

# datacentrix infocentrix

First issue  
2014

Serious about performance, passionate about value

## Message from our Chief Executive Officer



Over the last five years, Datacentrix has transformed itself from a technology-focused organisation to an integrated, services-orientated systems provider.

As a complete, integrated systems provider, Datacentrix delivers innovative solutions that:

- ▶ power our customers' business strategy;
- ▶ add tangible operational value by reducing costs and optimising efficiencies; and
- ▶ increase uptime and ensure hassle-free computing.

Our objective is to help our customers attain the maximum business value that intelligent, well-managed technology systems can deliver. Simply put, we are about unlocking more value for our customers, all of the time.

This issue of the Infocentrix captures how Datacentrix is moving forward as one of South Africa's top IT companies. Not only does it showcase some of our successes, but it illustrates the new face of the company. While our logo and corporate identity have evolved, our core company values remain unchanged. We continue to conduct our business with passion, professionalism, pride and we are performance-driven in everything we do.

Our thanks go to Riverbed, HP and Symantec for their on-going support and sponsorship of the Infocentrix. I hope that this issue provides useful insight into Datacentrix, our offerings, customer successes, partner relationships and industry involvement.

Enjoy the issue.  
Best regards

**Ahmed Mahomed, CEO**

## Explore Datacentrix' new online presence

Datacentrix has launched its new website. The site offers viewers an enjoyable, easy-to-navigate, online experience. An overview of the company, the management team, financial performance, as well as our services and offerings are described, with much more to be seen. The site portrays the company's new corporate identity and we encourage you to go have a look. Please feel free to provide your feedback to our marketing department.

[www.datacentrix.co.za](http://www.datacentrix.co.za)



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

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

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### Site report

## Datacentrix and Exxaro partnership

### grows from strength to strength

Datacentrix has been involved with Exxaro for over a decade and has a very good appreciation of the some of the challenges and complexities the mining sector is facing on a day to day basis.

This long-standing strategic partnership with Exxaro has seen the mining company partner with Datacentrix on many fronts, including the outsourcing of its enterprise services management, the services around its sites, network, servers and storage areas, information security upgrades and bandwidth optimisation to its operations integration management.

Datacentrix endeavors to be continually innovative in its approach and strive for excellence in its execution for the benefit of all stakeholders.

"From an outsourcing perspective, Exxaro expects Datacentrix to engage on multiple levels in support of its strategic business drivers and to ensure predictable service delivery outcomes. True value can only be unlocked if a trust relationship between the parties exists and, to this end, Datacentrix and the Exxaro Information Management function are working very closely on a day to day basis, to ensure that the required service levels are achieved and maintained." Datacentrix managing director: outsourcing and managed services, Abrie Peens, explains.

We are delighted that in the spirit of true partnership, Exxaro is consistently recognising our talent and resultant efforts. A number of Datacentrix staff members have demonstrated exceptional IM support, customer service and dedication; which has resulted in them being singled-out for the Exxaro IM Stars of the Month award. These awards are the outcome of customer feedback through the Internal Datacentrix Compliment Process at Exxaro.

#### The IM stars over the past 12 months are as follows:

Jan Labuschagne – manager: problem management  
Glenn Griffin – operations integration manager  
Deon Nel – senior data base administrator

This team has provided exceptional support while resolving various critical issues,



Datacentrix endeavors to be continually **innovative in its approach** and strive for excellence in its execution for the benefit of all stakeholders.

sometimes under extremely difficult circumstances over an extended period of time. Not only did members provide the customer with exceptional technical support and leadership, but also insightful communication skills to ensure that all stakeholders were appraised at all times, even after hours.

Stienie Sadie (transition manager) and Cathy Cox (change manager) were specifically recognised for their respective roles in the areas of operations integration and dedication to continuous improvement respectively.

Hendrik van Wyk, service manager KZN was invited to accept a general manager award on behalf of Datacentrix for the excellent service delivered to Tronox KZN Sands. This is the first time an external contractor has won this particular award.

Pierre Hoffman, the national service manager for Exxaro, added his congratulations by saying: "Well done not only to the IM Stars, but to all of our IM Services Stars who remain committed, motivated and deliver excellent service everyday within this demanding and challenging environment. You all make us proud."



Abrie Peens, managing director: outsourcing and managed services at Datacentrix



A number of Datacentrix staff members have demonstrated exceptional IM support, customer service and dedication; which has resulted in them being singled-out for the **Exxaro IM Stars of the month** award.

- ▶ Jan Labuschagne
- ▶ Glenn Griffin
- ▶ Deon Nel
- ▶ Stienie Sadie
- ▶ Cathy Cox
- ▶ Hendrik van Wyk



# Every CIO's top five technology priorities

By Michael Wilson, HP Networking product category manager

Today's CIOs are under immense pressure to match business and technology priorities, using technology to essentially move the business into the future. And while there are a number of challenges to overcome, HP has selected five of what it believes to be the most important current technology priorities.

Consolidation is still topping most companies' agendas, continuing the trend of the past few years. And while we've seen many businesses move from storage islands to virtual storage, for example, and decrease the number of servers used, the network is yet to face consolidation. Datacentre consolidation is particularly important, as it can assist in reducing costs, freeing up resources and improving capacity utilisation.

Cloud technology – or the delivery of IT as a service – has also long been a customer priority, or at least something they are working towards. Essentially, what is required is that IT must be delivered as a service – at the lowest possible

manufacturing cost and with the least resource consumption. Furthermore, these services must be able help the company to act quickly in the market and minimise the risk of any threats it is facing.

A third business priority is virtualisation. We have seen many companies virtualise servers and storage, but again, the network has been overlooked. By virtualising the network, organisations can easily improve agility, optimise resources and boost availability.

The fourth priority is embracing the Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) phenomenon. Changing user behaviour and increasing mobility has also created the expectation that we can connect our new tablet – which may even be a personal device – to the network. Users are expecting to be able to access their business data and business applications, from wherever and however they choose, meaning that BYOD has become a priority that will need to be supported in the future, not least from a security and risk perspective.

The fifth and final priority is unified communication. We have stated that people need to work together virtually, across mobile devices and across consolidated datacentres. They must be able to work together at the same time, sharing information and screens and need to be able to communicate with one another, without high costs and without needing to travel or drive to meetings. These requirements make unified communication – or the ability to work effectively across locations – another critical focus area for companies.

HP's vision is to provide the technology to meet all of these requirements, allowing enterprise networks to become



By virtualising the network, organisations can easily improve agility, optimise resources and boost availability.

more agile and adaptable to changing business needs.

