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Second issue
2018

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Second issue 2018

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Welcome

By Ahmed Mahomed, CEO

The way we work, learn and communicate is forever being changed by technology. Technology is becoming so engrained in our daily lives that even personal purchasing decisions are being affected by visual recognition, targeted marketing, location-based services and hyper-personalisation that predicts and anticipates our desires.

The digital age is transforming the heart of business operations, and adoption is no longer an opportunity for improvement, but a prerequisite for survival. In fact, some argue that organisations are more technology organisation than what they considered historically to be their core business. If one considers the banking sector, they could be categorised as technology organisations that deliver banking solutions.

- Technology services are becoming smarter and cheaper, thanks to powerful artificial intelligence.
- Companies are moving away from consuming products, to consumption-based services and subscriptions, delivering operational efficiencies and in some cases growing the existing market.
- Cloud services, whether on- or off-premises, private or public, provide the opportunity for optimised, secure workloads, effective management and control, risk mitigation, and alignment with local and global governance and compliance requirements.
- Converged infrastructure is changing the way businesses store their data, supporting smarter operations that offer elastic capability and self service.
- Software-defined networking is changing the way business connects and giving back the control over the network to the business.
- The hybrid business model is re-engineering how business works and is elevating the cost saving potential for businesses to new heights.

With these and many other considerations, never has it been as imperative for companies to partner with a business enabler that offers expert guidance and support on the digital adoption journey.

There are three reasons why Datacentrix' conversation on digital adoption is unique:
- **Firstly,** Datacentrix invests in the future of our customers. Our formal approach helps our customers take the right decisions now to ensure longevity and on-going competitiveness into the future.
- **Secondly,** as a service aggregator, Datacentrix is strongly positioned with global technology leaders. This positioning and our specialised technical expertise help address customer challenges across their business that are inhibiting business processes improvement, waste reduction, sustained profitability and growth performance.
- **Thirdly,** our industry-specific application hosting services enable smarter, easier and more secure cloud adoption that supports business growth potential.

Digital adoption is a key company focus and a significant part of our customer conversation. Isn't it time you're asked the right questions to establish whether you are on the right path to securing your digital future and the future of your business.

Pedro Maia, CIO at Alviva and Eric Henderson, divisional managing director for Managed Services at Datacentrix

Alviva turns to Datacentrix
for consolidated group IT management

Alviva Holdings, one of Africa's largest providers of ICT products and services, has outsourced its group IT requirements to Datacentrix.

As part of this agreement, Datacentrix manages desktop support (within office hours), network support (on a 24/7 basis) and back-end system support, including servers, backups and data centres, for group subsidiaries, across Alviva subsidiaries, incorporating Pinnacle, Centrafin and Axiz.

The project, which spans 17 locations, sees the management of more than 400 desktop machines, over 1 000 laptops, in excess of 60 servers (as well as 317 virtual servers), with the provision of access to a 24-hour professionally managed service desk with guaranteed service levels.

"Previously, the individual businesses were supported using local onsite support staff without a service desk, with each organisation operating their own set of standards. The support effort has been standardised and consolidated to drive up efficiencies by leveraging the scale of the Alviva group," states Eric Henderson, divisional managing director for Managed Services at Datacentrix.

"With this outsourcing agreement in place, Alviva is now able to closely track service level agreements (SLAs) on a monthly basis, ensuring that services are consistently on track. Each business unit within the group now has a simple, one-click access to dashboards and reporting to obtain an instant infrastructure health check. In addition, cyber security concerns are now managed via the industry-

> **"**
> **Alviva is now able to closely track service level agreements on a monthly basis, ensuring that services are consistently on track. Each business unit within the group now has a simple one-click access to dashboards and reporting to obtain an instant infrastructure health check.**

leading Datacentrix Security Operations Centre (SOC), which is a 24/7/365 operation."

"It made sense for Alviva to move away from a siloed approach and consolidate services, while leveraging Datacentrix's established infrastructure and experience built over time," says Pedro Maia, group CIO at Alviva. "This has allowed us to standardise group-level ICT for a more consistent, predicable operation, while at the same time showcasing Datacentrix's breadth and depth of skill for potential outsource customers," he concludes.

Datacentrix appointed as first
South African Facebook Workplace reseller

In today's decentralised world, the ability to connect, collaborate and communicate in real-time, from anywhere, is a necessity for any business, regardless of size.

Datacentrix is poised to assist local companies in simplifying internal communications, while making them more effective, with its appointment as the first South African reseller partner for Workplace by Facebook.

Launched in October 2016, Workplace is a dedicated, secure space for companies of all sizes to use familiar Facebook features, such as chat, news feeds, events and groups.

"There are an estimated two billion Facebook users globally," explains Johann Coetzee, MD Commercial at Datacentrix. "And, according to research company World Wide Worx, there are around 19 million South African Facebook users, up by a staggering two million since 2017.

"Where this is of huge advantage to local businesses is that they are able to extend a user's familiarity and comfort in using Facebook on a personal level to the workplace, saving on training costs and ensuring that employees can metaphorically hit the ground running."

In addition, this change in the collaboration game speaks to the much-needed increase in agility, speed and transparency for the next generation workplace.

"Another advantage is that the Workplace offering is able to replace several different methods of communication within

> **Datacentrix is poised to assist local companies in simplifying internal communications, while making them more effective.**

the business environment, including video conferencing facilities, internals mails, distribution lists, messaging and VC communication tools, intranets and even telephony systems. It can easily be integrated with an organisation's existing IT architecture, with content integration from over 50 third party business tools already available. Possibly one of the biggest advantages of Workplace is the accessibility to custom integrations and automation using powerful bots," Johann adds.

"Datacentrix' track record as a specialist cloud consultant places it in an ideal position to help South African companies to navigate today's digital world, allowing its customers to drive business efficiencies as well as user experience. The addition of a tool like Workplace to our arsenal allows us to assist our customers in further transforming communications, culture and workflows, essentially building an organisational-wide community," he concludes.

Senwes looks to unified comms for enhanced network control, collaboration

Senwes, one of the leading agricultural companies in South Africa, is centralising network management for its more than 140 sites nationwide with the implementation of a unified communications solution supporting both voice and data. The roll-out will be completed by Datacentrix.

The Senwes Group of companies is supported by three pillars: Input Supply, Financial and Technical Services, and Market Access, across the North West, Free State, Gauteng, Mpumalanga, KwaZulu-Natal, Eastern Cape, Northern Cape and Western Cape provinces. The group has an integrated business model to facilitate its core objective of making a meaningful contribution to food security in South Africa in a sustainable manner.

A Datacentrix client for more than a decade, Senwes announced in October last year it wanted to replace end-of-life legacy PABXes, moving away from a reliance on analogue lines towards a new, fully fledged unified communications solution, with a view to improving reliability and freeing up internal IT support resources.

Says Alf White, Senwes group executive for IT: "The main objective of this project was to move away from the organisation's use of analogue voice communications, which comprised a number of different PABX brands being supported by around 10 different vendors. We realised that our existing analogue equipment was reaching the end of its life expectancy, and that it needed to be replaced by a centralised, unified communications solution to mitigate the risks related to running outdated systems.

"We also completed a travel analysis of Senwes staff, finding that the 2,500 staff members using the network were travelling a cumulative total of approximately four million kilometres per annum, excluding own fleet travel required. It was decided that a more collaborative solution would deliver greater productivity by allowing for video conferencing and document sharing features, as opposed to physical travel.

"It would, in addition, alleviate the need for our IT support team, which provides central support via our Klerksdorp head office to all branch offices, to spend as much time on the road."

According to Henry Minnaar, account manager at Datacentrix, the agricultural organisation underwent a comprehensive tender process, which included a request for information (RFI) from 14 different companies, followed by a formal request for proposal (RFP) process involving a shortlist of four potential partners.

"Datacentrix, a local Cisco Tier One Gold Certified partner, put forward the Cisco Meraki software-defined WAN (SD-WAN) solution, which, although not typically aimed at enterprise level, was an excellent fit for Senwes' specific needs. The biggest advantage of this type of disruptive technology is that, as a cloud-based solution, it provides centralised visibility and control of branch networks, managed entirely through a web-based dashboard," he explains.

"In addition, it can be rapidly deployed, is highly available, self-provisioning and self-optimising, and allows for automatic monitoring and alerts.

"A lot of thought and work went into the design of the system for Senwes, as we wanted to make sure that we had the right fit for the environment."

Alf explains that the SD-WAN based solution put forward by Datacentrix, as well as its national footprint and support levels, clinched the deal for the company.

"Datacentrix really took it to the next level with its cloud-controlled network management suggestion, aimed at providing improved management of our networking and security infrastructure, and at a better price point too.

"The innovative new network connectivity solution will not only deliver improved visibility of our entire network, it also gives us the ability to physically track objectives and benefits according to the business case," Alf concludes.

The implementation of the unified communications project at Senwes kicked off in June this year.

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The biggest advantage of this type of disruptive technology is that, as a cloud-based solution, it provides centralised visibility and control of branch networks, managed entirely through a web-based dashboard.

Tertius Roux, WAN manager at Senwes; Henry Minnaar, account manager at Datacentrix; David Strauss, IT project manager at Senwes; Michael Storm, Cisco sales specialist at Datacentrix.

Intelligent security operations:
Confidently detect and correct threats faster

Behind just about every legitimate alert your IT security receives is an adversary using multiple attack techniques to penetrate your infrastructure and compromise your vital data assets or systems.

Today's targeted multiphase attacks consist of a series of steps that make up the cyberattack chain: reconnaissance, scanning for vulnerabilities, exploitation, and finally, exfiltration of valuable corporate data. Cyber threats and the data needed to defend against them continue to increase, overwhelming security teams and driving the need for open, efficient security operations.

