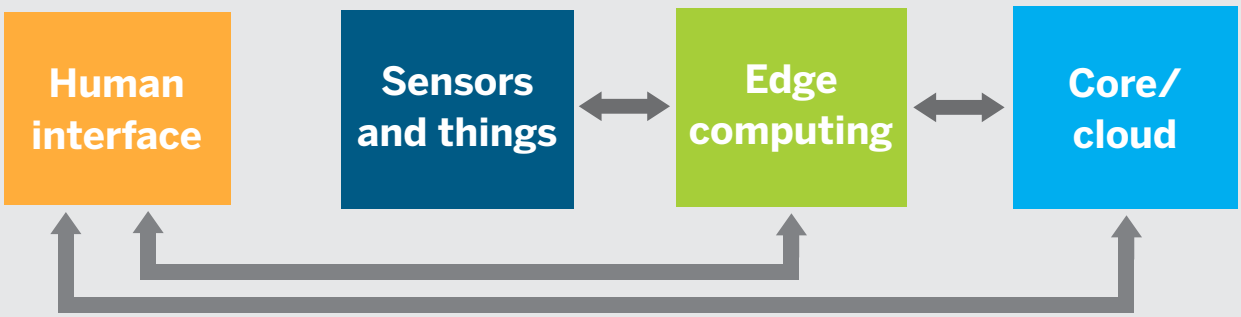
Embracing the "Edge" is all about ensuring that your company will remain relevant as 21st century computing becomes the norm. With this in mind, Lenovo is incredibly proud to deliver our new range of Edge servers namely the ThinkSystem SE350, which is:

- **Compact** – 1U tall, short depth, half width. Mounts on rack, wall, shelf.
- **Rugged** – Continuous 0-55°C, dust, high shock and vibration.
- **Multiple connectivity** – WiFi and cellular LTE, plus optical and copper ensuring redundancy on the connectivity layer.
- **Performance** – Server-class compute and storage, AI acceleration, hyper-converged stacks.
- **Secure** – Physical and cyber tamper detection and encrypted storage.
- **Management** – XClarity remote management tools, activation via app.

By deploying this solution Lenovo once again claims market leadership in the "Edge" while taking the complexity of deploying an "Edge" solution out of the equation.

> It is important to remember that cloud computing is not a destination, but a business model. For all other services it will become more and more important to architect one's data centre with Edge Computing in mind.

Beyond the data centre



Functions				
	• Human control • Visualisation	• Generate data • Interact with physical world	• Collect • Pre-process • Automate • Analyse • Forward	• Store data • Deep analytics • Automate • Control

Datacentrix cleans up at HP partner awards

Datacentrix has put huge effort into its HP partnership this year, and the recognition of its investment of time and energy into the HP brand makes it all worthwhile, says Datacentrix end-user computing (EUC) product manager, Elmari Keyser.

HP recently rewarded top local partners, including Platinum Partner, Datacentrix, at its annual channel awards event.

Within the RSA Partner award category, Datacentrix took top honours as 'PC Platinum Partner of the Year 2018' and 'Print Platinum Partner of the Year 2018', for its ongoing contribution to the organisation's laptop and desktop business, as well as the HP Managed Print Services (MPS) suite of offerings.

"As a Platinum Partner, Datacentrix must continually ensure it is on track for its revenue targets, as well as required certifications. The Print and PC awards recognise Datacentrix as best-in-class within these categories," Keyser explains.

The specialisation grouping saw Datacentrix named the 'Value Products Partner of the Year'.

“Here, Datacentrix has been acknowledged for its success with HP's top tier 'powerhouse' workstation products, including the Z-series."

Finally, Datacentrix business unit manager: managed print and document solutions (MPDS), received the title of 'Commercial Channel Ambassador' for 2018.

Says Keyser: "This award is a huge accolade for Dewald Badenhorst, as it shows that he is able to talk the 'HP speak' and embodies the company's values.

“Datacentrix is grateful that our hard work and close collaboration with HP over 2018 has paid off," she adds. "It shows that our head is in the game, and that we're working together with HP to bring the best possible solutions to our customers. Our partnership is stronger than ever, and we are pleased to see our efforts being rewarded in this way."

David Rozzio, HP managing director; Michael van Lier, HP channel manager; Jamie Scott, Datacentrix business development manager; Elmari Keyser, Datacentrix EUC product manager; Ahmed Mahomed, Datacentrix CEO and Boitumelo Kgonare, HP partner business manager

Datacentrix wins multi-million rand SANParks outsource deal

South African National Parks (SANParks) has awarded Datacentrix a five-year contract for the full outsource of its network and infrastructure services across more than 100 sites nationwide, in a deal worth over R298 million.

Recognised as a world-leading conservation authority, SANParks is a public entity under the jurisdiction of the Department of Environmental Affairs. The organisation manages a system of 19 functional national parks in seven of South Africa's nine provinces, with a total area of just over four million hectares (comprising 67 percent of the protected areas under state management). In the past two decades, seven new national parks have been established, totalling over 700,000 hectares, with much of this being in under-conserved ecological areas such as the Succulent Karoo and Fynbos Biomes.

SANParks' requirement for a single service aggregator will see Datacentrix manage multiple suppliers of both ICT and business services, providing a single business-facing ICT organisation. This approach aims to seamlessly integrate interdependent services from various internal and external service providers into an end-to-end service, meeting SANParks' business requirements of service optimisation, maturity and innovation.

In this role, Datacentrix will also deliver the following services:

- **Network services:** The network and connectivity services will be delivered by eNetworks, a wholly-owned Datacentrix company. SANParks needs a robust network to pave the way for its future technology plans. This necessitates a complete re-engineering of the network.
- **Infrastructure services:** The full outsource solution involves having a team on site to deliver day-to-day infrastructure support, managing their servers, desktops and Exchange, including 24x7 helpdesk services, environment monitoring services, as well as third party aggregation services.

Says Savan Marimuthu, senior account manager at Datacentrix: "Our appointment as the SANParks outsource partner is a significant accolade to Datacentrix, proving that, as a company, we are executing our vision of becoming the ICT partner of choice to both corporate and public sector South Africa.