The HP Virtual Application Network framework is a complete, end-to-end software-defined networking (SDN) solution that enables businesses to create a scalable, agile and secure network that streamlines operations. Based on cloud functionality, it can speed up application deployment, simplify management and ensure network service level agreements (SLAs) in cloud and other dynamic computing models.

Essentially, Virtual Application Networks provide a virtualised view of a network – abstracted from the physical equipment – that transforms a rigid physical enterprise network into a programmable, multitenant and application-aware virtual network.

Virtual Application Networks allow businesses to take advantage of a virtualised, end-to-end network infrastructure to deliver applications from a cloud datacentre to users, from video in multiple forms, conferencing and playback, to training, communications (like Microsoft Lync) and real time business and messaging applications.

# Datacentrix dominates HP partner awards

Datacentrix raked in no less than 10 awards at the recent 2013 HP partner awards. Not only was the organisation named as HP's overall partner of the year, it also scooped the following titles: Enterprise Group (EG) partner of the year; storage partner of the year; Industry Standard Server (ISS) partner of the year; workstation partner of the year; Retail Point of Sale (POS) partner of the year; and software information management partner of the year.

In addition, HP singled out three Datacentrix staff members as providing an exceptional service. Tony de Sousa, Datacentrix enterprise business unit manager, received the title of channel champion of the year; Merwe Erasmus, Cape coastal technical manager, was named as outstanding technical person; and Hannes Steyn, end user computing specialist, won the Printing and Personal Systems (PPS) channel champion of the year award.

"HP South Africa's partnership with Datacentrix works so well due to the strong relationships we have with staff members throughout the organisation," explains Thibault Dousson, HP South Africa country general manager for PPS. "This applies right through the organisation from Datacentrix' account managers and business unit managers, all the way to the senior directors.

"The strategy put in place by Datacentrix over the past five years has been so aligned with HP's strategy that the two companies can only grow from strength to strength," he adds.

According to David McMurdo, indirect sales country manager at HP South Africa, Datacentrix' tenacity has been highlighted by the number of awards received by the company. "From an Enterprise Group perspective, Datacentrix has been instrumental in growth across this entire sector. Not only this, but as HP South Africa's overall partner of the year, it is clear that Datacentrix has a true understanding of the HP offering from end to end," he explains.

Says Ahmed Mahomed, Datacentrix CEO: "Datacentrix has been the top HP partner



Frank van Rees, HP South Africa managing director; Tony de Sousa, Datacentrix business unit manager - enterprise; Thibault Dousson, HP PPS country general manager; Adele Oosthuizen, HP PPS country channel manager; Hannes Steyn, Datacentrix end user computing specialist and David McMurdo, HP country EG channel manager

for over a decade. The organisation's strategic approach, investment in the best skills, and turnkey solutions approach has resulted in the organisation garnering 10 awards in 2013. Datacentrix is very proud of these achievements.

"These accolades can only be garnered through the dedication, innovation, persistence and hard work of all involved, and this has certainly been proven by this honour. It bears testimony to what a great team we have and that the organisation is seen as a credible player within the market with an enviable execution capability.

"People are the cornerstone of our business and I am proud to be associated with such a talented team," Ahmed continues.

"As well as the teams that made these awards possible, I would like to extend an appreciative congratulations specifically to Tony, Merwe and Hannes and their respective teams for their well-deserved recognition. In addition to this, the support and guidance received from the HP South Africa executive team, in particular from Thibault Dousson, Frank van Rees, David McMurdo and partner business manager, Petro Plotz, has ensured that Datacentrix reached this high point in its HP journey."

## Some of the awards that Datacentrix raked in at the 2013 HP partner awards

- HP's overall partner of the year
- Enterprise Group (EG) partner of the year
- Storage partner of the year
- Industry Standard Server (ISS) partner of the year
- Workstation partner of the year
- Retail Point of Sale (POS) partner of the year
- Software information management partner of the year

### TOP TECHNOLOGY PRIORITIES

1. Consolidation
2. Cloud technology
3. Virtualisation
4. Bring Your Own Device (BYOD)
5. Unified communication





# Enterprise information management

According to Gartner "Enterprise information management (EIM) is an integrative discipline for structuring, describing and governing information assets across organisational and technological boundaries to improve efficiency, promote transparency and enable business insight".

Datacentrix EIM is the practice and technology of maximising the value of information by providing solutions that help customers create opportunities and address challenges related to their information – to gain better business insight, to create positive business impact, to increase process velocity, to reduce risks related to information governance and to address information security concerns.

By bringing structure to unstructured information through a well-designed EIM strategy, companies can unleash the power of information.

Datacentrix has a dedicated business unit that focuses on delivering EIM solutions for customers across the country focusing on set of applications, solutions, and core capabilities, or "categories of offerings" such as:



## Site report

# SAPREF sees benefits from process automation with Datacentrix

**SAPREF**, the largest crude oil refinery in Southern Africa, is seeing significant benefits and efficiency improvements just three months post the automation of its request process for capital investment project development and approvals. Datacentrix partnered with SAPREF for this project, implementing a workflow and business process management tool to meet its requirements.

SAPREF is a joint venture between Shell SA Refining and BP Southern Africa. Located in Durban, it holds 35% of South Africa's refining capacity.

Says Mark Skea, senior ICT project manager at SAPREF: "A major benefit of this rollout is being able to search for, and find, all project development documents in one place. Losing paper-based files and incomplete documentation is now a thing of the past as process integrity is enforced by the new system. This success, plus the positive feedback from users, has emphasised the need to make further electronic workflow deployments across other manual business processes within SAPREF."

Shakeel Jhazbhay, business unit manager: enterprise information management and security solutions at Datacentrix, explains that the customised solution enables enterprises to build and run business applications, including forms, workflow, data and reports.

"It provides powerful capabilities that facilitate the integration of applications with line-of-business systems and scale those applications according to an organisation's needs.

"Prior to solution selection and implementation, a considerable amount of time was spent studying SAPREF's ICT strategy and consulting with the organisation to ensure the careful selection of a 'no-regret' solution for its electronic workflow requirements," he adds.



**Shakeel Jhazbhay, business unit manager: enterprise information management and security solutions at Datacentrix**

"This in no small way contributed to the great success of the project," Mark continues. "It is rare to find a company that volunteers to put this much effort into studying your environment, and partnering with you, to ensure an appropriate solution from your perspective. Datacentrix won the contract based on our technical evaluation of its bid, and solid feedback from other Datacentrix reference sites. It turned out to be the correct selection of vendor."