"When organisations are uncertain about the value or insights inherent in their data – or are confronted with new information they don't know how to interpret – machine learning can help discover business value where they may not have been able to before," Carlton E. Sapp, a Gartner research director, wrote in a January 2017 report.

"The capability to transform data into actionable insight is the key to a competitive advantage for any organisation. But the ability to autonomously learn and evolve as new data is introduced – without explicitly programming to do so – is the holy grail of business intelligence."

A recent McAfee survey discovered the most effective Security Operations Centres (SOCs) are analytics driven, with proactive threat hunting and automated investigative workflows creating an ongoing progression towards increasingly advanced security management.

Such effectiveness relies on the implementation of advanced analytics technologies, machine learning, deep learning and artificial intelligence, to curate and visualise

threat data so security analysts can make sense of it in a short amount of time.

Security operations teams need a modular and scalable architecture that can rapidly process massive volumes of data, extending detection and correction through behavioural analytics and on to endpoint detection and response, enabling remediation to the endpoint in real time.

McAfee, one of the world's leading cybersecurity companies, is acting on our 'Together is power' principle with collaborative security that combines the unique advantages of people, machines and partners enabling teams to be situationally aware of security events and take swift action to thwart assaults, from the endpoint to the cloud.

McAfee provides companies to:
- Detect sophisticated attacks, unlock powerful threat analysis capabilities that extend beyond the traditional sandbox, and instantly share out new threat intelligence across your environment.
- Identify insider threats and highly risky behaviour often invisible to other security solutions. Leverage an open big data platform, machine learning and advanced analytics to resolve the most serious risks first.
- With a new analyst SOC workspace, navigate and interpret high volumes of complex and contextual security incidents with smarter threat management tools.
- Leverage open communications fabric to efficiently share threat intelligence. Join our OpenDXL ecosystem of multiple players to learn, share, and innovate so you can make your security posture more robust.
- Acquire expert guidance to optimise investigations, transforming analysts into expert investigators who can navigate incidents with confidence, efficiency, and speed.
- Combine global threat information with locally collected intelligence and share it instantly, allowing your security solutions to operate as one.

McAfee™
Together is power.

SANBS stays online to save lives

The South African National Blood Service (SANBS) has awarded Internet service and network specialist, eNetworks, a Datacentrix company, with a tender to provide secondary fibre infrastructure, creating a multi-link software-defined WAN (SD-WAN) for the organisation. Established with the key purpose of saving lives, SANBS provides an essential service within South Africa and is rated among the best in the world in the provision of blood and blood products, as well as in relation to the research and training provided. SANBS is a non-profit organisation that operates across eight provinces in South Africa.

Edwin Kadi, senior manager responsible for IT infrastructure at the SANBS, explains the organisation is committed to the use of technology to improve patient outcomes and donor care, and to drive down the cost of operations by finding innovative ways to improve efficiency. "With these objectives in mind, it became critical to implement an alternative secondary solution to our existing WAN infrastructure.

"The availability of the wide area network could literally become a matter of life and death. We have 188 sites, located throughout southern Africa, of which 67 are critical for operational sustainability. Although uptime is, of course, vital from a business continuity perspective, a lack of WAN connectivity for SANBS has a serious impact on the release of blood within hospitals, for instance, which could have severe repercussions on patient well-being."

Edwin also notes that WAN downtime further affects the processing and testing of blood at SANBS processing centres and laboratories.

Says Frederik van Staden, senior consultant for WAN and ISP services at eNetworks, a Datacentrix company: "We responded to the SANBS tender with their requirement for implementing an alternate fibre WAN, completely separate from the current WAN infrastructure. This dual connectivity will allow for better response times and high availability at critical sites."

As this stage, 55 of the 67 SANBS critical sites have been provided with the alternative fibre connectivity. The roll-out will be completed by mid-September 2018.

"During the project, we could already see that the new fibre infrastructure was delivering improved performance; more than doubling capacity at our critical sites, halving

Frederik van Staden, senior consultant for WAN and ISP services at eNetworks, a Datacentrix company and Edwin Kadi, senior manager responsible for IT Infrastructure at SANBS

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The organisation is committed to the use of technology to improve patient outcomes and donor care, and to drive down the cost of operations by finding innovative ways to improve efficiency.

response times and allowing for improved availability," Edwin explains.

"The added redundancy will also ensure that we do not have to resort to manual processing, which comes with the risk of incorrectly captured information. Our experience with eNetworks during this WAN rollout has been a good one, and we've been very happy with the services that the company has provided," he concludes.

NetBackup 8.1.2
Unified data protection for the Cloud-ready enterprise

ENTERPRISE-CLASS DATA PROTECTION
Long recognised as the market share leader of enterprise backup and recovery software, Veritas NetBackup™ is built to protect the largest and most demanding multi-cloud and data centre environments. NetBackup delivers breakthrough capabilities for virtualised and cloud-based deployments that go well beyond what traditional backup practices can achieve.

- Comprehensive – As a single, unified solution to protect all of your data assets, NetBackup provides support for virtually every popular server, storage, hypervisor, database, application, and cloud platform used in the enterprise today.
- Scalable – High performance, intelligent automation, and centralised management based on a flexible, multi-tier architecture enables NetBackup to adapt to the growing needs of a fast-paced, modern enterprise.
- Integrated – From backup appliances to cloud storage, NetBackup integrates at every point in the technology stack to improve reliability and performance.
- Innovative – With hundreds of patents awarded in areas including backup, recovery, virtualisation, deduplication, and snapshot management, NetBackup continues a long tradition of bringing advanced technologies to market first. No backup software has won Best of VMworld as many times as NetBackup.
- Proven – For over a decade, NetBackup has led the industry as the most popular enterprise data protection software by market share and is used by many of the largest enterprises on the planet. When you need your data back, you can trust NetBackup.

PROTECT ANY WORKLOAD
One of the hallmarks of enterprise IT is its heterogeneity. The wide variety of platforms, applications and infrastructure often grows with the size of the enterprise. NetBackup supports a vast array of environments and integrates with every layer of the infrastructure stack to unify your entire data protection strategy.
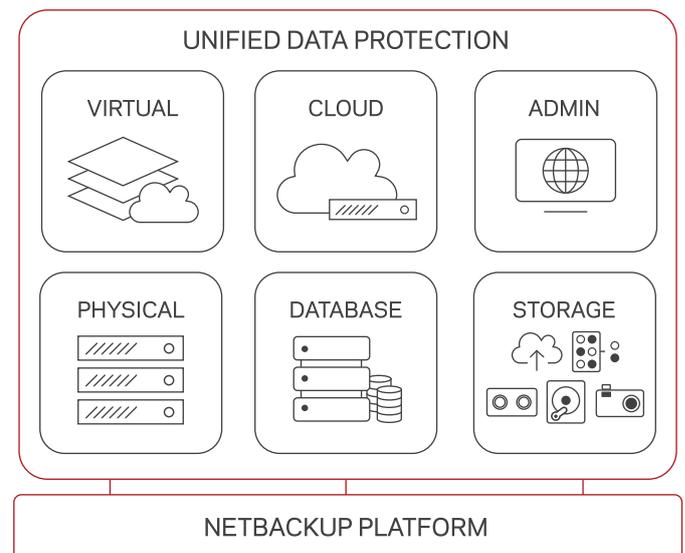

Figure 1. NetBackup offers scalable data protection for the enterprise with a single, unified solution across cloud, virtual, and physical deployments.

CHOOSE YOUR STORAGE

A lot has changed since the days of traditional tape backup. Enterprises now have many choices where they store backups. NetBackup integrates this diverse collection of storage targets without compromising manageability.

BREAK THE BACKUP WINDOW

It's not uncommon for IT organisations to report data growth of 40-60 percent per year. To keep up, you need backups that run as fast as possible without disrupting production activity. NetBackup combines innovative design with the latest technical advancements to deliver impressive performance numbers with minimal impact.

BACKUP REMOTELY

Whether backing up a remote office, a cloud-hosted workload, or a customer site as part of a backup service, backups over a wide area network (WAN) or the Internet must be as efficient as possible. NetBackup leverages the latest change tracking and deduplication technologies to make these backups not just possible, but practical.

RESCUE YOUR BUSINESS

The unthinkable happens. Services are down and the clock is ticking. There's no time to waste: it's time to recover from backup. NetBackup is ready with fast, reliable recovery options to get your systems up and running as quickly as possible.

PREPARE FOR DISASTER RECOVERY

No business will survive if it keeps its data in one place. Protect your business from natural disasters and site outages by keeping a copy off-site or in the cloud. NetBackup can help you automate disaster recovery (DR) readiness regardless of what storage or transport method is used.

DEPLOY QUICKLY

Experienced IT professionals know how difficult it can be to deploy or upgrade backup systems. Not only do backup servers and storage require their own care and feeding, but backups interact with just about every server, storage, or network component. NetBackup eases this burden and offers a fully integrated, turnkey appliance that combines software with server and storage.

Discover what's new with Veritas NetBackup™ 8.1.2.
Veritas NetBackup™ 8.1.2. is packed with the following new capabilities making our market-leading enterprise backup solution even better:
- Secure, role-based administration with access control and audit tracking.
- Agentless point-and-click restores of files on virtual machines.
- Orchestrate snapshots of cloud workloads in AWS, Microsoft and Google.
- Automate provisioning and ticket creation with extensive REST API libraries.
- Faster upgrades with automatic client updates and more Appliance options.
- Real-time usage and consumption reporting through Smart Meter.

STREAMLINE OPERATIONS

With constant pressures of relentless data growth and escalating service requests, IT is always challenged to do more with less. NetBackup helps you maximise staff productivity so you can invest more in your core business.

PLAN FOR THE FUTURE

No successful organisation stands still. There are always improvements to make, processes to optimise, and costs to reduce. NetBackup provides extensive reporting and analytics to help understand past results and clarify the road ahead.