Kamal Pillay, CIO at SANParks and Savan Marimuthu, senior account manager at Datacentrix

"The tender was awarded to us based on the strength of our managed services track record of more than 15 years, as well as our solid understanding of SANParks' business environment, cost effectiveness and Level One empowerment rating. Our dedication to enterprise development – through our network of SMMEs that will assist in the delivery of this project – and the level of innovation that was applied to architecting the solution put forward to SANParks, were also key criteria in Datacentrix clinching this deal.

"We look forward to partnering with our client once again, helping the organisation to improve its ICT environment, and taking it to the next level in terms of connectivity, monitoring and support," he adds.

Gauteng graduates

Datacentrix celebrates graduates – acknowledges top achiever

Datacentrix recently hosted a graduation and celebration ceremony that acknowledged 98 delegates in Gauteng, who have completed several programmes in various operational sectors as part of its learnership and graduate internship programmes as well as its human capital development programme for existing employees.

"This follows our first graduation ceremony held in November 2017, which recognised approximately 50 delegates, and paved the way for our final ceremony for another 53 delegates in our coastal region, which also took place in Cape Town at the beginning of April 2019, taking our final number of graduating delegates to almost 150 for 2019," says Samukelisiwe Dube, head of Human Resources at Datacentrix.

"Since 2008, Datacentrix has welcomed hundreds of learners into the learnership and graduate internship programmes with the aim of providing theoretical knowledge with on-the-job skills training," she adds.

"We've also helped to develop existing employees through our management development programme (at executive, advanced and intermediate levels), as well as providing national certification programmes in project management and IT related programmes (i.e. system support, systems development, MCSE, end-user computing, etc.)."

Datacentrix supports the principle of lifelong learning and these programmes line up nicely with its organisational strategic objective, which is to acquire and continuously develop people to help deliver on its overall business objectives.

"If we are able to do this while ensuring that lives of our employees are changed and enhanced, one day at a time, all the better," says Dube.

A special acknowledgement

Datacentrix had one stand-out top achiever across all programmes, Pheello Manamela, who Dube says is the truest representation of what the company is trying to achieve thus far.

"Manamela is humble, he takes his work seriously and does everything to the best of his abilities. His work performance is reflective of the passion he brings to his career every single day and, as he has been rated and acknowledged as a Top Achiever across all of our Learning Academy programmes, we couldn't think of anyone who deserved this accolade as much," she explains.

Manamela enrolled as part of the Datacentrix Internship programme in 2017 after graduating from UNISA with a formal qualification in Human Resources Management.

“

Datacentrix supports the principle of lifelong learning and these programmes line up nicely with its organisational strategic objective, which is to acquire and continuously develop people to help deliver on its overall business objectives.

He says being part of the programme was a great learning experience from joining, right through to becoming officially employed by the company. “I've been fortunate enough to work with top level management, which has helped me grow in so many ways – both professionally and personally,” he says. “As an example, prior to joining Datacentrix, I feel I had minimal social skills but my time here has seen me form long lasting interpersonal working relationships, friendships akin to family, and my social and professional network grows daily.

“This experience has exceeded my expectations – I have been challenged to leave my comfort zone, to defy my own limitations and refine my career objectives. It would be over simplifying to say I'm grateful.”

What does the future hold?
“Our Learners with Disabilities programme is running for the second time since launching last year and our learners are currently enrolled for the National Certificate in End-user Computing NQF Level 3,” says Dube.

“Furthermore, the ever evolving demand for requirements driven by the market and the business along with a growing number of our employees participating in the formal programmes, we have seen space to formally launch the Datacentrix Learning Academy later this year,” she concludes.

Pheelo Manamela, top achiever

Cape Town graduates

PARTNER

How quickly could a cyber attack take down critical infrastructure?

With crucial national infrastructure like power systems and manufacturing currently in the spotlight, stakeholders need to consider the impacts of unseen risks, such as cyber attacks, on Operational Technology networks.

By Doros Hadjizenonos, regional sales director at security specialist, Fortinet

The recent national infrastructure challenges have thrown into sharp relief the impacts downtime can have on businesses, individuals and the national economy.

Most local industrial and manufacturing organisations have moved in recent years to upgrade Operational Technology (OT) environments – including industrial control systems (ICS) and supervisory control and data acquisition (SCADA) systems, switches, sensors, valves and manufacturing technologies – to advanced and connected modern Industrial IoT (IIoT) systems that support automation, remote monitoring and analytics. In many cases, organisations are opting to merge older OT environments with their IT systems. This aging OT may also be integrated across multiple sites and systems to enable a single control system through a cloud-based platform. These smarter, more connected systems typically support cost savings, efficiency and enhanced health and safety.

However, some of these OT systems are decades old, designed in a pre-cyber risk era, and are vulnerable to malware and other cyber threats. The very connectedness that enables smarter operations also expands the organisation's risk profile, making systems that worked historically suddenly interconnected and highly vulnerable devices that can be compromised remotely.

Critical infrastructure is being increasingly targeted by cybercriminals, with a reported 51% of organisations experiencing a SCADA/ICS security breach within the past 12 months. Cybercriminal organisations may target particular organisations to hold systems hostage for a ransom, manipulate stock prices, gain a competitive advantage, raise political awareness or for other malicious reasons.

A successful attack can lead to immediate disruption, and even destruction of physical assets and essential services like water, electricity and fuel. In the case of critical national infrastructure such as a power grid, dramatic and far-reaching damage is caused by downtime. In manufacturing, a system crash or unexpected downtime can have a devastating ripple effect on production, turnover, human resources and customer retention.

Attempts to address risk by simply bolting on firewalls, sandboxes and intrusion prevention systems (IPS) into these OT environments present an unacceptable, disruptive and uncertain outcome. Security tools need to be strategically designed into the OT environment at the highest level, and purpose-built to understand the sorts of protocols, communications, and services that have been deployed to preserve safety and availability.

Securing the OT environment

The convergence of OT and IT demands unified, automated security, implemented in a strategic manner that's designed specifically to support the OT environment. Unlike traditional IT security strategies, OT security strategies also need to include access control, processes for at-speed recognition of actions that are beyond the scope of normal, and ruggedised appliances designed for use in extreme conditions.