SAPREF has praised the efficiency of the implementation, and the end result. "This 'first time right' implementation was as a result of particularly good teamwork and excellent technical development skills on the Datacentrix side. Attention to detail, good communication and customer satisfaction remained key focuses throughout the project, ensuring that the new application was very well received and readily embraced by around 100 users."

## Sponsored article

# Datacentrix: first Riverbed diamond partner in Africa

**Datacentrix** has been named Africa's first "Diamond" level partner by application performance company, Riverbed Technology, in recognition of its outstanding track record of sales success and its technical and support commitment to Riverbed solutions.

Last year, Datacentrix had been named as the first Riverbed Accredited Support Partner (RASP) in Africa, joining the ranks of a select, invitee-only programme that allows the organisation to provide high-value support services to local Riverbed customers, helping them to fully leverage the value of their technology investments.

More than 22,000 organisations worldwide depend on Riverbed to understand, optimise and consolidate their IT infrastructure, through solutions that overcome performance issues caused by distance, distributed computing, and ever increasing amounts of data. As IT organisations embark on strategic initiatives to virtualise, consolidate and migrate workloads into cloud environments, users are moved farther from their data. Slow applications and file transfers, and inefficient websites can negatively impact the performance and success of these initiatives.

Riverbed transforms IT performance by providing solutions spanning WAN optimisation, storage delivery, performance management, application delivery controllers, web content optimisation (WCO), and cloud data protection. By providing the broadest portfolio of performance solutions that deliver anywhere, any-application optimisation, Riverbed enables organisations to increase productivity and efficiency, while enhancing business resilience and controlling costs.

To enable its reseller partners to act as an extension of the Riverbed support organisation, Riverbed introduced RASP, a specialisation programme that allows eligible partners to provide Level 1 and Level 2 support services to their customers. The RASP programme is only available to partners that demonstrate a successful track record selling Riverbed solutions and are able and willing to

provide a high standard of 24x7 Level 1 and Level 2 operational support services.

"The partner network programme is structured so that everyone wins – our partners, customers and Riverbed. Through the RASP specialisation programme, not only do our partners benefit from being positioned to increase their bottom line, but our customers are working with the industry's most qualified Riverbed partners to support their IT infrastructure," says Christo Briedenhann, regional sales manager: Africa at Riverbed.

"The Riverbed partner programme is designed to reward and support resellers who have the skills and ambition to achieve success with our leading edge solutions. As a certified RASP Diamond level partner, Datacentrix is able to offer the highest levels of customer support, ensuring that any Riverbed investment is backed by world class service.

The requirements to become a Diamond level partner are challenging and this reflects the serious investment Datacentrix has made to being a leader in the Riverbed channel. With the appointment of Datacentrix as Diamond level partner, we are recognising the company's commitment to consistently succeed in delivering innovative Riverbed solutions for their customers."

"We are delighted to be recognised as the first Diamond partner in Africa by an organisation that itself has been globally recognised for excellence in service experience and operations," says Tony de Sousa, Datacentrix' enterprise business unit manager. "This recognition underpins our aspirations within the service delivery arena and reinforces our commitment to Riverbed.

It also highlights the strength of the partnership that Datacentrix has maintained with Riverbed over the past eight years and its dedicated focus on the areas of WAN optimisation, network performance management and cloud storage solutions, offering customers the assurance that we are more than capable of supporting these solutions."



**Christo Briedenhann, regional sales manager: Africa at Riverbed**



Riverbed enables organisations to increase **productivity and efficiency**, while enhancing business resilience and controlling costs.





# Datacentrix leverages Cisco to enable its service-based strategy

There's been a notable shift in the ICT market in recent times, with services increasingly coming to the fore. Where in the past organisations could get by merely on supplying products – in effect box-dropping – today, it takes much more to succeed, says Chris Pretorius, Cisco business unit manager at Datacentrix.

He illustrates his point by indicating how Datacentrix has transformed, moving away from its product-based beginnings and becoming a value-driven, services-based entity. "In 2008, some 81% of our revenue was based on products. By 2012, it was a 50/50 split between products and services, and today, only 37% of our revenue stems from the former, with the remaining two thirds contributed by our managed services and business solutions," he says.

"Of course, this growth in managed services and business solutions has had to be driven by investment in the right technologies, which is where Cisco comes into the picture. By investing in the development of a Cisco business unit and our rapid ascent as a Gold Partner, we believe we've positioned Datacentrix perfectly to continue building its reputation as a services organisation."

Chris maintains that Cisco is a genuine enabler for such a strategy. "In order to

effectively provide services to customers, best-of-breed technology is required. With a Cisco foundation, Datacentrix is then able to differentiate itself from its competitors through its skills, experience, and reputation in the market.

"Going hand-in-hand with our skills and experience is our other major differentiator, which is our customer intimacy. We focus on building solid, long-term relationships with our customers because we understand that ultimately, people buy from other people."

Chris points out that while this may not be a unique strategy in the industry, it's definitely something that Datacentrix is doing really well, evident in the company's financial results. Moreover, he adds, the more profitable the business is, the more money it can invest in new technology skills and grow its services organisation.

"And, of course, the bigger our services business, the better the economies of scale we can offer to customers. Offering customers value for money is crucial, meaning that we can provide them with skills and experience at a better price, ultimately, than if they did it for themselves."



Chris Pretorius, Cisco business unit manager at Datacentrix

"Offering customers value for money is crucial, meaning that we can provide them with **skills and experience** at a better price, than if they did it for themselves."

"In fact, we are so confident about our service that we challenge any customer to give us an opportunity to do a network optimisation assessment and see what savings we can deliver."

Recent Cisco services wins include Bankserv, JSE Limited and African Bank, amongst others, with a number of new contracts imminent.

Looking ahead, says Chris, Datacentrix is focused on aligning itself more closely with Cisco's strategy, as well as keeping a close eye on customer trends and investing in the right skills at the right time to meet future customer demands.

## Cisco Smart Care Service helps Datacentrix add more value and drive growth and performance



# Meadow Feeds beefs up business intelligence infrastructure

Market leader within the southern African animal feed industry, Meadow Feeds has consolidated and optimised its entire business intelligence environment, with the assistance of Datacentrix.

According to Meadow Feeds management information systems executive, Reinald Bormann, the company's updated business intelligence solution has allowed it to consolidate databases, work faster and more efficiently, and access more valuable information.

"Not only have we been able to combine seven databases into one, we are also able to quickly and easily access sales and financial data, as well as production information on a daily basis – right down to ingredient level," he explains. "Our current business intelligence infrastructure incorporates five business information areas at present, with plans in place to expand this further in the future."