UNIFIED DATA PROTECTION FOR THE CLOUD-READY ENTERPRISE

Veritas NetBackup™ 8 reduces the staggering complexity of enterprise data protection through a unified solution built on converged infrastructure, scales with relentless growth through best-in-class performance at petabyte-level capacity, and paves the way to IT-as-a-Service through convenient, self-service operation. It lays the foundation for universal data management, enabling rapid visualisation of data and accelerating cloud adoption with minimal risk. As IT transforms from cost centre to business enabler, NetBackup is engineered to solve the diverse challenges of today and tomorrow, and ultimately give organisations the confidence to move faster and take bigger risks trusting that their information will be safe.
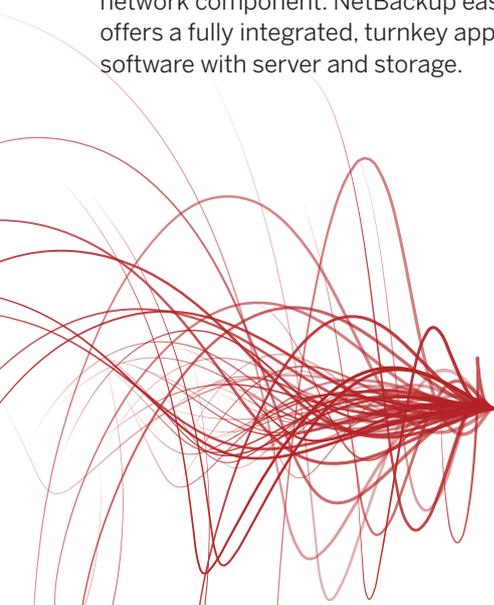
VERITAS™

The truth in information.

The Aurum Institute remedies
networking infrastructure with eNetworks

The Aurum Institute, a leading healthcare organisation that has become an internationally recognised, global authority on HIV and TB treatment and prevention, has embarked on its next-generation networking journey with the assistance of Internet service and network specialist, eNetworks, a Datacentrix company.

Through its Health Programmes and Research Programmes, The Aurum Institute has helped to influence and advance new treatment protocols for HIV and TB, as well as to direct better public health policies and practices. The organisation estimated that it has already saved over 500,000 lives in South Africa alone, as well as conducted more than 90 research studies involving over 150,000 participants, performed over 250,000 TB x-rays across rural areas, and carried out in excess of 130,000 male medical circumcisions to help prevent HIV.

"eNetworks is currently entrusted with The Aurum Institute's entire WAN infrastructure, incorporating fibre, microwave and DSL services, as well as failover operations at its main branches. This comprises the institute's head office in Parktown, Johannesburg, major clinical research centres in Rustenburg and Klerksdorp (North West Province) and Tembisa (Gauteng), as well as its public facilities and clinics in Tembisa," says Frederik van Staden, senior consultant: WAN and ISP Services at eNetworks.

The network also encompasses The Aurum Institute's 16 additional mainly administrative sites across the country, in areas such as the Western Cape, North West, Gauteng, Free State and Limpopo. At these sites, staff members upload files after collecting relevant health information in the field.

In addition, the company uses its Pretoria-based premises as a conferencing facility for use by partners, collaborators and other organisations, such as the nearby National Department of Health and the USA Centre for Communicable Diseases

"The reliable and consistent availability of the WAN infrastructure across all of our offices and facilities is of critical importance," explains Dirk van Schalkwyk, ICT

"

As a public benefit organisation, an efficient, transparent ICT infrastructure is critical, and as such, it is our strategy to outsource this service to trusted partners, predominantly Datacentrix. We have enjoyed a lengthy relationship with the ICT company, utilising a flexible 'clip on/clip off' set-up as different services as needed.

Director at The Aurum Institute. "System downtime could lead to extended waiting times for clients at our premises, meaning that we could risk serious reputational damage.

"This in turn could have a catastrophic effect on the R1.1 billion in funds raised for the institute annually by our supporters, which include USA PEPFAR, CDC, USAID, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Johnson & Johnson, the Anglo American Chairman's Fund and many more.

"As a public benefit organisation, an efficient, transparent ICT infrastructure is critical, and as such, it is our strategy to outsource this service to trusted partners, predominantly Datacentrix," says Dirk. "We have enjoyed a lengthy relationship with the ICT company, utilising a flexible 'clip on/clip off' set-up as different services are needed.

"Our long-term partnership with Datacentrix made the moving of our WAN services to eNetworks a natural next step, particularly in light of the fact that eNetworks was able to offer us more flexible, more cost-effective services,

Frederik van Staden, senior consultant for WAN and ISP services at eNetworks, Dirk van Schalkwyk, ICT director at The Aurum Institute, The Aurum Institute ICT manager, Cristian Pieterse, and Andre Potgieter, service delivery manager at The Aurum Institute

delivering the same or better connectivity, with double the throughput."

Previously, the organisation had a traditional MPLS (multiprotocol label switching) hub and spoke network, tied to an ISP that was not vendor agnostic in its last mile connectivity options. The issue here, comments The Aurum Institute ICT Manager, Cristian Pieterse, was that connectivity could not be provided at all sites country-wide, leaving the healthcare organisation having to find alternative means in these cases. "Through its more agile model of partnering with multiple last mile connectivity vendors, eNetworks has been able to provide the best coverage to all of our sites, regardless of location, allowing us to improve service delivery."

eNetworks' responsiveness and agility has ensured a close, consultative partnership with The Aurum Institute, continues Dirk, with direct access and input received from senior management. "Not only does the company carefully manage The Aurum Institute's bandwidth usage at all times, ensuring that it is not over-

utilised, but our entire experience with the company has been very positive."

As a next step, The Aurum Institute is planning a move to software-defined networking (SD-WAN) technology for its branch connectivity with eNetworks, which will include its recently established footprint in Ghana and Mozambique.

"The SD-WAN approach is ideal for an organisation like The Aurum Institute, with its branch office environment," states Frederik. "Not only does it meet the company's requirement for more granular reporting, but SD-WAN technology is also able to provide a number of additional performance and cost benefits, such as improving bandwidth efficiencies and end-to-end network visibility while allowing for accelerated services delivery and enhanced availability.

"Furthermore, eNetworks' continuous consultative engagement model enables The Aurum Institute to remain on the cutting edge of digital transformation, allowing the company to more efficiently provide these critical services that save lives on a daily basis," Frederik concludes.

FOURTH INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION

As the buzz of the so-called Fourth Industrial Revolution gets louder, just what does it mean for your network?

Readying your network for the
Fourth Industrial Revolution

Modernised, scalable telecoms networks are essential for businesses looking to seriously embrace the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR), the fourth major industrial era since the initial Industrial Revolution of the 18th century, characterised by emerging, disruptive technology breakthroughs.

This was the core message from Johann Coetzee, managing director: Commercial at Datacentrix, who was speaking at the recent 2018 Finance Indaba Africa in Sandton, a high-profile event drawing finance professionals from across the continent, alongside guest speaker Sean Taylor, managing director at Torch Telecom Lifecycle Management.

"The Fourth Industrial Revolution isn't something that's looming on the horizon," Johann told delegates, "it's already here."

He pointed to developed economies that may be a step ahead of South Africa on the road to the Fourth Industrial Revolution, noting that in the UK's financial services industry, for instance, top-tier banks have closed over 4,000 branches over the past decade. "That's more than one per day," he noted.

And it's not just financial services companies that need to adapt to this revolution. Johann said that organisations in

every industry must reposition themselves, re-platform their architectures, and re-engineer their business models.

"The Fourth Industrial Revolution represents an exponential leap forward in human science, technology and innovation, and promises to alter every aspect of our lives. However, to truly access and participate in the shift, the network becomes critical," explained Sean. "Ultra-fast networks enable a world of new possibilities – from AI robots, to self-driving cars, remote medical surgery, immersive virtual realities, holographic teleportation, drone deliveries, smart agriculture, connected cities, smart logistics and more."

But if the network is critical to unlocking all these incredible possibilities, just what does the network of the future look like?

"The traditional legacy architecture – a hardware-centric configuration based on clients and servers configuration – simply cannot scale," Sean said, "Over time, the costs of maintaining this infrastructure will billow out of control, as you fail to keep up with the demand of ever increasing data throughput."

Instead, the future involves software-defined networking (SD-WAN), where the intelligence of the network lies in the