Organisations need to shift from a reactive to a proactive security posture, implementing strategies such as segmentation to limit exposure in the event of a compromise, and multi-factor authentication to mitigate the physical access control risk. Security needs to be driven deep into the OT infrastructure, segmenting systems and devices, actively monitoring east-west traffic, and isolating compromised devices.

Organisations must also deploy security devices purpose-built for OT environments to protect the network from IT, cloud Internet-based threats, as well as establishing continuous visibility into devices and their behaviours with a combination of NAC (Network Access Control) and behavioural analytics. Wireless communications must be secured across all Industrial IoT (IIoT) device communications protocols. And all security systems need to be integrated within an OT-specific, real-time threat intelligence platform for vulnerability protection, deep visibility and granular control over proprietary ICS and SCADA protocols.

Securing the OT environment should be a top priority for industrial and infrastructure organisations, since failing to adequately secure these environments could cost organisations dearly, and could impact stakeholders far beyond the immediate environment.

Security fabric protection tailored for OT infrastructure
Fortinet's rugged and outdoor products are industrially-hardened appliances that deliver enterprise-class connectivity and security for critical control systems facing malicious attacks, as well as extreme weather and other demanding physical environments.

FortiGate Rugged Series is an all-in-one firewall that delivers specialised threat protection for securing critical industrial and control networks against malicious attacks.

FortiSwitch Rugged Series deliver all the performance and security of Fortinet's trusted FortiSwitch line, but with added reinforcement that makes it ideal for deployments in harsh outdoor environments. Management by the FortiGate simplifies operation and extends security policies down to the switch ports.

FortiAP Outdoor Series delivers secure, identity-driven WiFi access points with management provided by the integrated wireless controller functionality within the FortiGate. Combined with FortiSwitch, this provides for a truly unified access layer with common security policies.

Fortinet's rugged and outdoor series devices are offered in various form factors with features like superior mean time between failure, electromagnetic inference protection, vibration tolerance, ingress protection waterproofing, wide thermal operating ranges, fanless cooling and power over ethernet.

These devices are controlled by Fortinet's FortiOS security operating system and are backed by FortiGuard Industrial Security Service to protect the most widely-used ICS and SCADA devices and applications. FortiGuard Industrial Security Service delivers OT-specific, real-time threat intelligence for vulnerability protection, deep visibility and granular control over proprietary ICS and SCADA protocols.

The Fortinet Fabric-Ready Partner Program also enables organisations to seamlessly integrate complementary, third-party OT security solutions with the Fortinet Security Fabric. These deep technical integrations are pre-validated to ensure consistent interoperability, ease of deployment, reduced complexity and increased automation.

Doros Hadjizenonos, regional sales director at security specialist, Fortinet

F5 recognises Datacentrix as Partner of the Year

Datacentrix has taken the title of local F5 Partner of the Year, which acknowledges the high performing and secure ICT solutions provider's strategic focus on extending the reach of F5's cloud and security application services in South Africa. The award was announced at the recent F5 Forum Johannesburg 2019 event.

Datacentrix joined F5's UNITY Partner Program in 2017, and currently holds a Silver level accreditation. Since then, says Datacentrix business unit manager, Chris Pretorius, the organisation has worked hard on building its pipeline, something that played a key role in Datacentrix winning the award. "Datacentrix was acknowledged by F5, not only based on this market growth, but also its investment in F5 certification levels, which enables us to provide clients with the best possible support.

"Application development is on the rise in South Africa, and so the need to protect these applications from today's threats is also on a growth trajectory," he explains. "F5's solutions can protect applications from Distributed Denial of Service (DDoS), application infrastructure and access attacks, shielding valuable data. In fact, the company has been positioned as a 'Leader' in Web Application Firewall (WAF) technology by both Forrester and Gartner, proving its strength in sophisticated and complex threat protection, making it an excellent value proposition for local businesses.

"The future of Datacentrix and F5 looks extremely positive, and we look forward to building on our partnership into the future."

Says Nasser El Abdouli, director, channel sales Middle East, Turkey and Africa at F5: "Datacentrix is a powerful member of our UNITY Partner Program, and this reward is well deserved. UNITY is all about enhancing value and optimising the deployment of our solutions. Datacentrix has the background, the scale and strategic vision to both support existing clients and unlock a wide range of new business opportunities in the region."

Simon McCullough, F5 channel partner manager in South Africa; Alain Tshal, district sales manager sub-Saharan Africa at F5; Chris Pretorius, business unit manager at Datacentrix; Diego Arrabal, vice president sales: Middle East, Turkey & Africa at F5; David Helfer, senior vice president, Europe, Middle East & Africa at F5 and Nasser El Abdouli, director, channel sales Middle East, Turkey & Africa at F5

