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Anything is Possible

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First Issue 2023

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CEO message

The challenge of becoming truly data driven

Datacentrix advocates a data-first strategy, simply because data is core to every single business. Besides the growth of structured data, unstructured data (effectively email, social media platforms, and data from outside of the organisation) is also growing exponentially. This unstructured data is becoming key to organisations in terms of driving customer analytics, customer behaviour, business growth as well as for developing a better understanding of target markets. It is critical that businesses understand, interpret and effectively apply their data to gain competitive advantage. However, few companies have a clear strategy for overcoming the challenges of becoming truly data driven.

The pandemic expedited cloud adoption globally, resulting in many companies migrating systems into the cloud; but countless of these organisations are reassessing their strategies. The challenges around cloud adoption are multi-faceted, including understanding the business objective of migrating data into the cloud; understanding which applications are designed to function more effectively off a cloud platform; and understanding the costs and potential benefits of running certain applications from the cloud.

Deliberate, data-first strategy

Datacentrix assists businesses with analysing their information and devising a deliberate strategy in terms of cloud migration. We promote a data-first, instead of a cloud-first approach, as some workloads simply function more effectively in the cloud than others. Certain information is needed on the edge of computing, while other company information is needed from a centralised repository. There is simply no one-size-fits-all strategy; instead, it depends on the organisation and their objectives.

Inevitably, a company's strategy will also evolve as the technologies change. It is critical for organisations to understand that technology is core to every single business, regardless of sector as it provides competitive advantage, drives efficiencies and facilitates growth. Many organisations have gone out of business because they were blindsided by new technology players coming to the fore and most organisations are starting to realise the importance of staying ahead of the technology curve. Investing in technology is investing in a desired outcome.

The cost factor in cloud adoption

Predominantly the cost implications of cloud adoption have forced companies to reassess their cloud strategy. The hype around adopting a cloud-first strategy meant that applications were moved to the cloud, only for the business to find out that they function better on-premises, or in some cases, off a hybrid model.

The challenge relating to cost should be seen in context with what the company is trying to achieve. There is no doubt that a digitalisation or a hybrid cloud strategy is core to most businesses, with digitalisation fast becoming a mandatory strategy to stay in business. The cost factor should be seen in this context – to avoid going out of business.

The time factor in cloud adoption

Digitalisation, as we know, is a journey that can take anything from five to seven years depending on the size of the organisation, the number of users, growth rate, types of applications, workloads and so forth. In many instances there are applications that you can move to the cloud quite quickly, such as Microsoft 365, which is a well-scripted implementation. However, when it comes to core applications, predicting timeframes becomes more difficult. Assessments need to take place to understand the landscape – what applications are being used, where information is being consumed, who is consuming the information, how often the information is being accessed and for what purpose, which impact the time required.

Opportunity costs

Cloud adoption is not just a cost effect and a timing factor. It's about understanding your business and what you want to achieve and then using the available technology resources to enable that for your business.

Datacentrix is uniquely positioned in the market to support the journey to digitalisation:
- We assist our clients in navigating their business challenges, not just their IT challenges, it's really about the business challenges and leveraging technology to achieve their business outcomes;
- We invest in technical capability so that we're not reliant on third parties to drive our business; and
- We have some of the best resources in the market across the core disciplines.

Datacentrix subscribes to a "do it right the first time" mindset. We believe in our capabilities and support our clients in constructing a positive future using technology to impact their confidence in achieving their business objectives. At a time where nothing is certain, with Datacentrix, anything is possible.

Ahmed Mahomed
CEO

CUT takes important digital
transformation step with Datacentrix

The Central University of Technology (CUT), a leading higher education institution based in South Africa's Free State province, has successfully rolled out phase one of its three-year network and Wi-Fi infrastructure upgrade, an important step in the university's digital transformation journey. The project is being completed in partnership with Datacentrix.

Says Busi Matube, CUT's ICT Director and Chief Digital Officer: "The driving force behind this infrastructure upgrade is our digital transformation strategy, with the aim of improving our connectivity efficiencies and speed, and our use of 4IR technologies. This will allow us to better leverage the Internet of Things (IoT) for other projects we have in place, such as smart buildings, smart bins, a virtual reality environment for our engineering students, and more, located in different areas."