INDUSTRY 1.0	INDUSTRY 2.0	INDUSTRY 3.0	INDUSTRY 4.0
Mechanisation, steam power, weaving loom	Mass production, assembly line, electrical energy	Automation, computers and electronics	Cyber physical systems, Internet of Things, networks
1784	1870	1969	TODAY
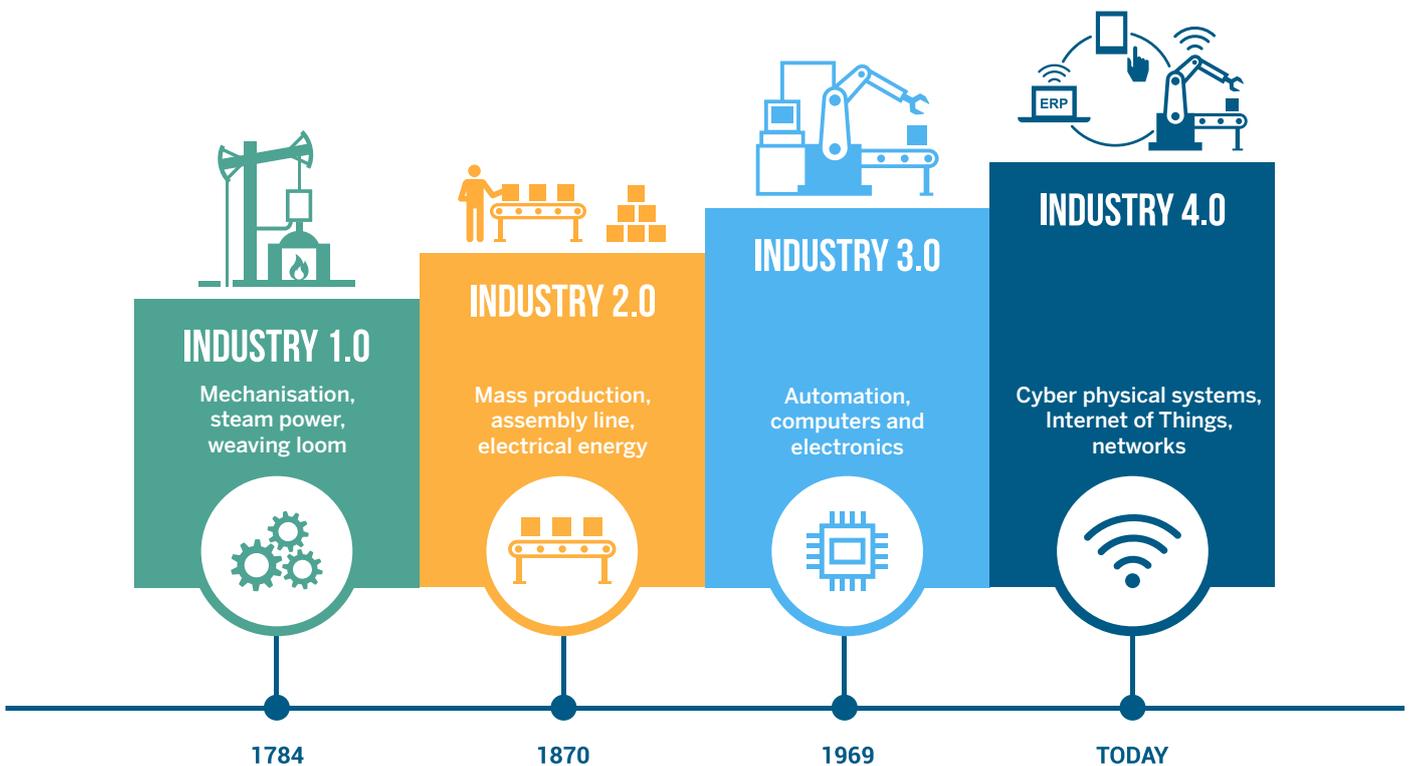
software, which can more easily be updated, automated and outsourced to specialist networking partners.

Software-defined architectures are able to intelligently route traffic, so that certain mission-critical data is carried over dedicated MPLS (multiprotocol label switching) links, and other data is carried over direct Internet links.

This approach has several benefits, he added, including:

- The optimisation of network capacity;
- Increasing available bandwidth with lower levels of latency;
- Ensuring better application performance;
- Reducing costs (as you shift some traffic from expensive MPLS to hybrid WANs);
- Security controls remaining up-to-date all the time;
- Your network becoming 'cloud-ready' and able to handle all the demands of a cloud-first business;
- Quick deployment of new branches, or a boost in capacity as needed;
- No outages or downtime (as you failover automatically to redundant links); and
- A network that scales limitlessly as your demands increase.

Johann explained that for any organisation that's looking to embrace the true potential for the Fourth Industrial Revolution, they'll need a networking partner that can achieve all these outcomes.

"In fact, we're reaching a point where one should be expecting certain guarantees. For instance, Datacentrix can provide guaranteed networking cost savings (these would be audited findings from an external auditing firm) and then bill you by charging a percentage of these savings."

That kind of structure aligns everyone's interests around a common goal – a better, faster, more efficient, more competitive business, he added, and ensures the very best results.

Johann Coetzee, managing director: Commercial at Datacentrix

Datacentrix supports CCBA's
technology strategy with zero-waste notebook refresh

Christian Cronje, CCBA's IT service delivery manager for Africa, and Francois Jacobs, senior account manager at Datacentrix

As part of its ongoing technology partnership with Coca-Cola Beverages Africa (CCBA), the eighth largest Coca-Cola bottling business by revenue worldwide and the biggest on the African continent, Datacentrix has assisted the company in setting a new benchmark in technology refresh projects, seeing 595 notebooks replaced over 15 sites, with zero stock lost and both budget and timeline parameters met.

The upgrade process was closely managed from end-to-end using an asset management application and back-office support system. The system ensured CCBA management benefitted from the availability of centralised, accurate real-time information for decision-making, at the push of a button. Its integration with the organisation's central project management office (PMO) was another critical success.

According to Christian Cronje, CCBA's IT service delivery manager for Africa, the objective of the rollout was to identify, plan and execute the refresh of all laptops older than four years by site, location and user across South Africa.

"The environment was a challenging one. The combination of the bottling operations of The Coca-Cola Company and SABMiller plc, following the Competition Tribunal's approval of the merger in 2016, meant that it was difficult to identify which devices needed to be replaced. The mapping of locations and people to each device consumed copious man-hours to attain 95% accuracy," he says.

Francois Jacobs, senior account manager at Datacentrix, adds: "We tailored the project to ensure a seamless rollout,

despite the challenges. Our approach alleviated wastage, while giving CCBA greater control of the project.

"The interactive system enhanced communication between all role players, allowing end-users to directly confirm details and appointments, leading to increased satisfaction in their dealings with CCBA IT. In addition, the use of tablets by the Datacentrix site engineers simplified the management of the process and allowed for immediate, digital sign-offs by the end-users.

"The combination of a managed and manned system ensured that any inefficiencies were identified timeously and solved very quickly," says Francois. "With the entire process being run in real-time, we were able to provide CCBA IT a complete audit trail from beginning to end."

Christian further states: "The project with Datacentrix enabled accurate stock management throughout the project, including the tracking of additional components, such as speakers and teleconferencing equipment. The improved reporting gave CCBA IT a clear status on real-time project deliverables."

Christian notes it was CCBA's relationship with Datacentrix and the company's flexibility that underpinned the success of the notebook refresh.

"Without this partnership, we would not have been able to deliver the project on time and at such a low risk. Datacentrix understands our environment and the requirements of our modernisation journey, which contributed to the project delivery according to scope," he adds.

The future of business connectivity

The rise of SD-WAN is changing the way organisations manage their network infrastructure, as it offers a more agile, cost effective and resilient approach.

Brendan Mc Aravey, country manager for Citrix

Imagine a reality where you had bought and paid for a brand new car, but the dealership still had complete control of the vehicle. In short, every time you wanted to take the car out for a drive, check the engine, or even put your bags in the boot, you would have to call the dealership and get their permission first. In the real world, that's exactly what it is like for companies who currently use an MPLS network provider.

On the other hand, having a software-defined wide area networking (SD-WAN) solution in place is like having complete ownership of your vehicle. You can drive it until it is worn out, not to mention that you, as the owner, are in ultimate control.

According to Brendan Mc Aravey, Country Manager for Citrix, "SD-WAN allows administrators to shape traffic and provide network services instantaneously, a far cry from the recent past, where the de facto way to put together a WAN was by using multi-protocol label switching (MPLS). This is far more expensive and ties the user into a long-term contract, where they are dependent on a single service provider."

With SD-WAN, on the other hand, it is an overlay technology, so it can run on top of the existing MPLS network, or any other network that is available. This means that companies no longer need to be locked into using their MPLS provider alone. They can now link to multiple providers and leave it up to the software to decide the fastest and most efficient link.

Cost and time savings

Schalk Burger, Group IT Manager at Intelligent Gaming, says, "Because we can use whatever service is available, we are no longer reliant on a single MPLS provider. Meaning there is far lower risk of our network being down for any length of time. Obviously as a betting organisation, this is critical to us – to be offline could cost us millions of rands a day".

Richard Vivian, IT Manager at Kolok adds that the fear of downtime is particularly real, "In the end, you have no visibility with regards to whether the service provider has a proper backup option available for your business. You are entirely reliant on them and will only find out whether redundancy is available when something goes wrong".

Additional options

One of the key advantages that SD-WAN offers is that it immediately enables an organisation that is having such difficulties to utilise a different provider while solving the problem, thereby ensuring that there is no impact on the end user during this period.

"With SD-WAN, instead of deciding who you are getting, you are able to decide what you are getting. You can pick and choose the providers you use and mix and match as required to get exactly the kind of service you require, because SD-WAN is essentially service provider-agnostic technology," says Brendan.

Not only does SD-WAN offer alternatives to MPLS, but it can also be used by those companies in the middle of long-term agreements with MPLS providers, to provide additional redundancy while waiting for the MPLS contract to expire.

"So whether you are in the middle of an MPLS contract or simply looking for a better way of providing WAN connectivity, there is no longer any reason to remain tied to a single carrier-grade service. SD-WAN means you have access to quality services from multiple providers complete with not only redundancy, but also much lower costs in the long term," he concludes.

CITRIX®

Datacentrix takes Dell EMC
Storage Partner of the Year title for SADC region

Datacentrix has been named as Dell EMC's 'Storage Partner of the Year' for the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region, announced at the inaugural Dell EMC African awards ceremony.

The awards, which also included North West and Central East Africa, formed part of the organisation's Africa Partner Summit 2018 held in Cape Town.

Datacentrix took the title as the best storage partner due to its stellar work delivered within several blue-chip accounts, including a South Africa-based multinational mobile telecommunications company, and for the dedication that our team has shown to our customers, always going the extra mile to ensure optimal value delivery.

Says Rudolf van der Gryp, Dell EMC business unit lead at Datacentrix: "This award is a significant honour for Datacentrix, as a company that has only been an EMC partner for approximately five years. Having received this recognition within a short space of time shows how serious

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Having received this recognition within a short space of time shows how serious we are about competing in the market and, as such, is a real milestone for Datacentrix. The recognition confirms that we are doing an excellent job in servicing our customers.