THE SD-WAN EXPERIENCE

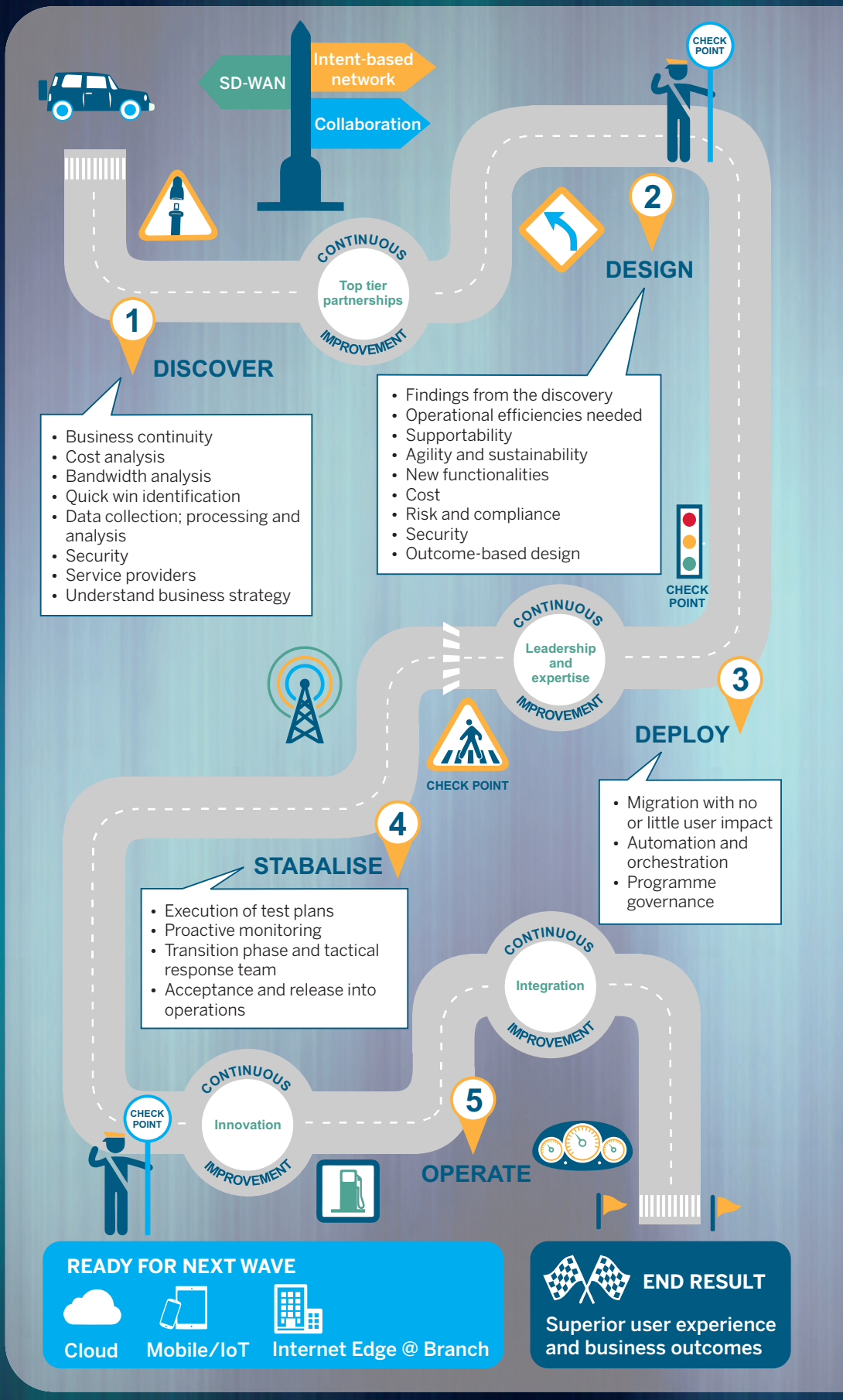
cisco Partner

Lower operating costs and TCO

Protect application Service Level Agreement

Optimise network capacity and increase bandwidth

Datacentrix value add
We apply proven methodologies and an architectural approach to achieve a user-based outcome.



Datacentrix partners with our customers and uses technology to support their business strategies.

PARTNER

Red Hat Ansible helps clients reduce the cost of operations

With Ansible, even individuals without knowledge of a different operating system, network device or firewall, can manage and fix things that are totally outside their comfort zone.

The common maxim today is that every business is a digital business. Technology has become an engine for innovation, and for delivering applications and services faster, helping businesses stay ahead of the competition. In the past, this required a huge amount of manual effort and complicated co-ordination, but no one enjoys doing these mundane, repetitive tasks.

Today, there is Red Hat Ansible, a simple, yet powerful IT automation engine that thousands of organisations are harnessing to drive complexity out of their environments and accelerate DevOps initiatives. Ansible frees up human resources to focus on initiatives that deliver real value to the business, and gives teams the one thing there is never enough of – time.

And you don't need to be an expert either. "Even individuals without knowledge of a different operating system, network device or firewall, can manage and fix things that are totally outside their comfort zone," says Andre Froneman, business unit manager for Open Source at Axiz Advanced Technologies.

One business that has benefited from the implementation of Ansible, is Datacentrix. He says Datacentrix users do not have to enter things manually or follow a guide, as it is already written and automated. This has significantly lowered customer SLA risk for them as critical tasks have been automated and audited.

"Moreover, Ansible will enable clients to reduce their cost of operations by automating network, security and server management tasks using potentially the same engineering resource".

Ansible is a simple automation language that can perfectly describe an IT application infrastructure, he says. It's simple to learn, self-documenting, and doesn't require a grad-level computer science degree to read. "Automation shouldn't be more complex than the tasks it's replacing."