Prior to this implementation, she explains, CUT's infrastructure was failing to meet the needs of both students and staff, with connectivity issues becoming a sore point for

For this project, Datacentrix has delivered far beyond the set-up of our equipment, and has provided excellent after-sales support to CUT's small IT team, augmenting the skills we have available internally. Our Datacentrix contacts are always available and the experience with them has been excellent.

Busi Matube, Director: ICT and Chief Digital Officer at Central University of Technology, Free State; Henry Denner, Account Manager: Commercial at Datacentrix and Lucky Matjelo, Deputy Director: ICT Infrastructure Services at CUT

the university. In fact, according to Lucky Matjelo, Deputy Director: ICT Infrastructure Services at CUT, the university's Wi-Fi, which was set up in 2009 as its secondary mode of connectivity after the LAN, had actually become the primary connection point for these users.

"Over this time, technology has changed and advanced, and the existing solution, which was not scaled for high volume connectivity, was under increasing pressure," he comments.

"With around 22,000 staff and students on campus, each with a minimum of two devices apiece and expectations of being able to connect wirelessly around the campus, connection speed had increasingly become an issue for us, and end-of-life infrastructure needed to be replaced."

Challenges for CUT at the time included low throughput, resulting in poor connectivity; poor coverage (both inside and outside); and a lack of visibility on the network. This was particularly challenging in the event of users reporting connectivity challenges, as the CUT team was unable to ascertain what was happening on the network at the time.

> There has also been greater visibility on the network, as well as more opportunity to engage with users to understand and solve challenges. Now, when a student or staff member logs a query, these can be tracked according to what the individual was doing on the network at the time, and where any problems lie.

"The COVID pandemic also played a role in these increasing needs, as the reliance on virtual meetings increased, further overloading the Wi-Fi infrastructure," Matube adds.

CUT thus decided that a network and Wi-Fi infrastructure upgrade was critical for the university to meet its digital transformation objective of building a smart campus, where both students and staff are always connected through improved network infrastructure and reliable, responsive connectivity.

The new wireless network infrastructure would ensure the connectedness of students and staff to digital resources both internal and external to the network, as well as providing the medium through which CUT would be able to relay data from smart buildings' backend systems for analysis and reporting, and to provide a connected access control system for a more secure campus.

CUT went out on tender through its partner PURCO to appoint a service provider that could implement a Wi-Fi solution that would be able to seamlessly integrate with the university's existing network infrastructure and improve its Wi-Fi services.

Says Matjelo: "An additional requirement was that the supplier should have done a similar project in the higher education sector."

"Datacentrix's strong footprint in education, which extends to the support of several local universities, and our excellent vendor certification levels, as Aruba Platinum Partner with ClearPass Policy Management competencies and the 2022 winner of the Aruba Partner Deal of the year award, were critical in our appointment to provide the procurement, configuration and installation of Wi-Fi equipment for a period of three years at both the Welkom and Bloemfontein campuses of the university, as were our Level One Broad-based Black Economic Empowerment certification and competitive pricing," adds Henry Denner, Datacentrix Account Manager: Commercial.

Benefits experienced by CUT from the rollout thus far include the improvement of Wi-Fi connectivity issues in high-traffic areas, like the library and labs, where previously students had experienced serious connectivity challenges due to low Wi-Fi signal. These signal drop-outs have stopped completely since Datacentrix began the project, reports Matube.

"There has also been greater visibility on the network, as well as more opportunity to engage with users to understand and solve challenges. Now, when a student or staff member logs a query, these can be tracked according to what the individual was doing on the network at the time, and where any problems lie.

"I have personally worked with Datacentrix for a number of years now, and there is no doubt as to the organisation's strong technical capabilities," Matube says. "For this project, Datacentrix has delivered far beyond the set-up of our equipment, and has provided excellent after-sales support to CUT's small IT team, augmenting the skills we have available internally. Our Datacentrix contacts are always available and the experience with them has been excellent."

"The trusted partnership built over recent years between Datacentrix and CUT has been integral to the success of this project. Magical outcomes like these require constructive input from the client, our technology partners, in this case Aruba Networks, as well as from the experts at Datacentrix. We look forward to many more successful engagements with CUT," concludes Francois Jacobs, Sales Manager: Commercial at Datacentrix.