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"Maturing organisations generate ever increasing volumes of business intelligence, which need to be shared, stored, protected and retrieved in a way that saves time and increases productivity. As part of our consultative approach, Datacentrix offers data management solutions that consider the customer's ecosystem and status quo, ensuring the very best solution for their needs."

Brad Pulford, Dell EMC general manager for Channel and Distribution; James Scott, Datacentrix general manager: Technology 3 and Mohammed Amin, senior vice president at Dell EMC

Datacentrix attains Dell EMC
Titanium Partner status

Datacentrix has been appointed as a Dell EMC Titanium Partner, joining a niche group of partners that are recognised for their expertise in the South African industry. The Titanium tier of the Dell EMC Partner Program acknowledges partners that have demonstrated capability and resources, going above and beyond requirements to achieve expert levels in their designated areas of competency. In the case of Datacentrix, these include client-computing, networking, and server and storage.

Rudolf van der Gryp, Dell EMC business unit lead at Datacentrix, is naturally pleased with the acknowledgement and believes it was the expected next step in the partnership between the two organisations.

"The synergies are apparent to both ourselves and our customers," he says. "We have grown our Dell EMC business by more than 100% year-on-year over the past four years, and believe this is due to the fact that Dell EMC's solution offering helps our customers overcome challenges easily and affordably.

"Our new Titanium status will afford Datacentrix the opportunity to work more closely with Dell EMC to meet our mutual customers' needs in bigger and better ways."

This level of partnership recognises the service and execution levels that Datacentrix customers have grown to expect, but it also enables the company to offer more by way of competitive pricing, early access to the latest technologies and training, and a roadmap to future growth with Dell EMC.

"The digital era is here; all that is left for us is to reach out and take charge of it," says Doug Woolley, GM of Dell EMC South Africa. "But that's easier said than done, and you need the best partners to go on that journey. I'm very glad that Datacentrix has decided to join Dell EMC in helping South African companies transform for the future. As a Titanium partner, they will create great gains for the country while growing their own business. We look forward to working with them in creating a society of which we're all proud."

Mike King, Dell EMC sales specialist; Rudolf van der Gryp, Dell EMC BU lead; and Kristoff Kasch, Dell EMC senior solution architect

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We have grown our Dell EMC business by more than 100% year-on-year over the past four years, and believe this is due to the fact that Dell EMC's solution offering helps our customers overcome challenges easily and affordably.

Paid article

Delivering insights into storage,
fuelling digital transformation

The far-reaching integration of digital technology within an organisation is fundamentally challenging all areas of businesses, changing both how they operate and how they deliver value to customers. So said Graeme Dendy, business unit manager for IBM, Lenovo and Nutanix at Datacentrix, speaking at a Datacentrix breakfast event looking specifically at digital transformation (DX), software-defined storage and its effect on the market.

"In light of this, we're trying to get companies to rethink the way they utilise their storage infrastructure, using it to gain practical insights into data that could allow them to become more flexible, highlight new routes to market, and speed up delivery."

Graham Brown, storage software sales specialist at IBM South Africa, presenting at the same event, concurred.

"Today's business challenges include shrinking budgets, new applications, and the hybrid cloud. Aside from these, there is also the current data explosion – 90 percent of the digital universe has been created in the past two years – which brings to the fore new rules and complications in the way that data needs to be stored, used and extracted.

All of this data requires storage, he explained, an area that has been a key IBM focus for the past five years. "With a view to creating those efficiencies and allowing

companies to manage their infrastructure better, we've made heavy investments into the software-defined storage side."

The industry describes software-defined storage (SDS) as any storage software stack that can be installed on any commodity (x86 hardware) and/or off-the-shelf computing hardware, and used to offer a full suite of storage services. Storage is managed and automated by intelligent software as opposed to by the storage hardware itself. The pooled storage infrastructure resources within an SDS environment can therefore be automatically and efficiently allocated to match the application needs of an enterprise.

"While we're seeing the evolution of workloads, with the sheer volume of data driving to move them from private to public clouds (as well as to the multi-cloud environment), many organisations still have traditional infrastructure in place. These assets often hinder the adoption of transformation," clarified Graham.

"Software-defined storage is able to run on and leverage commodity storage hardware, unify disparate storage technologies, improve data service availability, pool storage resources, automate core storage functions, expose programming interfaces (APIs), and augment storage architecture without interruption.

> **We're trying to get companies to rethink the way they utilise their storage infrastructure, using it to gain practical insights into data that could allow them to become more flexible, highlight new routes to market, and speed up delivery.**

"Essentially, software-defined storage can be used to optimise traditional application infrastructure to free up money and resources, enabling organisations to use these savings to invest in, deliver and operate new application infrastructure to run new workloads linked to the Internet of Things (IOT), analytics and blockchain."

So, how do companies move forward, in a world where the rules that apply to traditional infrastructure and applications are very different to those governing next generation applications driving digital transformation?

"It's a completely new game – you have to take factors such as containerisation and unstructured data into consideration now. We've gone way beyond keeping the lights of traditional infrastructure on."

Graham explained that a data-driven, multi-cloud infrastructure must be:
- Flexible – allowing for data portability between private and public clouds, supporting security and compliance, and allowing for high ROI use cases;
- Modern – native DevOps capable, as well as providing for API automation and self service; and
- Agile – being service level driven, software defined, flash optimised and able to deliver modern back up and replication facilities.

"It's about control, having efficiencies and the abstraction of assets," he added.

Guest speaker, Jonathan Tullett: research manager, IT services for sub-Saharan Africa at IDC, said that a tipping point for DX isn't far off, and companies that are behind the door won't be aware of how badly they are losing the race until it happens.

In his talk, entitled "Infrastructure realities of digital transformation", Jonathan observed that businesses must adopt a strong but flexible strategy, with the right partners to match. "It's time to stop clinging to legacy ideas and to choose the right partner – legacy IT ideas are often linked to legacy partners. Flexibility and adaptability are critical, as they allow for the ability to adapt and integrate better.

"Organisations need to pivot towards a platform supporting DX, and not a framework dictating it," he commented.

Five pro tips to ensure success
with identity and access management

Identity and access management (IDAM) is an essential aspect of an organisation's overall security posture, both from a physical access perspective (office premises, laptops, documents and so on) as well as from a digital viewpoint (data, systems and applications). Often, this data may be scattered across a number of internal and external systems, so enterprises must have a reliable way of managing a number of identities and permission levels.

However, if IDAM is conducted in isolation from the broader security strategy, it is likely to be less effective and place organisations at risk of access breaches. The result could be loss of consumer trust, brand damage, regulatory fines, and other disastrous consequences, says Wayne Olsen, security business unit manager at Datacentrix.

So, just how can an organisation ensure their IDAM strategy is best suited to their organisation, achieving optimal results, while making certain it also remains relevant in the face of an ever-changing threat landscape?

Let's look at the top five tips to ensure impenetrable IDAM in your business:

1. Design your IDAM programme in the context of overall business and technology strategies

The harsh reality is there's no simple 'plug and play' IDAM solution for any enterprise, no 'one-size-fits-all' approach. The business strategy and objectives, as well as the technology roadmap, will dictate the types of controls that must be implemented to best serve the business's needs.

For instance, in some organisations where a mass of personal customer data is held (such as a bank), a heavy emphasis on data security will be front-and-centre in one's IDAM approach. For a purveyor of luxury goods, then physical IDAM might be the biggest priority. Software providers might be more focused on how to ensure only authenticated users can access their services (preventing piracy and unauthorised use).

IDAM should certainly not be planned and implemented in isolation. Consider the organisation's broader enterprise architecture, and follow formal project management and software development approaches to ensure alignment with the business and technology strategies.

2. Mitigate the greatest risks early on

In principle, IDAM can alleviate identity abuse and deter fraud, while providing auditing compliance and acting as an impartial 'witness' to sensitive business transactions (providing evidence when needed).

In practice, though, the organisation must firstly identify the biggest risks to its business, and place a heavier emphasis on addressing these concerns.

Generally, we see the most effort being poured into high-visibility issues, such as ransomware, hacking, network security, and ensuring regulatory compliance. But there may be some lesser-known threats that are quite specific to your business, which actually pose the biggest risks.

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> **Over time, new types of threats emerge, and new criminal tactics start to take hold. Your IDAM strategy must respond to the ever-changing threat landscape.**
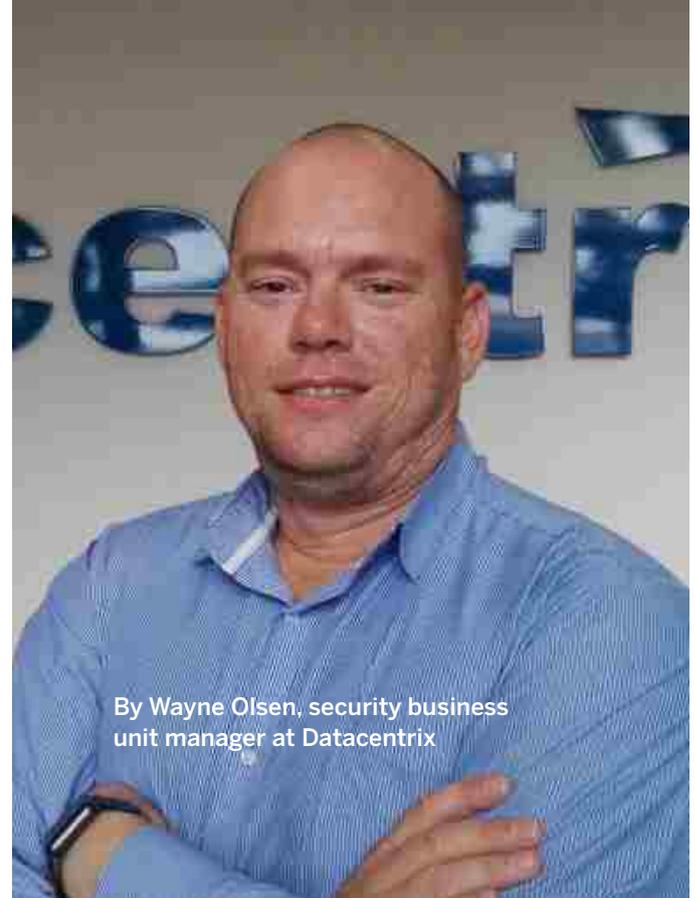
By Wayne Olsen, security business unit manager at Datacentrix

3. Garner support at all levels and disciplines within the organisation

In large enterprises, perhaps the biggest reason for the success or failure of any initiate, technology or otherwise, is the team's ability to corral the support and endorsement from across the entire organisation.