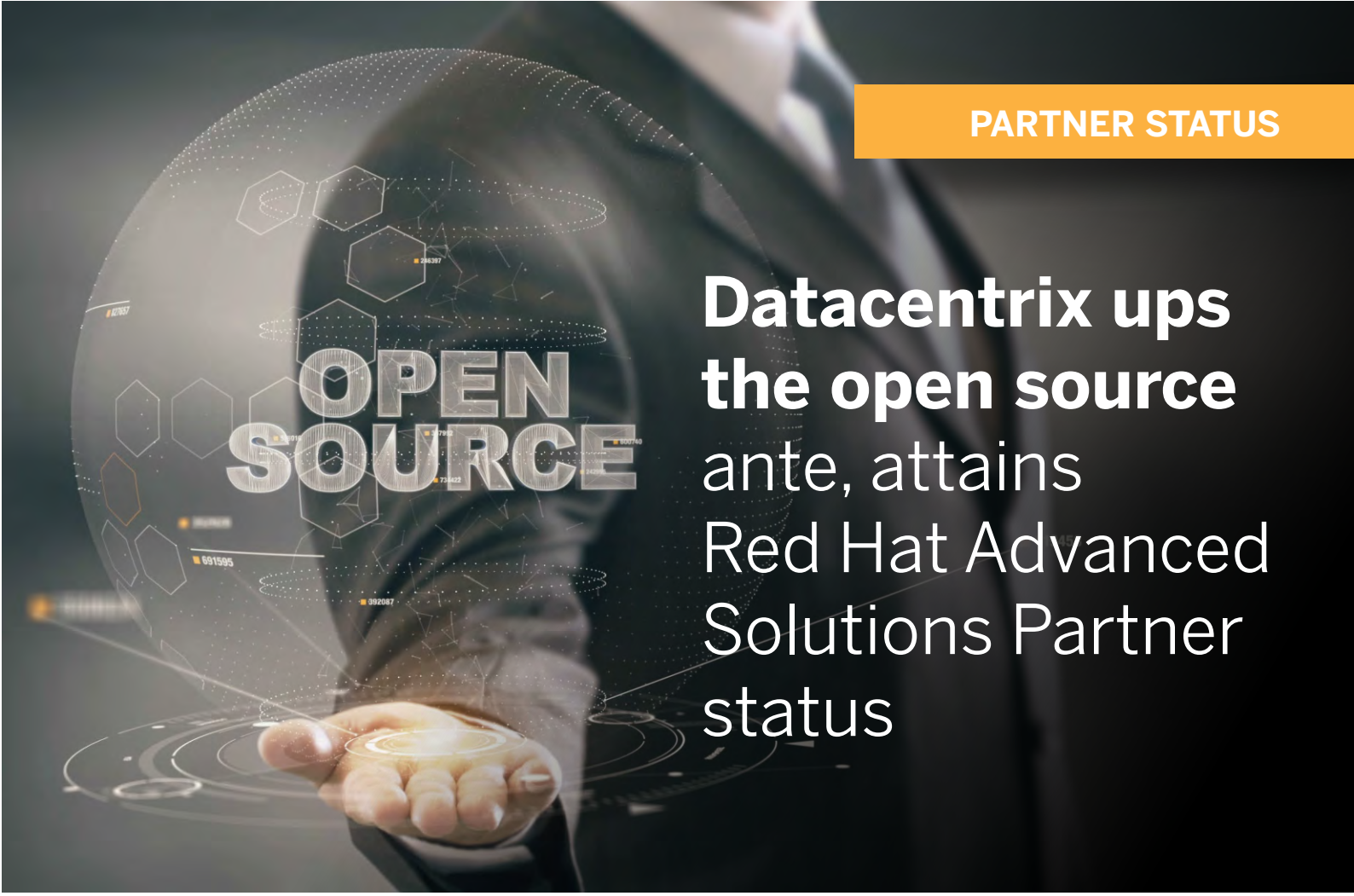
He says Ansible enables the automation of all aspects of the IT organisation and infrastructure, from operations and processes to servers, storage, network and cloud resources. In addition, it is a simple, agentless technology that makes automation easy and accessible to everyone.

Using a simple, human-readable language, anyone can create an Ansible Playbook to streamline tasks and processes. Ansible Automation supports integration of more than 900 third-party technologies and products using modules developed and released through the Ansible community, so you can easily automate your environment. Additionally, Ansible Tower, another member of the Ansible Automation family, delivers increased functionality at scale for enterprises, including a visual dashboard, role-based access control, job scheduling and real-time status updates.

Ansible Tower, is another powerful tool that enables the orchestration of enterprise environments. It manages the Ansible technology used by thousands of organisations around the world to help them automate IT tasks, including configuration management, provisioning, workflow orchestration, application deployment and life-cycle management.

A most compelling feature is its low barrier to entry. Ansible is agentless, meaning that no changes to servers or network equipment are necessary to start using it. It is simple enough that it can be installed and up and running in minutes.

Ansible Tower adds to the simplicity of Ansible with improved security, scale, and scope. Ansible allows you to use workflows to streamline jobs, and it provides simple tools for sharing solutions with the team. Businesses can centralise and control their IT infrastructure with a visual dashboard, role-based access control, job scheduling, integrated notifications, and graphical inventory management. Moreover, it is easy to embed Ansible Tower into existing tools and processes via its RESTful application programming interface.



Datacentrix ups the open source ante, attains Red Hat Advanced Solutions Partner status

Datacentrix has intensified its focus on open source technology, recently reaching Advanced Solution Partner status with Red Hat South Africa.

In a partnership that has been just over a year in the making, Datacentrix' achievement speaks of its dedication to improve support of open source technology locally, says Graeme Dendy, service manager for Converged Solutions at Datacentrix. “The certification requirements for Red Hat's Advanced level partnership are extremely stringent, and verify that not only does Datacentrix have the necessary established sales and engineer accreditations (32 and 6 respectively), but also that we have successful reference sites in place.”

The adoption of open source software is on the rise, Dendy explains, particularly within the enterprise space. This statement is backed by Snyk's “The State of Open Source Security Report: 2019", which cites the examples of Red Hat's acquisition by IBM and Microsoft's purchase of GitHub in 2018 as proof that 'open source software is becoming the foundation for the modern enterprise'.

“Locally, we are seeing increasing numbers of clients moving more workflows onto the Red Hat environment than ever before, as well as greater adoption of containerisation and automation,” Dendy adds. “Our appointment as an Advanced level Red Hat partner means that Datacentrix has not only consistently met sales targets and expectations as defined by Red Hat, we also now have access to a number of benefits, including access to Red Hat EMEA's technical pre-sales team as well as preferential pricing.”

In a partnership that has been just over a year in the making, Datacentrix' achievement speaks of its dedication to improve support of open source technology locally.

Looking ahead, he states, Datacentrix is determined to reach Premier Level Red Hat partnership, and the company is already working on its required certifications.

“We expect to see exciting developments down the road within the Red Hat stack, and are fully prepared to assist enterprise-level South Africa to take advantage of the astonishing effect open source technology has had on software development as we know it today.”

NATREF fuels document management improvements with Datacentrix

National Petroleum Refiners of South Africa (NATREF) has upgraded its document management environment, allowing for faster access to the critical documentation native to production and processing businesses. The ongoing project is being rolled out with the assistance of Datacentrix, a long-term NATREF partner.

NATREF, South Africa's only inland crude oil refinery, is a joint venture between Sasol and Total South Africa. The organisation produces fuel, including petrol, diesel, jet fuel, bitumen and tar, which it supplies to the inland region of South Africa.

According to Andries Visagie, operational and governance manager at NATREF's Information Management Division, the project came about when the organisation realised the time had come for it to set up its own Enterprise Information Management (EIM) system (this had previously been shared with Sasol). "We were happy with the solution being used, but found that, over time, there was a need for additional support. It made sense for us to put a team in place, not only to bolster support of the environment, but also to upgrade it for greater efficiencies."

Having partnered with Datacentrix before, the natural next step was for NATREF to engage the solution provider to complete a technical audit on the existing system, and the information contained therein, to gauge the current status, assess risks within the environment, and use this input for decision making.