Reinald explains that, using its new analytical front end tool, Meadow Feeds has not only doubled its user base and improved transparency, but also saved on administration time, as the thin client setup enables centralised management and improved collaboration.

"Moreover, the upgraded solution has enabled us to fine-tune our annual budgeting and forecasting, allowing us to drive the business to greater efficiencies. In

fact, information that would normally take a financial person days to consolidate – as budgeting is usually done outside of the ERP system – can be completed within a very short time frame now.

"We truly are using the features of this solution to the fullest, having loaded our strategic plans onto the system, meaning that four years' worth of data is online at any time." He believes however, that the greatest benefit delivered by the new infrastructure is that the organisation can derive more value from its Microsoft SQL technology investment.

"As a Datacentrix customer since 2004, Meadow Feeds has enjoyed a close working relationship with the organisation, one that allows us to constantly improve our business intelligence solution, based on our specific and growing needs," Reinald adds.

According to Datacentrix business intelligence and analytics business unit manager, Charl Joubert, Meadow Feeds will be further extending its business intelligence infrastructure with the addition of a simulation tool to improve financial planning in terms of forecasting and budgeting.

"The new tool will allow Meadow Feeds to simulate business scenarios and immediately see the financial impact on the business," he explains.



Reinald Bormann, management information systems executive at Meadow Feeds

"Not only have we been able to combine seven databases into one, we are also able to **quickly and easily** access sales and financial data, as well as production information on a daily basis."

## Datacentrix' unified communication

Unified communication (UC) isn't as much a solution set as it is a selection of related technologies that, when working together, provide a superior communication and collaboration experience to companies and individuals. Enabled by the convergence of voice, data, mobility and video communication, UC solutions deliver enhanced communication and collaboration inside and outside an organisation.

Datacentrix' UC team prides itself on its consultancy skills in this space, and its ability to maximise its customers' use of their current infrastructures, using what is already there and deploying it optimally to enable UC. The ideal for most customers is to have one network carrying all voice, video and data traffic, and Datacentrix helps organisations achieve that.

- ➔ **Connect** co-workers, partners, vendors, and customers
- ➔ **Facilitate** dynamic interaction
- ➔ **Easily access** and share video on the desktop, on the road, and on-demand
- ➔ **Extend** the corporate network so mobile workers can be productive anywhere
- ➔ **Innovate** across the value chain by integrating collaboration and communications into applications and business processes



# Datacentrix goes platinum, achieving highest HP partnership level

Datacentrix has been named as an HP Platinum Partner, one of only five in South Africa, highlighting the company's ability to deliver smart and flexible HP strategies that will help customers well into the future.

Says David McMurdo, indirect sales country manager at HP South Africa: "From the beginning, HP has been a company driven by partnerships. Our founders understood the immense value of people working together towards a common goal, as well as the impact of collaboration on the world around us."

"It's this belief in teamwork that has inspired us to continually improve and bring innovation to the industry's longest running channel programme. For over 30 years, we have strived to deliver the solutions, support, motivation and rewards that enable our partners to inspire the world."

McMurdo explains that, with the evolution of the HP PartnerOne programme, several key changes have been made for HP's 2014 financial year, including improved partner compensation, the simplification of the certification process, and improved predictability around partners' expectations of the programme.

"The most important area of change was the rebranding of the PartnerOne Specializations. These partner levels have been renamed to Business, Silver, Gold and

Platinum, making it easy for customers to understand a partner's capabilities and offerings. Through this process Datacentrix has attained the top partner level and is now an HP Platinum Partner."

McMurdo believes that the relationship forged between Datacentrix and HP is an integral local partnership. "The results and benefits of the collaboration between Datacentrix and HP can be seen clearly in the number of satisfied customers serviced by the two organisations."

As a Platinum Partner, Datacentrix has demonstrated that it has met all the highest criteria required by the HP PartnerOne programme, attaining customer loyalty by offering the broadest portfolio of end-to-end HP solutions. This includes building complex server, storage, networking, virtualisation and application infrastructures, all the way up to the cloud.

"As a Platinum Partner, our HP-focused approach and ongoing investment in the growth of our skills base across the entire HP portfolio is paying off," says Tony de Sousa, Datacentrix enterprise business unit manager. "Our new partner status is proof of Datacentrix' mature and proven business relationship with HP as well as our ability to provide the highest level of consulting expertise across multiple HP solutions."