It's critical for an IDAM programme to have the right level of support within an organisation prior to implementation. Technical guys will see bells and whistles, and perhaps become enamoured with the likes of single sign-on.

On the other hand, business leadership will understand the importance of regulatory compliance and protecting intellectual property.

Frame the benefits in these various ways, to get all levels of the organisation on board with what could potentially be the introduction of a disruptive technology.

4. Take a structured, phased approach to the rollout

It is crucial to take a structured, phased approach to the rollout, showing business value at every stage. To begin with, individuals must be positively identified and physically verified to create the right level of trust.

Early on, the tasks are likely to be creating frameworks, groups, memberships, duties and roles. Allied to this, data (both structured and unstructured) must be classified, and policies and procedures put in place.

Remember that IDAM maturity is more of a journey than an event. While we might initially focus on 'keeping the bad guys out', the programme should mature, where the angle is more about 'keeping the good guys honest and protecting the innocent from identity abuse'.

5. Plan for growth, agility and flexibility

Here, we come full circle, returning to the need for your IDAM to be woven into the fabric of your broader technology and architecture strategies. In this way, it should be built to evolve, to be continually analysed and improved.

Over time, new types of threats emerge, and new criminal tactics start to take hold. Your IDAM strategy must respond to the ever-changing threat landscape.

Ensure your initial IDAM solution specs include detailed current and probable future functionality requirements, so you can choose a solution that caters for immediate needs, but also has the flexibility to grow, allowing you to toggle new features whenever needed.

While IDAM is a core component of any security technology implementation, and certainly one that can deliver massive benefits, the concern is that these projects can become costly and lengthy if a business is not properly prepared.

To avoid exposing your business to undue risks for lengthy periods of time, Datacentrix can support your business throughout the preparatory and planning phases, through implementation and management, setting up your IDAM programme for success.

Datacentrix talks farming with
ones and zeros at Agri Indaba

Datacentrix recently focused on the topic of digital adoption within the local agriculture sector, at its second annual Agri Indaba held at Zebula Golf Estate in Limpopo. Backed by technology specialists including Cisco, ITR Technology, Lenovo, McAfee, Skybox Security and Veeam Software, the event took an introspective look at how industry can support farming communities in embracing technology, better equipping these agri-businesses with information on existing and emerging solutions that can help transform business processes, increase performance, and deliver a better customer experience.

Speaking at the 2018 Agri Indaba, Datacentrix chief digital officer, Rudie Raath, explained that, as a continent, Africa will feel the greatest amount of change when it comes to disruptive technologies, and that this type of innovation is transforming Africa's economic potential. "With disruption comes great opportunity, where Africa will use technology to improve our competitive advantage on a global scale.

"Agriculture plays a critical role in meeting Africa's developmental goals, with a huge focus on increasing agricultural production in a sustainable way, while also decreasing costs. Here, technology like the Internet of Things (IoT), analytics and blockchain can help to shift this

industry beyond a 'business-as-usual' farming approach to one of transformation, without cost to the environment."

According to Rudie, the barriers to technology entry for the agricultural sector are being lowered, with cloud computing, drones, IoT, automation and more now within reach of the average farmer.

"Organisations within the sector have acknowledged that agriculture is a complex environment, highly variable and affected by a number of factors (like rainfall for instance) that are out of the control of the farmer.

"However, this type of setting is also ideal for machine learning and IoT sensor measurement, meaning that the local Agri sector is starting to transform itself – and its products – to help make farming smarter, more efficient and more sustainable."

But, Rudie stated, connectivity remains one of the biggest stumbling blocks for the local Agri sector, with a direct correlation to the adoption of new technology within this market. "We see many farmers dealing with little to no connectivity, and some depending on satellite phones or two-way radios to communicate.

> **This type of setting is also ideal for machine learning and IoT sensor measurement, meaning that the local Agri sector is starting to transform itself – and its products – to help make farming smarter, more efficient and more sustainable.**

"And, while the National Development Plan (NDP) 2030 does cater for basic connectivity to all, we understand the challenges that internet service providers (ISPs) face when deploying expensive infrastructure in low density areas, like farmlands, where the cost of infrastructure is not aligned to the number of users in the area.

"It is here where industry and government need to work together to find solutions – like opening microwave spectrums to sectors – allowing private organisations to develop these purpose-built networks, such as those needed within the Agri sector.

"Essentially the private sector needs to work hand-in-hand with government to ensure the success and sustainability of local agriculture, but we need to take the first step together," he added.

"Datacentrix was gratified to see an attendance increase of over 100 percent on last year's Agri Indaba, with particular interest from C-level attendees," said Josua Taljaard, event owner and business unit manager at Datacentrix. "We believe that this is indicative of the real value delivered in terms of content at the event, which not only emphasised how digital adoption can support local farming communities and mapped technology solutions to assist with the transformation process, it also provided real customer success stories."

Alf White, group executive for information technology at Senwes, one of the leading agricultural companies in South Africa and a Datacentrix client, presented one such testimonial, sharing Senwes' unified communications journey with the Agri Indaba 2018 attendees.

"By moving away from our use of analogue voice communications and centralising network management for more than 140 sites nationwide with the implementation of a unified communications solution supporting both voice and data, Senwes has managed to achieve a 40 percent reduction in call charges," clarified Alf.

"We also completed a travel analysis of Senwes staff, finding that the 2,500 staff members using the network were travelling a cumulative total of approximately four million kilometres per annum. It was decided that a more collaborative solution would deliver greater productivity by allowing for video conferencing and document sharing features, as opposed to physical travel.

"The ROI for the project has already been realised, in less than five years," Alf added.

For more information on Datacentrix' Agri Indaba, please visit https://www.datacentrix.co.za/agri-indaba18.html

Technology, the next 10 years on –
the digitisation of the physical world

We are standing on the precipice of a technological revolution that will modify the way we live, work, and relate to one another. In its scale, scope, and complexity, this transformation will be unlike anything humankind has ever experienced.

Already, artificial intelligence (AI) is all around us, from self-driving cars and drones to virtual assistants and software that translate or invest. Impressive progress has been made in AI in recent years, driven by exponential increases in computing power and by the availability of vast amounts of data, from software used to discover new drugs, to algorithms used to predict our cultural interests.

With advances in cloud, big data, AI, and robotics, smart devices have engaged our senses as never before. They are the technological embodiment of smart digitisation. Future devices will interface much more directly with our senses, sometimes even seamlessly (via implanted micro technology).

Technology will help us perceive the world more directly, easily, and quickly. The experience will become more human. By 2025, there will be 40 billion personal smart devices in the world, 5.6 times more than in 2015.

Global CEOs and senior business executives are finding that the acceleration of innovation and the velocity of disruption are hard to comprehend and that these drivers constitute a source of constant surprise, even for the best connected and most well informed. There is clear evidence that the technologies are having a major impact on business.

The mobile Internet has led to the creation of vast quantities of data and many mobile apps. The key to improving the user experience is bringing the data and services to them in a shorter time. Artificial intelligence will help us develop smartphones into intelligent phones. They will bridge the gap between technology and humanity, and bring users an entirely new class of experience.

It's not just the devices that generate valuable data, but also the intelligence that is built to consume that data, analyse it and generate actionable insights.

The Internet of Things (IoT) is forging the digital economic era. Consumers are replacing vendors as the architects of production, and their demands are creating services from what used to be products. ICT will emerge as a factor of production rather than remain a support system, and the integration of the physical and digital worlds will deepen. The advanced technological age of IoT is here, bringing with it great opportunities across the industry.

The massive requirements and potential applications of IoT are becoming clear: the number of IoT connections will vastly exceed connections between people. IoT is destined to benefit the global economy with transformative technologies made available for wearables, smart home appliances, smart cities, logistics management, and much more.

Huawei wants to empower users to experience a more connected world through the Internet, using a series of connect devices ranging from smart plugs to smart lighting. At the same time Huawei is seeking to allow third-party developers and other manufacturers to connect Huawei devices through their open source ecosystems.

IoT is the networking of physical smart devices, which also include vehicles, buildings, and other items that feature embedded electronics, software and sensors that enable smart objects to collect and exchange data.

Huawei is providing the technology to power IoT in smart homes, utilities and the vehicle industry. Globally, Huawei is already working with Volkswagen in China and BMW in Germany to provide chips for vehicles.

In South Africa, IoT is still in its early stages of development, but already we are seeing significant demand for solutions in various industries, like utilities, insurance and manufacturing.

HUAWEI

Datacentrix CEO named as
Businessperson of the Year

Seasoned ICT forerunner and Datacentrix CEO Ahmed Mahomed has been honoured for his leadership and wealth of experience at executive management level, receiving the coveted title of 'Businessperson of the Year' at the recent Minara Chamber of Commerce Business Awards gala dinner. In 2015, Mahomed was selected as a finalist in the Master Entrepreneur category of the EY World Entrepreneur Award.

Held in Durban this year, the prestigious Minara Business Awards recognise and celebrate contributions made to all parts of society, and also serve as inspiration for others. Prior to the awards evening in early November, 18 high-achieving South Africans were shortlisted for categories including 'Businessperson of the Year', 'Business Entity of the Year', 'Businesswoman of the Year', 'Professional of the Year', 'Young Entrepreneur of the Year', and 'Community Builder of the Year'.