"The outcomes of the assessment, which encompassed a full strategy and roadmap, provided clear recommendations to NATREF's IM team, included details such as the type of infrastructure needed, sizing, and estimated timing for data migration," explains Visagie.

When it came to the implementation, NATREF's production environment encompassed critical information within the existing system, so a 'rip-and-replace' approach was not possible. With this in mind, and to minimise business interruption, Datacentrix replicated the old environment and used it as a platform for testing. From a business continuity point of view, the decision was then taken to do the cut over after NATREF's financial half-year concluded in November.

"Overall there was an excellent joint effort between Datacentrix and NATREF to make this as painless as possible. At this point, we're happy to report that the system is stable, and running across all disciplines within the business, with a total of 600 permanent users."

Visagie clarifies that the EIM environment is critical across all areas of NATREF. "For instance, when it comes to production, the system holds important information on standard operational procedures that need to be accessed

“Essential within a processing and production environment, our safety team has timely access to supporting documentation such as work and task overseeing instructions. An example of this is when it comes to specialised welding, in that the welder would need access to task observations before any physical welding can take place. All of this documentation is quickly and easily accessible using the new EIM solution.”

and adhered to at any point in time, from start-ups to shut-downs. Within the HR environment, it is used to store the relevant policies and procedures. The finance department needs access to financial records, audit documentation, and so on.

“Essential within a processing and production environment, our safety team has timely access to supporting documentation such as work and task overseeing instructions. An example of this is when it comes to specialised welding, in that the welder would need access to task observations before any physical welding can take place. All of this documentation is quickly and easily accessible using the new EIM solution.”

Visagie says that NATREF users are embracing the new functionalities on offer within document and content management. “Ease-of-use, system speed and convenience have improved immensely for our users. We've also managed to completely automate workflow around the critical inspections conducted on NATREF's production equipment, which are legally required and include mechanical integrity checks such as x-rays and infrared analyses.

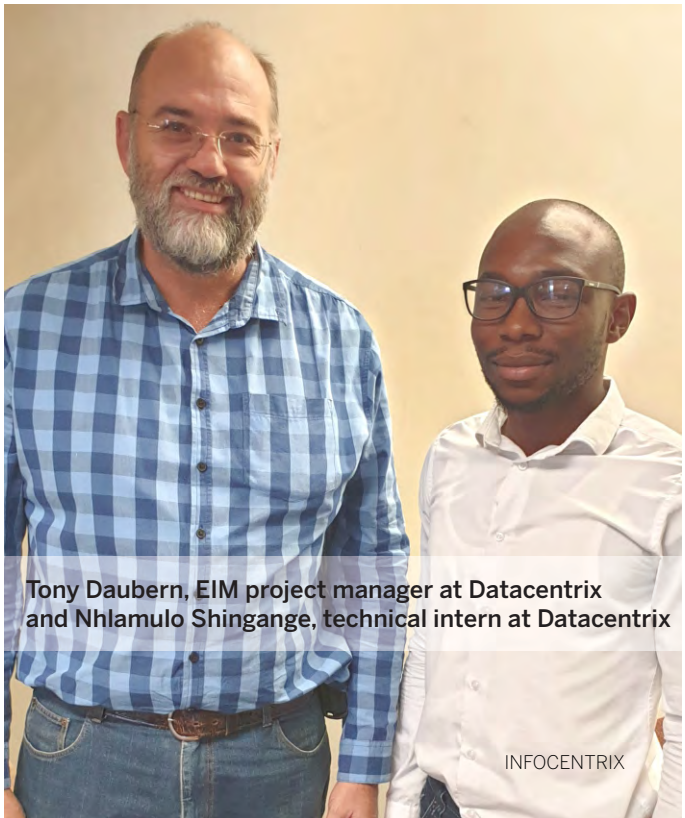
“The new EIM system is also now fully integrated with the other tools used by NATREF, making for a seamless user experience,” he adds.

“NATREF's partnership with Datacentrix has been extremely positive overall. Our requirement for open and transparent communications has certainly been met, and we've found that the team of Datacentrix experts working with us have all the skills – from document management, infrastructure and around the product itself – needed to easily manage any unexpected challenges.

“For NATREF, this project was an excellent stepping stone in improving its document management environment, and we will be looking at upgrading our document archiving process next,” states Visagie.

Additional future plans at NATREF include integration of the organisation's enterprise software with the EIM solution, a real area of strength for Datacentrix, according to Tony Daubern, EIM project manager at the company. “Datacentrix has a wealth of experience in the integration of EIM and enterprise software, receiving industry recognition for exactly this in the form of several awards over the past few years.

“We look forward to deepening our partnership with NATREF, and taking its EIM setup to new heights, with a view to also tackling its records management in time.”



Tony Daubern, EIM project manager at Datacentrix and Nhlamulo Shingange, technical intern at Datacentrix

Datacentrix maintains ISO certifications

Datacentrix has been assessed and has maintained the ISO 9001:2015 (Quality Management System), 14001:2015 (Environmental Management System), and OHSAS 18001:2007 (Occupational Health and Safety Management System) certifications received last year.

"Receiving an ISO certification is one thing; maintaining it is something entirely different," says Debbie Maguire, divisional manager: logistics and SHEQ at Datacentrix. "The certifications have naturally positioned us very positively in the market, while providing us with a distinct advantage over our competitors, but sustaining the standards that we worked hard to achieve is vital."

Processes assessed included SHEQ (safety, health, environment and quality), human resources, sales and projects, finance, warehouse, procurement, facilities, IT, and the service desk.

Maguire says achieving and maintaining this certification underscores Datacentrix top management's commitment and transparency regarding the management system, and says this announcement will continue to encourage client and shareholder confidence in the team's ability to answer the highest demand for quality in the industry today.

"Datacentrix's attainment of these standards is proof that the organisation adheres to consistent processes and procedures, and confirms that compliance and continuous improvement are high up on management's agenda," she adds.

> The certifications have naturally positioned us very positively in the market, while providing us with a distinct advantage over our competitors, but sustaining the standards that we worked hard to achieve is vital.