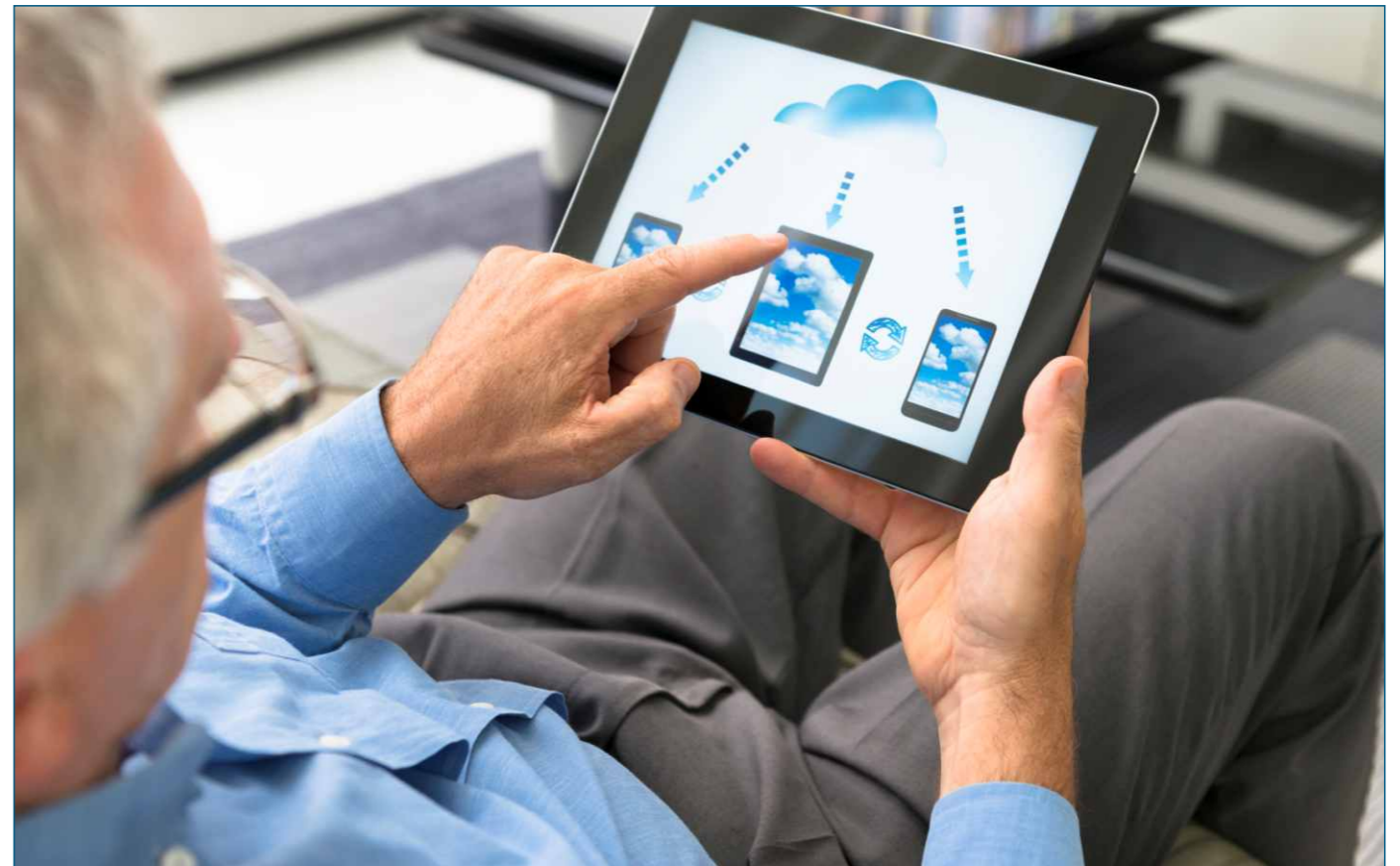


David McMurdo, indirect sales country manager for South Africa at HP and Tony De Sousa, Datacentrix enterprise and networking business unit manager

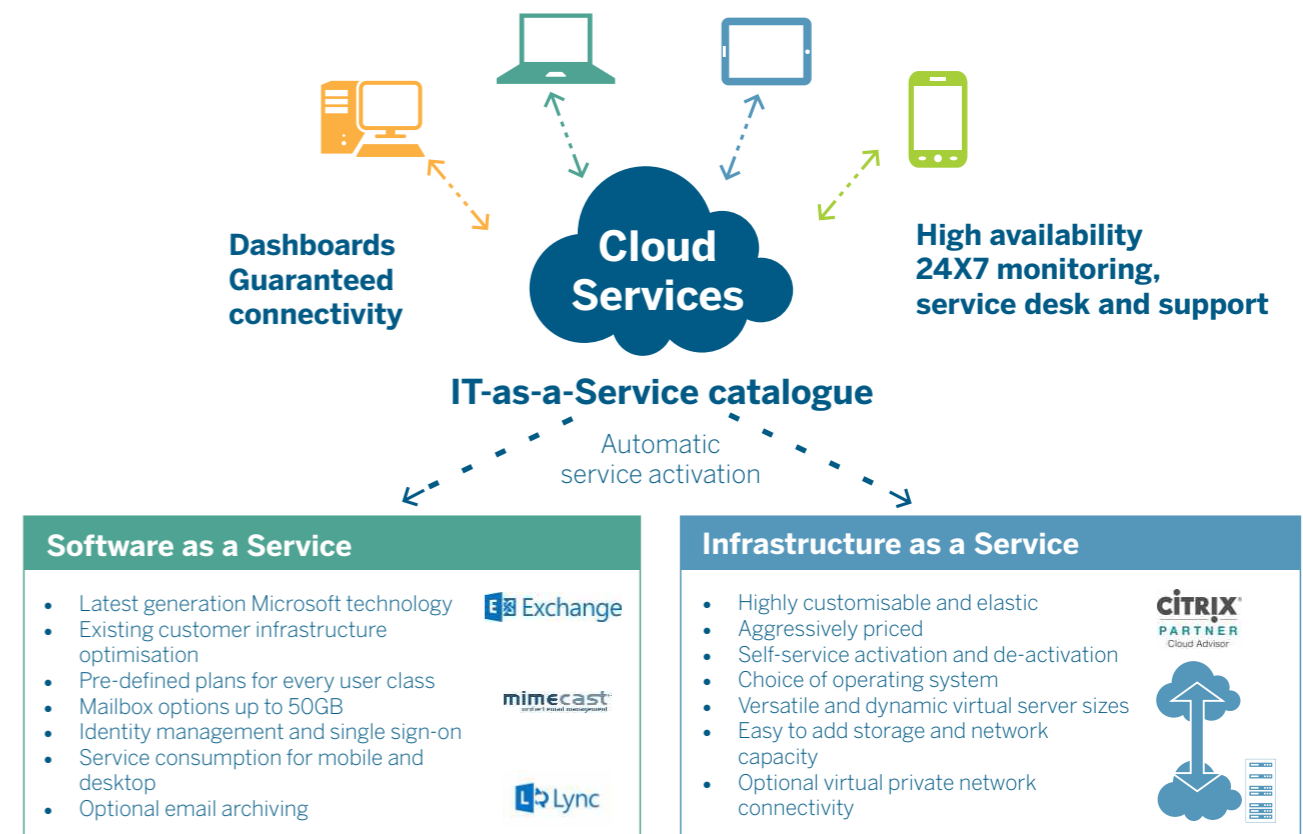
"As a Platinum Partner, our HP-focused approach and ongoing investment in the growth of our skills base across the entire HP portfolio is paying off."

## Generating more value for our customers, all of the time

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## Web experience management: meeting the needs of customers online

The building and maintaining of a first-class website has, in more recent years, become a top priority for many organisations. Whereas previously website visitors would engage when they were ready, today's users expect a far higher level of engagement. This in turn has led to a more significant exchange between the user, the brand and the website.

"Customers are expecting to access your web content seamlessly, not only in a highly tailored and contextualised experience, but also across a myriad of channels and devices," explains Rudie Bronkhorst, account manager at Datacentrix. "A scalable, interactive website that can handle traffic and day-to-day transactions provides an opportunity to engage customers with targeted interfaces and establish meaningful connections."

"As web strategies evolve though, companies need to ensure that their content management systems keep up," he

continues. "This means that tools able to meet the demands of the rapidly changing web experience are required, and these solutions must not only provide a number of features as well as support the complexity of robust websites, but also be easy to use and allow for rapid content creation, management and publishing."

According to Rudie, organisations that are seeking new, agile solutions to help them differentiate their market presence by personalising and improving the overall customer experience on their websites, should be looking towards a web experience management tool to meet these specific needs.