Said incoming president of the Chamber, Solly Suleman: "Our awards pay tribute to extraordinary people from across commerce, industry and professional sectors for their dedication, hard work, success and contribution to the progress of South Africa. The public puts nominees forward and three finalists are then selected per category.

"Ahmed Mahomed's considerable experience at executive management level for several established companies, with an exceptional 17-year tenure as CEO of Datacentrix – a company with a revenue of over R3 billion and more than 1,500 skilled employees – made him the clear winner of the 'Businessperson of the Year' award."

In receiving his award, Mahomed stated that these types of awards are critical for business, as leaders of industry should be setting the pace for the younger generation. "It is humbling to receive this recognition, alongside some of the brightest and best in the country. I share this award with colleagues, family and friends. Success is only achieved because of the contribution of many individuals and the sacrifice the family makes. I firstly want to thank my wife for her encouragement and guidance and for not only providing an incredible support structure, but for also keeping me grounded. I would also like to thank my colleagues, many of whom have become friends, for their unwavering support and commitment.

Solly Suleman, president of the Minara Chamber of Commerce and Ahmed Mahomed, Datacentrix CEO

"As leaders, we have an immense responsibility, and, in our daily interactions, we face challenges. The way in which how we engage these shapes society in general. This is more so today than ever before. Injustice and unethical behaviour seem to have become an accepted norm, if not fashionable. It is our responsibility to stand up to this type of behaviour, and that takes great courage.

"It is commonplace to talk about unethical business practices as if it is restricted to the public sector, but those who feed this practice are as guilty as those who accept it," Mahomed continued. "There is no shortage of examples of private sector complicity in the absence of any public sector involvement. The enormous negative impact on our society cannot be understated. Whilst this is not a uniquely South African phenomenon, but also a global one, the quantum in South Africa is obscene. As South Africans, we must find it within ourselves to rise above this.

"It is also critical for local business leaders, in South Africa where unemployment conservatively is north of 27 percent, to take responsibility for the creation of jobs. We need to have an impact beyond narrow interest," he added.

The Minara Chamber of Commerce was founded in KwaZulu-Natal in 2000 to focus on uplifting and promoting business. The organisation later introduced its businesswomen's chapter and further promotes black economic empowerment skills transfer workshops and youth development.

From concept to reality: Bringing digital transformation into focus

Many companies are appointing chief digital officers and investing in their digital transformation programmes, says Nigel Hysom, business unit manager: EIM, Western Cape at Datacentrix.

The incredible announcement from Uber at this year's annual Elevate conference in Los Angeles sent echoes across the globe, stirring imaginations about just what's possible with new technologies. The transportation giant unveiled its electric-powered 'flying car', looking like a hybrid of a drone and a helicopter, designed to fly 1 000 feet above the ground, and taking us between rooftop 'skyports' when it launches to consumers in 2023.

"That's just over four short years away," notes Nigel Hysom, business unit manager: enterprise information management (EIM): Western Cape at Datacentrix. "This type of quantum leap grabs consumers' attention, pushing us to demand more from our technology and from the companies with which we engage," he says. "After all, if flying cars are possible, then why can't an insurance company allow me to open a new policy on a website? Why can't a retailer allow me to track the delivery of my goods through an app?"

So, in the era of aerial Ubers, just how can organisations keep up with ever more demanding consumer expectations?

"Digital transformation must be considered across all aspects of the organisation," begins Nigel, noting the following core principles:

- **People:** Human capital transformation efforts to develop new skills within teams, change the ways of working, and redeploy individuals into new areas of focus.

- **Processes:** Integrating robotic process automation and integration technologies (such as restful APIs) to better connect systems within the organisation, as well as external systems from partner companies in one's ecosystem.

- **Technology:** The smart application of 'frontier' technologies like artificial intelligence, cloud platforms, intelligent devices, to transform internal operations and external products/services to consumers.

"But, to truly deliver on heightened consumer expectations, firms must make the big shift from dabbling in new technology, running pilots, POCs and incubators, towards truly embracing digital transformation in an enterprise-wide, committed manner."

Nigel adds many organisations, both locally and globally, are now appointing chief digital officers (CDOs) and investing heavily in their digital transformation programmes.

"The advent of the CDO role reflects the need to coordinate different pockets of digital innovation from across the business, and orchestrate them into an enterprise strategy," he says. "Today's digital pilots must become tomorrow's operational solutions.

"Though most companies are experimenting with the likes of blockchain, artificial intelligence and the Internet of things in limited ways, we'll soon see full adoption, wrapped within entirely new business models and business strategies."

Making it real

Putting some of these principles into practice, Datacentrix' EIM team operates with the rallying cry of "enabling your digitisation journey", distilling the principles of digital into real-world programmes that have tangible impact.

"For instance, in financial services, we've built the tools and processes for a major bank to pilot an entirely new way of onboarding new customers. We've leveraged mobile devices that scan ID books and other documents, fingerprints and facial recognition, and integrate into third-party systems. The result is a fully secure, fully compliant solution that means customers don't need to visit a branch to complete the FICA process.

"This could have a tremendous benefit to banks, as they play in an increasingly competitive space, with many new entrants entering the fray in 2019 and beyond," explains Nigel.

"Or, another great example is that of a resources giant, where we've taken the user-friendly principles of consumer apps and extended that thinking into an enterprise ecosystem. The result is an app-based Extranet tool that securely exposes a number of different services, allowing its distribution network to place orders, report faults, amend profiles and verify compliance documents, all from the convenience of an intuitive mobile app."

Scaling out

But, across the broader South African business landscape, there is much more of this kind of work to be done. Nigel says at a national level, the focus should be on skills development and small business incubation.

"At the moment, the demand for hi-tech transformation programmes is outstripping the supply of quality people that can design, implement and deliver an end-to-end journey.

"Then, at a business level, digital hubs like the Silicon Cape initiative should be expanded across the rest of the country. Already, over 1,200 small businesses in the Western Cape are driving innovative new solutions and technologies via Silicon Cape.

"It's time for local government to accelerate these kinds of programmes and adopt a similar stance to the UK government, for instance, which has provided preferential tax incentives to IP-based companies."

"

Though most companies are experimenting with the likes of blockchain, artificial intelligence and the Internet of things in limited ways, we'll soon see full adoption, wrapped within entirely new business models and business strategies.

Ultimately, many of the underlying technologies needed for the digital revolution, the likes of blockchain, IoT, 5G and machine learning, are rapidly maturing. Standards and best-practices are starting to emerge, and the risks and costs of embracing these new technologies are dropping.

With all this in mind, and with consumers expecting flying cars in just a few years, the time is now to prepare one's organisation for the digital revolution.

Datacentrix takes Africa Partner
of the Year title at OpenText 2018
Innovation Tour

Datacentrix clinched the 'Africa Partner of the Year' award at OpenText's 2018 Innovation Tour conference, which took place in Johannesburg as part of the enterprise information management (EIM) firm's global series of events held in nine cities around the world.

As one of OpenText's longest standing local partners and its only Platinum Partner in Africa, Datacentrix has received a number of accolades from the company over the past few years, including the 'SAP Solution Enhancement of the Year' award in 2017, and the international 'Fast Growth Market Partner of the Year' in 2015.

Datacentrix clients have also received serious recognition from OpenText, including 'Go-Live Project of the Year', 'Customer of the Year', and 'Customer Ambassador of the Year', all in 2017 alone.

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Receiving acknowledgement as OpenText's top partner not only verifies our dedication to this partnership, it also cements our reputation of excellence within the South African EIM market.

Juane Peacock, managing director: coastal region and EIM at Datacentrix

"Earning top honours at this year's local OpenText partner award is a huge accomplishment for us," explains Juane Peacock, managing director: coastal region and EIM at Datacentrix. "As an OpenText Platinum Partner, we've taken the EIM journey with OpenText for 18 years now, reflecting a true collaboration between the two companies. Over this time we've proven our implementation prowess, breadth of coverage within OpenText's portfolio, depth of skills, the provision of critical value to clients, and our overall commitment to the organisation.

"Receiving acknowledgment as OpenText's top partner not only verifies our dedication to this partnership, it also cements our reputation of excellence within the South African EIM market," he states.

"Datacentrix has shown consistent commitment to OpenText over the years by focusing on our solutions and investing in skills on an ongoing basis. This is challenging, with our vast and ever increasing EIM solutions portfolio. We have also jointly driven a successful graduate programme, which has increased the skills base on the OpenText technologies," says Lenore Kerrigan, Country Sales Director, Africa.

Datacentrix receives
Most Significant Project of the Year Award for SA from Veeam

Datacentrix proudly announces it has received the 2017 Most Significant Project of the Year Award from Veeam Software, the Availability for the Always-On Enterprise innovator.

These third annual awards recognise South African Veeam ProPartners and Veeam Cloud & Service Provider (VCSP) partners that have not only demonstrated success in providing Veeam Availability solutions to their customers, but who have also provided first-class support, expert knowledge, continued product education, and a true Veeam strategy incorporated into their business.

Datacentrix was recognised for the Veeam Most Significant Project of the Year, for identifying, managing and successfully closing the largest project in 2017.

"Datacentrix is most pleased to have reaped the reward of our dedication to Veeam, and its excellent 'always-on' solutions offering, as a Silver Service Provider and also as

one of the company's first local Platinum Resellers," said Tony de Sousa, Enterprise business unit manager at Datacentrix.

"We look forward to maintaining this partnership into the future, growing it from strength to strength as the two companies mutually assist local businesses on their digital transformation journey."

"We are excited to recognise and honour Datacentrix for the Most Significant Project of the Year," said Lisa Strydom, channel manager lead at Veeam.

"We value our partnership with Datacentrix as an example of a true collaboration, driving towards mutual success. We consider our partners as a true extension of our Veeam team, enabling us to provide Veeam Availability solutions to our joint customers, empowering them to stay operational and meet the increasing demands of our digital world."