"Our thanks, as always, go to the Datacentrix teams operating in these spaces, who have worked tirelessly over the year to ensure we adhere to the highest standards possible, and we look forward to a seamless, re-certification in 2020."

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ENTERPRISE

Avoid the Windows 7 end-of-life blues

Microsoft has announced that its support for Windows 7 will end after 14 January 2020. This means that Microsoft will no longer provide security updates or support for devices running Windows 7. For organisations that maintain high levels of security and governance, having unsupported devices on the network that may be vulnerable to security attacks and that may be unstable due to the lack of Microsoft updates, pose a risk to the whole organisation.

Organisations ultimately have two options to consider: One, migrate the device estate to Windows 10; or two, pay extended support fees to Microsoft. Option two is a short-term solution; and while the extended support costs per device are unknown at this stage, industry is unsure whether this will even be an option that Microsoft will provide.

Our approach

Datacentrix Enterprise Advisory Services (EAS) has developed a customised Windows 7 to 10 migration approach, methodology and toolset. These been developed internally from the ground up as a result of our experience from customer engagements and from using leading industry best practices.

EAS will engage directly with you, your End User Compute (EUC) management teams and staff to understand your current EUC landscape and future EUC strategy. Our team will deliver the migration results, findings and outcomes in the form of a detailed report to you in less than 4 weeks[1].

Costs aligned to your budget

Datacentrix will align the costing to your fiscal period and budget.

In addition to using our in-house developed toolset, Datacentrix can use other third-party workspace analytics tools to provide additional value and in-depth analytics. System tracking technology is applied at your locations to analyse the entire EUC estate, providing insight into employee usage patterns over 60 days. The process helps businesses to get an all-important handle on their total IT environment and ascertains user and device readiness for migration to Windows 10.

As devices, applications and information become more complex, tangible data is essential for answering important business questions relating to EUC transformation projects.

Migration objectives

Datacentrix enables a holistic view of your EUC landscape, including BYOD, ensuring an accurate current state analysis and informed decision making.

Manage Windows 10 licence impact: Datacentrix provides a full view of the Microsoft licence entitlements on current devices as well as the Windows 10 OEM licences that are included in the purchase cost of new devices.

Device analysis: An evaluation of all devices is conducted against the minimum hardware requirements from Microsoft to ensure sufficient capacity to run Windows 10 efficiently.

> “Datacentrix has an innovative solution that provides you with all the information needed to strategise and plan your migration from Windows 7 to Windows 10, in time and within budget.

Transparent migration costs: Migration costs associated with the EUC landscape modernisation are detailed along with timelines and any additional costs that might be required to migrate the end-user environment using the chosen migration strategy or end-state.

Provide accurate end user profiling: Datacentrix defines and reports on customisable categories and definitions of end user computing (EUC) profiles that are offered by IT to support the business requirements.

Informed device repurposing: Datacentrix enables informed decisions to repurpose devices that need to be replaced because they do not meet the minimum performance requirements for a given user profile to other user profile groups that do. This results in significant cost savings for the enterprise.

Outcomes

Most organisations will have unique device requirements for their end users based on role, function and department, to name a few.

Datacentrix will, in consultation with your user base and IT management, define as many user profiles as needed to classify each user into a specific profile based on your business needs.

The most common user profiles could be:
Admin – Office administration users
Power – Executives, developers, IT users
Call centre – Call centre agents
Point of service – Customer facing users, such as service desk or point of sale

The current state of each user will be evaluated against these customised and predefined profiles to ascertain device readiness to move to Windows 10 and if each existing device meets the minimum specifications set for each profile.

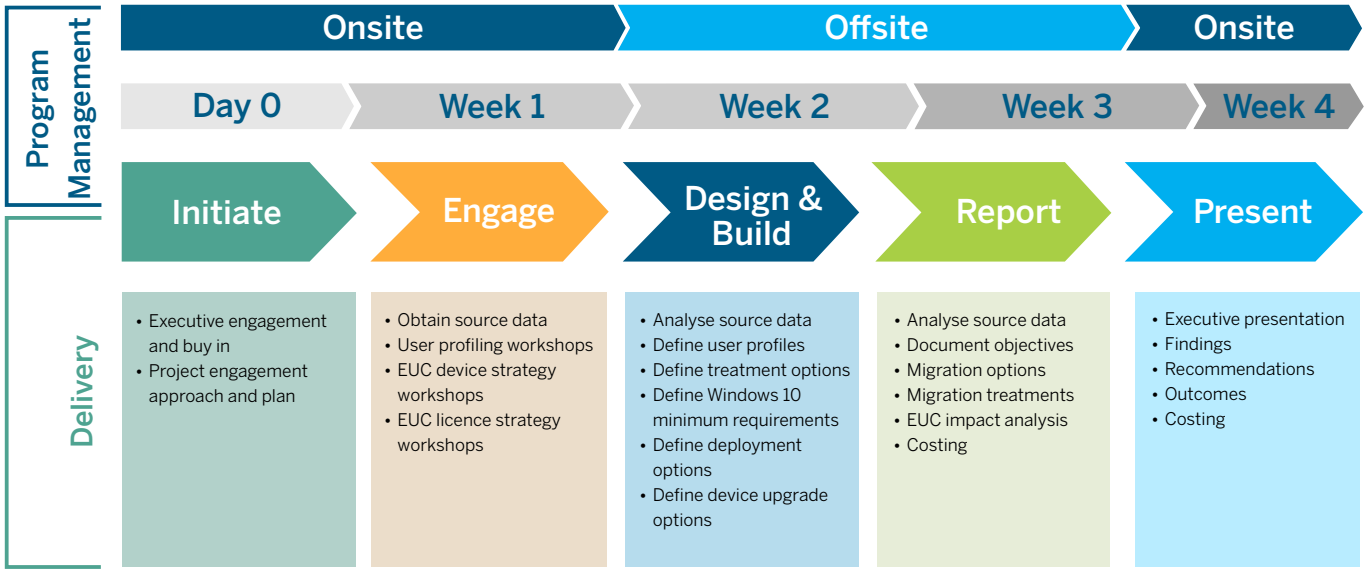
Once the user profiles have been defined and the users classified accordingly, Datacentrix will apply various treatment models to each end user device in each profile, again as many as needed to meet your migration objectives. Treatments are fully customisable.