"This type of tool will allow a company to strengthen positive relationships with customers before, during and after the interaction, through omni-channel touch points, multiple languages and across an array of devices."



Rudie Bronkhorst, account manager at Datacentrix

By approaching web experience management in this manner, businesses will experience a number of benefits, including improved customer experience, with more meaningful dialogue, the alignment of IT and business digital strategies, processes and technologies, and the optimisation of marketing effectiveness. In addition, this approach allows for maximum customer retention, broadened brand awareness and provides increased revenue potential.

"Not only this, but web experience management can also assist companies in search engine optimisation by providing features such as metadata management, search, analytics and recommendations. Furthermore, this type of tool can help ensure that customers are viewing a website the way it is meant to be seen – regardless of the device or platform from which request is made," says Rudie.

"At the same time, the key is to invest in a web experience management solution that is simple to use, where functions including the creation of a campaign microsite or updating content on the website will not require specialised skills or much involvement from the IT team," he concludes.



### A solution of this type, like OpenText's Web Experience Management (WEM), can combine the following:

- A large set of features for creating engaging online experiences. This would include structured and rich media content, as well as both user-generated and business content;
- An out-of-the-box approach to web content lifecycle management, all managed from a best-of-breed, web-based application;
- A native dynamic delivery model, for highly personalised experiences with targeted content that is always up to date;
- A flexible approach to a content repository that enables organisations to leverage existing content and data by putting it under management;
- A robust set of content staging mechanisms to deliver the content to various applications and web initiatives; and
- A standards-based J2E E architecture to fit in the most demanding IT organisation requirements.

## Datacentrix racks up outsourcing renewal deals

Datacentrix has reinforced the success of its value-driven, services-led approach, renewing nine outsourcing contracts country-wide over the past six months, the latest of which include mining giant, Exxaro and financial services company, PPS.

Says Abrie Peens, managing director: outsourcing and managed services at Datacentrix: "The recent outsourcing project renewals have made a serious impact in terms of the growing managed services business within Datacentrix, which contributed the largest portion of group profit before tax (PBT) over the company's interim results period last year, at 45%. This is particularly significant in a difficult market, and fortifies our position as one of the leading ICT players in this space."

Peens maintains that Datacentrix' focus on value, innovation and customer-centricity has played a strong part in its partnerships with outsourcing customers. "In today's competitive market, service providers cannot expect renewed contracts if service levels do not exceed their contracted service level agreements (SLAs). What is needed is a partner that will deliver

consistent, exceptional service, moving talent to align with and complement customers' strategic objectives.

"This predictability, underpinned by a culture of ownership in the resolution of issues, leads to a positive user experience and is a crucial building block in developing trust relationships with service customers," he adds.

Exxaro has enjoyed a ten-year partnership with Datacentrix; one that has seen the mining company join forces with its ICT partner on many fronts, including the outsourcing of its enterprise services management, the services around its sites, network, servers and storage areas, information security upgrades and bandwidth optimisation to its operations integration management, and has now been extended for another term.

"From an outsourcing perspective, Exxaro expects Datacentrix to engage on multiple levels in support of its strategic business drivers and to ensure predictable service delivery outcomes. We also manage some of Exxaro's third

Datacentrix' focus on value, innovation and customer-centricity has played a strong part in its partnerships with outsourcing customers.

party service providers and are continually trying to unlock value, which could lead to cost reductions and avoidance across the board."

Furthermore, PPS, a Datacentrix outsourcing customer since 2010, has committed to another term for a managed service desk as well as the management of its desktop, LAN and voice technologies with the assistance of Datacentrix onsite engineers.

## Datacentrix exhibits at EMC Forum



**Pictured left:** Johann Coetzee and the Datacentrix team on the company's EMC Forum 2013 stand.

Held in Midrand, Johannesburg, the recent event was a one-day technology conference aimed to lead business and IT transformation, focusing on business trends, cloud directions, real-world use cases and interactive discussions.

Datacentrix was a silver sponsor at the conference.

# SAS Institute appoints Datacentrix as new local partner

**Business** analytics software and service organisation, SAS Institute, has selected Datacentrix as a software reseller and professional services partner for its Visual Analytics solution.

According to Derek Dreyer, partner development executive at SAS Institute South Africa, the appointment was made based on Datacentrix' focused service and solutions-oriented approach and strong commercial customer base.

"SAS Institute has been on an amplified growth strategy for the past 18 months and has found that one of the best methods of rapid advancement is through partnering with mutually aligned companies.

While traditionally as an organisation we worked directly with end user companies, we have found that this new strategy – with its focus on improving efficiencies and

setting good growth targets – aligns itself better to a partnership model, operating through sales and services-driven partners like Datacentrix."

Derek maintains that Datacentrix' service and solutions-oriented approach was a good match for SAS. "We needed a partner that was focused on the provision of integrated solutions rather than 'product', and that also had the expertise necessary to deliver the highest level of services.

Furthermore, SAS is planning to aggressively penetrate the local SMME market, a space in which Datacentrix has a strong foothold."

Dayalan Naidoo, BI/analytics business development manager at Datacentrix, explains that the organisation was looking for a business intelligence and

analytics solution that would allow it to further develop this side of its business.

"Through Datacentrix' partnership with SAS Institute, we will now be able to make available a solution that not only harnesses the renowned SAS analytics abilities, but is also easy to use, visually appealing, and can be fully deployed in less than four weeks. This means that users of all skill levels can gain insight from any size of data."

Dayalan explains that, in addition, this solution provides immediate benefit realisation and is cost effective with a flexible pricing model. "By joining forces with SAS, Datacentrix can provide a one-stop service for customers, selling a fully packaged, shrink-wrapped business intelligence and analytics solution that incorporates hardware, software and services," he says.

## Always-on service desk

The Datacentrix Service Desk is a hub that provides a single point of contact for its customers' IT departments and is an integral and core component of IT business activities. The Service Desk offers a 24x7x365 professional managed services solution for both enterprise-level and small to medium enterprises (SMEs). The always-available Service Desk provides Datacentrix' customers with the ability to rapidly report any IT problems and solve ongoing issues.



**+75%**

**75% first call resolution** is routinely achieved at Datacentrix' Service Desk.

**1-click**

**1-click access** to CIO-level reporting and dashboards is provided as standard. Multiple layers and options of graphically presented service desk statistics are available at your fingertips.

**30 secs**

**30 seconds** is the maximum time that any of your staff will ever have to wait before their call is taken. Datacentrix continually exceeds 99% SLA in call answering.