Marius Redelelinghuys, solution architect at Datacentrix; Lisa Strydom, channel manager lead at Veeam; Claude Schuck, regional manager: Africa at Veeam; and Tony de Sousa, enterprise business unit manager at Datacentrix

Aveng ups desktop performance,
improves costs with Datacentrix

Aveng, an infrastructure company with expertise in steel, engineering, manufacturing, mining, public infrastructure and water treatment, has boosted desktop performance and reliability, and reduced related costs with the assistance of Datacentrix.

Ian van der Merwe, acting group IT manager at Aveng, clarifies: "Aveng's operations within the manufacturing, steel, mining and construction sectors require, at a high-level, slightly different desktop computing solutions.

"Our construction and mining businesses are project-driven, and encompass varying geographic locations, both within and external to local borders. Within this environment, the user base is highly fluid, projects vary greatly in duration, lasting between six and 36 months and occasionally longer, and the site environment can be harsh on devices, in terms of movements and dust, for instance. The result is that these project-based devices are often written off to the project or clients, making more cost-effective IT expenditure a key focus."

Based on these factors, says Ian, it has been necessary for Aveng to constantly review its standard catalogue of devices to better match business needs. "However, while cost played a significant role in our decisions, we also needed a quality, reliable, cost-effective device that did not compromise on performance."

As Aveng's preferred desktop device supplier, it is Datacentrix's mandate to also keep the organisation up to date with the ever-changing IT landscape and technologies.

"Datacentrix ensures that Aveng stays on top of new technologies by including us in regular product information sessions and technology trend discussions. And when we requested assistance in specifying an alternate model for our site-based operations, that matched current expected quality, performance and reliability standards, but was more cost effective, the company recommended going the AMD processor route."

According to Elmari Keyser, Datacentrix's end-user computing specialist for Commercial, AMD is delivering exceptional performance to both businesses, including Fortune 500 organisations, and hundreds of millions of consumers across the globe, and is now available on HP,

Ian van der Merwe, Aveng acting Group IT manager; Helder Feiteira, Datacentrix account manager; Greg Frey, Aveng Group IT infrastructure manager

Lenovo and Dell commercial platforms. "AMD has built a reputation of providing high-performance computing at a reasonable cost, making for the ideal answer to Aveng's specific requirements.

"The organisation was equipped with the right information, ran a demonstration, and was convinced that the solution put forward by Datacentrix matched its expected quality, reliability and performance requirements, at a more cost-effective price point," she states.

An interesting development resulting from the implementation is that Aveng has also extended the AMD-based computing option to its engineers. "The engineering device has very different specifications to the entry-level project device, being just short of a full CAD workstation device. However, the AMD option is able to meet the particular engineering requirements from both a design application and checking aspect," says Ian.

"This has allowed us to increase performance for the graphics and storage components, but with massive savings at the same time. Datacentrix invested time in understanding our challenges, executed on our requirements timeously and professionally, and delivered top-quality service, ensuring a seamless experience."

Aruba names Datacentrix
African Partner of the Year

Datacentrix was recently honoured as 'African Partner of the Year' by Aruba, a Hewlett Packard Enterprise (HPE) company, which acknowledged local partners' successes in sales, expertise in delivering Aruba solutions, and commitment to customer service.

This award extends the Datacentrix winning streak following its triumph at the annual HPE Partner Awards Celebration, which saw the organisation take the title of 'Overall Partner of the Year', as well as 'Server Partner 2017', 'Services Partner 2017', as well as being named the top 'Platinum Partner 2017'.

"As an Aruba Platinum Partner, Datacentrix ensures its senior architects offer top-level network consulting and guidance, while its highly experienced engineers have provided local and international organisations with networking solutions for a number of years," says Marc van der Poll, technical specialist: networks at Datacentrix.

"This recognition from Aruba speaks to Datacentrix's constant investment in the HPE brand, its drive to become a best-of-breed Aruba partner, and its focus on positioning itself as one of the most certified local partners. It is also

testament to our commitment to exceptional customer service, providing valuable, proactive insight into network performance, capacity and availability."

Says Leigh-Ann Spencer, Channel Account Manager at HPE Aruba: "Our channel partners are critical to Aruba's success, helping us to deliver on our long-standing philosophy of 'Customer First-Customer Last'. We would like to congratulate Datacentrix on taking the title of our foremost African partner, and thank them for the world-class service the company provides to South African customers."

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> **Datacentrix ensures its senior architects offer top-level network consulting and guidance.**

Marc van der Poll, technical specialist, Datacentrix; Rodney Mabunda, senior network engineer, Datacentrix; Pieter Engelbrecht, HPE Aruba BU manager Sub-Sahara Africa, HPE

Moses Segaetsho, CIO at Auditor General SA; Ahmed Mahomed, Datacentrix CEO; Kenny Nkosi, divisional MD Public Sector at Datacentrix; Dr. Stanley Mpofu, WITS CIO; Tumi Pooe, Datacentrix Public Sector business unit manager and Mrs. Ntombi Mpofu, wife of WITS CIO

Datacentrix receives Oliver Top
Empowerment accolade

Datacentrix was acknowledged at the 17th Annual Oliver Top Empowerment Awards held in Johannesburg, receiving a highly commended certificate of excellence within the Top Empowered ICT Award category. The overall winner of the ICT section award was a Datacentrix customer – Multichoice.

Datacentrix qualified as an award finalist for two additional categories, namely the Top Empowered Company: Skills Development Award and the Top Empowered Company: Business of the Year Award.

The Oliver Top Empowerment Awards is Africa's most established platform for recognising leaders in broad-based black economic empowerment (B-BBEE). It is endorsed at the highest levels of corporate and governmental South Africa, and has created a legacy of inspiration for the nation by showcasing outstanding leaders – organisations and individuals – who exemplify vision, innovation, leadership, and, most of all, action in the name of transformation.

The title of Top Empowered ICT company is awarded to an organisation that has used technology-based innovation to improve productivity, price, quality, effectiveness and efficiencies, ultimately enhancing the competitiveness of the South African economy. 'Innovation' may refer to either an internal system deployed, or a solution provided by the company that helps to advance the industry at large.

Says Ahmed Mahomed, Datacentrix CEO: "Datacentrix has been committed to socio-economic transformation for over two decades, when corporate empowerment requirements were in their infancy, reaching a Level One B-BBEE status last year at 52.13% black-owned with 135% procurement recognition.

"As a South African company, Datacentrix is a strong supporter of its surrounding communities, with an emphasis on developing skills and helping to transform people's lives. As part of our commitment to ongoing transformation, we will continue to foster an environment that will deliver substantially on empowerment objectives including skills, socio-economic and enterprise development.

"This recognition of excellence from the Oliver Top Empowerment Awards panel of esteemed judges is high praise indeed for us, and we feel that this achievement places Datacentrix at the forefront of national empowerment," Ahmed adds. "Congratulations to Multichoice on its triumph; there is no doubt that the organisation is a most deserving winner."

Work hard, play harder with
Lenovo's new ThinkPad X1 Extreme

Lenovo announced the latest addition to the premium ThinkPad X1 laptop portfolio. The ThinkPad X1 Extreme introduces a 15-inch form factor to the X1 series and is the first to include NVIDIA discrete graphics. The X1 Extreme is designed for advanced users and prosumers who seek a thin and light Windows 10 laptop that reflects their personality as well as high performance computing needs.

It is ideal for data intensive workloads; video and photo editing; graphics rendering; and virtual and mixed reality applications. Compatible with leading headsets, users can enjoy low latency immersive experiences, making it a strong performer in multiple fields such as education, training, healthcare and modelling. NVIDIA GeForce® 1050Ti graphics ensure users can also sneak in time with their favourite games.

The ThinkPad X1 Extreme is incredibly tough too. Four layers of reinforced carbon fiber form the top cover structure, including a core layer that absorbs shocks. And with so much power on tap generating extra heat, a new aluminum alloy bottom cover keeps it running cool by dissipating the heat more efficiently.

Work Hard
Work spaces can be anywhere from home to office, coffee shop to airplane. Weight is a critical consideration when moving between environments. Starting at just 3.76 pounds (1.7kg), the X1 Extreme is 12 percent lighter than its popular cousin, the ThinkPad T580, however users do not want to compromise on performance to get a thin and light package.

The combination of 8th generation Intel® CoreTM processors, including the six-core Intel® CoreTM i9 coming soon[1], up to 64GB of memory and dual PCIe SSD storage option with Raid 0/1 capability brings the highest performance ever seen on a X1 Series.

Productivity and collaboration are enhanced with far field microphones and Dolby AudioTM Premium for the best conferencing experiences and up to 15 hours of battery life mean users can work and play for longer. Rapid Charge will then fuel the X1 Extreme up to 80% in just 60 minutes for more work or play time. We also maintain the great ThinkPad Keyboard experience with industry leading key travel of 1.8mm within this device class.

Play Harder
The ThinkPad X1 Extreme design incorporates user demands for greater transparency and integration between personal technology use and that required for work. Touch screen capability brings smartphone-like control and smarter voice control features with Cortana and Amazon Alexa offer a new dimension to PC interaction.

Casual gamers will relish the recipe of a stunning 15.6-inch UHD display, a whole new world of sound with Dolby Atmos® through supported headphones and smoother gameplay with the NVIDIA GeForce® 1050Ti MaxQ discrete graphics. What's more, that stunning display includes support for Dolby VisionTM HDR enabled content allowing users to relax in front of their favorite show or movie from their chosen streaming provider.

The new X1 Extreme isn't just a high-performance workhorse, it transcends the gap between work and play and offers prosumers a smart laptop that delivers on all fronts.

[1] ThinkPad X1 Extreme with Intel Core i9 processor will be available starting December 2018

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