The most common treatments could be:

- Migrate to Windows 10 on existing device.
- Replace existing device with new Windows 10 device.
- Replace existing device with new high spec Windows 10 device.
- Replace existing device with new Windows 10 device, redeploy old device to another user profile.
- Replace existing device with a Thin Client.
- Repurpose existing device as a Thin Client.

The main deliverable from Datacentrix is a comprehensive report providing you with the analysis of your current state, including all the findings, recommendations and costing of the future state. These will help define your EUC strategy, migration plans and budgets for a successful transition immediately, or deployed over an extended period.

Datacentrix' Windows migration approach



[1] Based on a device estate size of 2,000 users

The right cloud at the right time

By Paul Ruinaard, country manager at Nutanix Sub-Saharan Africa

With the Microsoft Azure data centre having just arrived and with the Amazon Web Services data centre scheduled to arrive over the course of the next 18 months, more companies are starting to investigate how best to migrate to the cloud and manage multiple cloud environments.

According to findings of the recently launched Nutanix Enterprise Cloud Index 2018 Report, only eight percent of local organisations surveyed felt a traditional data centre would be the ideal IT deployment model in the next two years. This reflects worldwide trends with 13 percent of international respondents feeling the same.

Given how speed of deployment (43 percent), and compliance and security (48 percent) feature prominently in the decision-making process to migrate to the cloud, South African companies must ask themselves how best their existing approaches align with this faster, more dynamic environment.

Paul Ruinaard, country manager at Nutanix Sub-Saharan Africa

Workload priorities

In the EMEA region, respondents are less likely (58 percent) to consider performance, but more likely (46 percent) to seek agility than other regions in terms of where to put their workloads.

Already, more than a quarter (27 percent) of local companies spend approximately 20 to 30 percent of their annual IT budgets on the public cloud with hybrid approaches (91 percent) seen as the ideal deployment model in years to come.

Africa is well-known as being a mobile first (in some instances mobile only) towards business solutions, and the cloud will be no different. This is reflected in the need to easily move applications between cloud environments as required, in addition to being able to access relevant information irrespective of device used or the location it is being accessed from.

Companies therefore must carefully consider their current mobile environment and how easy (or difficult) it will be to migrate to a cloud-centric approach. Fortunately, the flexibility to choose the right cloud environment for each use case (78 percent) rates as one of the biggest drawcards. And being in a cost-sensitive market, choosing the best pricing model (66 percent) is also important for local organisations.

Already, more than three quarters (76 percent) of South African respondents who are currently using the cloud reported it has increased the productivity and efficiency of their IT teams.

Decisive factors

Locally, the research indicates that it is not a lack of willingness to move to the cloud, but rather the need to carefully examine facets like compliance and security, affordability and mobility. Irrespective of the cloud approach considered, having the option to select which workloads to migrate means companies can adopt a more segmented strategy of implementation.

So, whether it is private or public, hybrid or multi-cloud, it really is about selecting the best model to suit the specific needs of the business. Even so, the hybrid cloud (a combination of at least one private cloud with at least one public cloud) is a significant drawcard for local businesses.

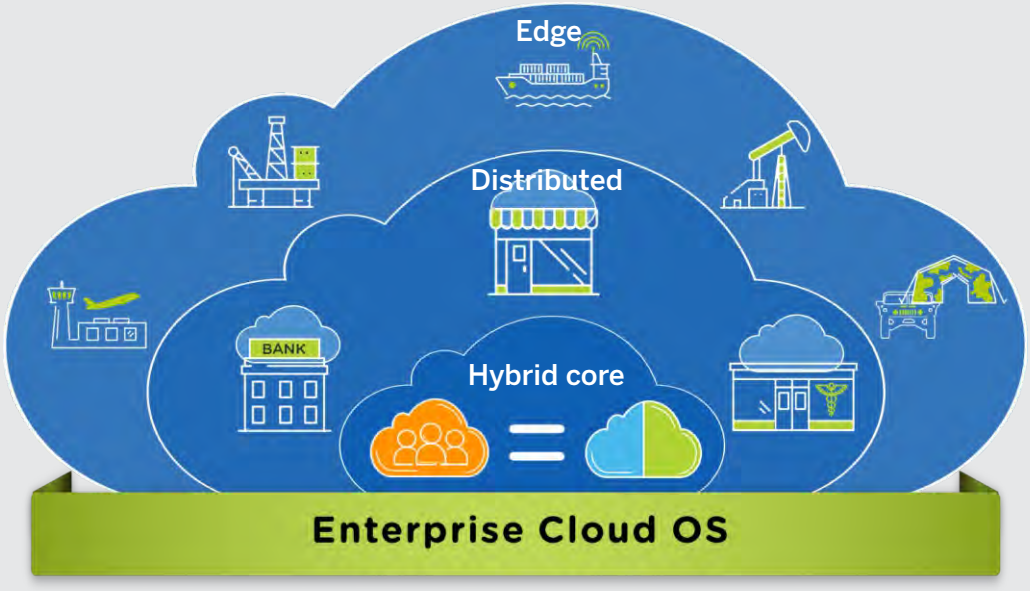
So much so that within the next 12 to 24 months, 33 percent of South African respondents believe they will be using a hybrid cloud environment. Considering that around one in four (24 percent) local companies still use a traditional data centre, this is not an insignificant shift.

With Artificial Intelligence (AI), machine-learning, and the blockchain all being made possible by migrating data analysis to the cloud, companies must ensure their employees have the skills required to maximise the value of these technologies.

The natural knock-on effect of this is that where there are skilled employees, companies must do everything in their power to hang on to them. With 64 percent of local companies stating that retaining IT talent is a challenge, migrating to the cloud will bring with it many opportunities to unlock. It is now about prioritising the areas inside the business that have the highest need.

“In our mind this line of thinking and the proposed actions that South Africans stated they will be taking, is exactly where Nutanix plays. Delivering a future-proof private cloud platform with a multi–cloud operating system, that enables organisations to compete on the edge, with the right cloud at the right time.”

Enterprise cloud operating system: Freedom in the multi-cloud era



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