**Single service**

**Single service aggregation** is an advanced service offered to all service desk customers, allowing a single point of contact for all of your customers and your support vendors.

**>90%**

**More than 90%** of our Service Desk personnel are MCSE certified. We use our best technical personnel at the front line giving you expert support at the point of contact.

# Symantec evolves product offering for cloud backup

**Symantec Corp.** has officially launched version 7.6 of NetBackup in South Africa, the only backup product designed to meet enterprise-level scale needs, accommodating hundreds of thousands of virtual machines and petabytes of data, while giving customers virtual machine recovery that is 400 times faster than a standard restore.

According to Nick Christodoulou, Symantec country manager for South Africa, this latest version provides new functionality to protect the largest scale VMware-based environments, as enterprises move to a software-defined datacentre architecture.

"This means that local IT companies can now simplify and automate the protection of massive and complex physical, virtual and cloud environments - the building blocks of the modern datacentre," he explains.

According to Symantec's 2012 "State of Information Report", data is growing at a yearly rate of between 60 and 70%.

"Add to this the fact that many businesses are modernising and upgrading their datacentres in response to the need for more agile, scalable and heterogeneous computing, plus the explosion of virtualisation and tight budgets, and we're seeing that CIOs are being forced to face the fact that traditional protection models are simply inadequate.

NetBackup accommodates hundreds of thousands of virtual machines and petabytes of data, while giving customers virtual machine recovery that is **400 times faster** than a standard restore.

"It has become increasingly evident across the globe that modern enterprise solutions must provide faster, automated application protection, give insight into large, complicated virtual environments, and deliver the foundation for partners and service providers to deliver backup-as-a-service," Nick continues.

"Symantec's NetBackup 7.6 ensures that organisations can meet their needs for a modern software-defined and fully protected datacentre."



### Highlights of version 7.6 include the following:

- 400x faster recovery of VMware vSphere virtual machines by booting directly from backup storage (compared to the hours or even days required for a traditional restore). NetBackup Instant Recovery for VMware environments allows customers to increase productivity and performance by powering on virtual machines from within NetBackup, making them 100% available in vSphere during the restore.
- NetBackup Accelerator for VMware eliminates the need for full backups by leveraging integration with VMware Changed Block Tracking. The result is a complete, automated backup that is 35 times faster than traditional approaches, allowing customers to increase performance without compromising budget.
- Customers can protect 300 virtual machines in 300 seconds, proactively backing up and recovering data with NetBackup Replication Director for VMware by leveraging NetApp array-based snapshots to protect virtual environments without giving up recoverability.
- Additional features include multi-tenant hosting options for channel partners and managed service providers to improve scalability; and automated disaster recovery from a physical to a cloud platform to ensure data is always protected and available.





# The business value of virtual desktop infrastructure (VDI)

By Jacques Viljoen, solutions architect at Datacentrix

**Today's** Virtual Desktop Infrastructure (VDI) or desktop virtualisation as it is also known, offers the type of technology that can provide real business benefits to South African organisations. But what is the best approach for companies wanting to derive this value?

## VDI explained

Defined by Wikipedia as: "software technology that separates the desktop environment and associated application software from the physical client device that is used to access it", there are two main types of desktop that can be deployed through VDI – personal and shared.

With personal VDI, each user has their own desktop image in a one-to-one ratio. This is ideal for those wanting to personalise their desktops, as settings are saved in the individual image. When it comes to shared VDI, users share the same image in a many-to-one ratio. This means that any changes made to the desktop will be discarded as no changes are saved to the image.

There is no single desktop virtualisation type that fits every environment, and organisations can make use of a combination of personal, shared and local desktops to address users' desktop needs. Application virtualisation is then used to complement VDI deployments, by delivering applications on demand, from a central infrastructure. This is also used to deliver applications to local desktops.

## Anytime, anyplace, any device

VDI offers users the flexibility to connect to their specific working environment remotely at any time, from any place and from any device, thereby delivering enhanced productivity to the organisation. Implementing a Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) strategy gives employees the flexibility to choose the device they want to use, as the working environment is device independent.

This further enables users to access the same working environment from their desktop in the office, laptop at home, or even a mobile device while travelling.

**Good to know:** Remote users will require a reliable internet connection capable of supporting high download speeds to ensure

a workable solution. User data is stored in the datacentre and can be backed up to ensure compliance and adhere to corporate governance.

## Elasticity

When it comes to VDI, organisations have the ability to deploy a corporate desktop to multiple users simultaneously and quickly. In addition to this, the IT department can make system and application changes much faster than with traditional desktops. This not only enables the accelerated deployment of new desktops and applications, but also gives IT the ability to roll back any undesired changes quickly and easily. Organisations that have already invested in server virtualisation strategies can make use of the security and disaster processes to support VDI deployments.

**Good to know:** Understanding the user and application environment is key to an effective desktop image management strategy. It is critical to run VDI deployments on reliable infrastructure, as multiple users will be affected if the VDI environment is not available.

## Going green

Thin client technology consumes only one tenth of the power drawn by traditional desktops, something that is critical in today's heightened environmental and cost awareness, and radiates far less heat due to less moving parts. This especially enables environments with a large grouping of users, like call centres for example, to save on electricity and cooling costs. Furthermore, fewer devices need to be recycled, and VDI also empowers users to work from home securely, thereby eliminating the need to commute to a workplace.

**Good to know:** Going green is normally more focused on saving costs than preserving the environment, but VDI presents the opportunity for both.



Organisations that have already invested in server virtualisation strategies can make use of security and disaster processes to support VDI deployments.



## Final points

The benefits that can be gained through VDI are far reaching, but it is important to have a solid business case in place before implementing this technology, as benefits might not have the same weighting for every environment. Understanding the users' working environment and applications is key, but it is also critical to comprehend the infrastructure and IT services that will be required to support a VDI deployment. This is especially significant in light of the fact that many VDI implementations fail due to lack of understanding of the current and required environments.

# Datacentrix Western Cape: applying customer centricity for a service to be reckoned with!

**Just** over a decade ago, the senior management team of Datacentrix created a managed services division to support businesses in the Western Cape. Today, this division is a firmly established managed and selective outsourced services partner for the province's private and public sector.

It currently boasts an enviable portfolio of customers, from small to large organisations, all aiming to optimise the value achieved through Datacentrix' managed services portfolio, while realising business and ICT goals with their partner of choice.

To achieve these objectives, the Datacentrix Managed Services division employs people with the right aptitude and invests in them by way of customer centricity programmes, ensuring that they adopt customer centric behaviour in all they do.

When asking Celma Marcus, head of managed services for the Western Cape, what she believes is the success of the division's consistent growth and high customer satisfaction levels, she answers without hesitation: "We don't only speak,

## Celma Marcus, head of managed services for the Western Cape.



"We invest in people by way of customer centricity programmes, ensuring that they adopt customer centric behaviour."

but live customer centricity. Our customers are all treated as people and not accounts.

We work hand-in-hand with these companies as true business partners and build our relationships by maintaining the view that our offering must benefit the customer and enhance their service experiences. For us, the relationship with the customer is as important as the service being delivered.

"Our approach is also holistic and does not focus on any single component in isolation. We do not see ITIL, COBIT and other best practices as 'differentiators'; rather we maintain that these are the basics with which a managed services offering should comply.

"By following best practice processes, ensuring proper governance, utilising effective tools to achieve smart service delivery and management, and equipping and maintaining enthusiastic, passionate people – our service level achievements for all our customers are above the industry norm."

Celma adds that the Managed Services division also believes in appropriate pricing. "Customers want to be reassured that they will get quality of service at a market related price," she explains. "We therefore continuously benchmark and ensure that we price our contracts fairly. This fair market value has led to numerous contract renewals, indicating the level of trust and confidence that organisations have in the division."

# Security operations centre (SOC)

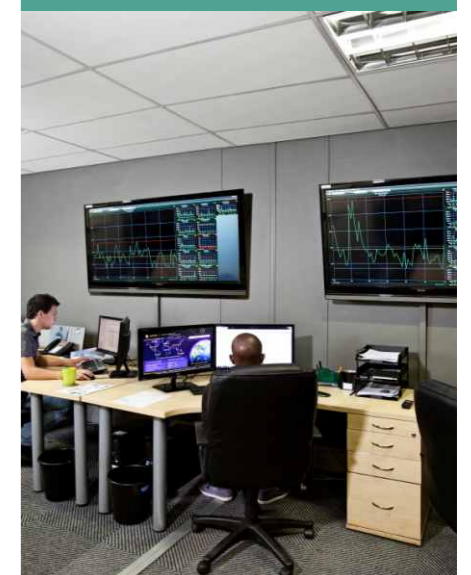
Datacentrix uses an industry-leading Security Operations Centre (SOC) to monitor and defend customer ICT environments in real time against any potential security threats. The SOC is the first of its kind in the Europe, Middle East, Africa (EMEA) region.

The SOC technology is based on a state-of-the-art Security Information and Event Management (SIEM) system that offers a powerful analytical tool, which helps to simplify compliance, enhance security and risk mitigation.

## The SOC:

- ▶ Provides situational awareness in real time
- ▶ Operates on a 24x7x365 basis
- ▶ Pulls information from a variety of devices (firewalls, anti-virus, intrusion detection systems, etc.), then normalises and correlates the information
- ▶ Provides real-time (or near real-time) reporting, enabling timeous response

Building block services are used to develop security solutions that meet our customers' unique requirements. Datacentrix uses its consultancy expertise to ensure that every solution is aligned with the strategic and operational business requirements of its customers.





Corporate social investment

## Datacentrix: helping those with disabilities to live a life of freedom and equality

Last year, Datacentrix afforded more than 100 learners from Gauteng, the Western Cape and KwaZulu-Natal a year of practical and theoretical training, with the aim of providing previously disadvantaged students a solid IT qualification and experience within the marketplace. Of the 100 learners that were enrolled in the previous financial year, 34 were offered employment with Datacentrix, some as full time employees and others on a contract basis.

The subsequent intake included a class of 15 learners living with various types of disabilities.

The organisation targeted disabled school leavers, and learners that have undergone basic IT training, providing them with the skills and practical experience to improve their opportunities for entering the labour market. At the same time, the company is proud to be part of the solution to address the IT skills shortage in South Africa and to partner with government to help alleviate poverty by creating employment.

The learnership is moderated and approved by the MICT SETA and is also registered with the South African Qualifications Authority. During the 12-month training period, all learners receive theoretical training from TorqueIT, an MICT SETA accredited training provider. Learners are given the opportunity to shadow subject matter experts within Datacentrix for "on the job" training.

By the end of the 12 months, those passing the final exam will hold a Microsoft Certified IT Professional (MCITP) qualification that certifies that they are capable of deploying, building, designing, optimising and operating technologies, and that they can make the design and technology decisions necessary to ensure successful technology implementation projects.

Rejoice Mamphitha, Datacentrix' head of HR, explains: "This type of exposure is helping to bring more 'marketable' skills to the ICT sector. We want to help people with disabilities enhance their



Rejoice Mamphitha, head of HR at Datacentrix

employment opportunities, proving that they also have talents and, given a chance and reasonable accommodation, can perform duties like anyone else."

## Learnership programme comes to fruition



Wade Norris and Boitumelo Mohosana, Datacentrix learnership programme graduates

Of the 34 successful Datacentrix learnership programme graduates of 2012 that were employed by the organisation, Wade Norris and Boitumelo Mohosana, in particular, have both excelled in their positions as junior engineers within the enterprise business unit.

The integrated ICT solutions and services provider has provided more than 100 learners from Gauteng, the Western Cape and KwaZulu-Natal with a year of both practical and theoretical training, in a bid to provide previously disadvantaged students with a solid IT qualification as well as experience within the marketplace. The company is specifically targeting school leavers and learners that have undergone basic IT training, to help improve the quality of life of the local workforce, and, at the same time, reduce the IT skills shortage in South Africa.

"Opportunities for training, skills gain and practical experience are hard to come by within the current economic climate," says Rejoice Mamphitha, head of HR at Datacentrix. "However, Datacentrix sees this step as a necessary one to support and help improve its surrounding community.

"It is so rewarding to be able to show success stories and have learners of Boitumelo and Wade's calibre as part of our learnership programme. To be able to come through a year's training and make good on the promise shown sets a good example, not just for other learners within Datacentrix, but to all of South Africa's youth."



## Credible, **systems integration** company



Broad, mature portfolio

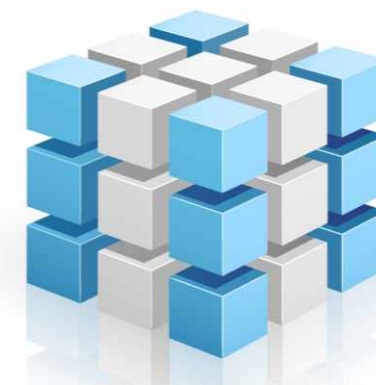


Proven execution capability



National points of presence

Systems Integrator



Innovative solutions

Technology

Partnerships



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