Put your data first to build
business resilience in an era of digital disruption

Big businesses everywhere are pegging their future on a cloud-first strategy, with the sudden and intense requirement for remote working and virtual platforms having played a significant role in the urgent digital transformation journey. However, reconsidering the cloud-led approach and implementing a data-first strategy instead, could fundamentally change business outcomes.

Data everywhere
"Technology is a significant business driver, and data is the modern company's most valuable asset," notes Ahmed Mahomed, CEO at Datacentrix.

"The rapid acceleration of digital transformation enabled many organisations to pivot towards new business models to support remote work and improve customer, supplier and employee engagements, and in doing so maintaining and safeguarding data.

"There's no question that data is the modern-day company's most valuable asset; it is the very core of an organisation," he explains.

"Nevertheless, with the growth in remote working environments, data is no longer confined to the safety of on-premises infrastructure; it travels freely across many devices and between multiple locations, adding to the CIO's pain points.

"We're no longer talking just of the structured data from the days of business ledgers or, more recently, ERP systems. Currently, we see multiple data sources, as well as unstructured data in the form of mail repositories, end user and Internet of Things (IoT) devices, operational technology systems, and social media. All of these points are generating data in some form or another, such as information around customer and staff behaviour, vendor purchasing habits, stock levels, and more.

"However, for the data to deliver real business value, it needs to be mined, managed, and protected effectively."

Shifting focus from cloud-led to data-led strategy
It is important for CIOs to understand where their data lives, how it is secured, and how it is being delivered to where it is needed. According to Mahomed, it is here that organisations are finding that a purely cloud-led technology strategy is not delivering on these requirements.

A hybrid ICT model on the other hand, addresses the flexibility of cloud, while boosting a data-led approach, he

> The rapid acceleration of digital transformation enabled many organisations to pivot towards new business models to support remote work and improve customer, supplier and employee engagements, and in doing so maintaining and safeguarding data.

> A hybrid ICT model should incorporate the ideal hosting environment for data to reside within, whether on-premises, co-located or multi-cloud infrastructure. It will also consider the reliable transportation of and accessibility to data, as well as pervasive data security.
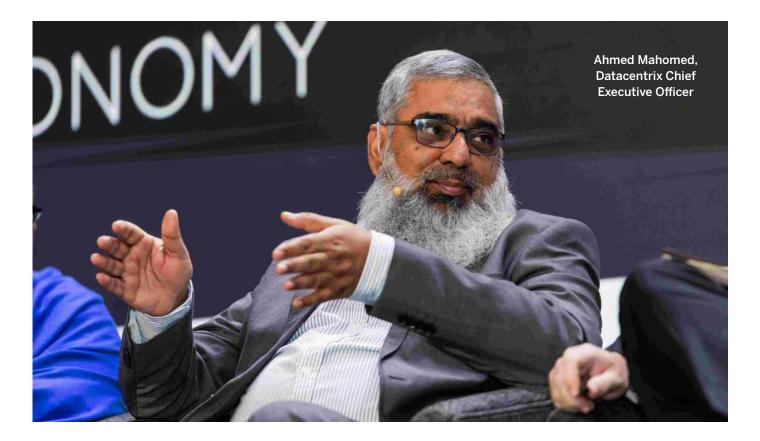
says. "CIOs are realising that the wave of pandemic-driven investments has not been entirely optimised, including investments in cloud capability.

"What the modern business needs is on-demand capacity that combines the flexibility and economics of the public cloud with the security and performance of on-premises IT," he continues. "A hybrid ICT model should incorporate the ideal hosting environment for data to reside within, whether on-premises, co-located or multi-cloud infrastructure. It will also consider the reliable transportation of and accessibility to data, as well as pervasive data security."

Yet, embarking on a digitalisation path is a multi-faceted process, Mahomed says. "Typically it's not the destination but rather the journey that is important. A data-first strategy provides a roadmap to digitalisation, and Datacentrix's advice is to start with the low-hanging fruit within the organisation, extracting intelligence from existing data sources, applying this and scaling up as you go along. This strategy accelerates an organisation's time to market.

"The world around us is not standing still. Companies are becoming smarter and slicker, mining their data and using it to gain competitive advantage. Ignore this at your peril: it's no longer a case of debating the cost of deploying a digital strategy, but rather looking at whether your business can afford not to commence its digital journey," Mahomed concludes.

"The time to close knowledge gaps within your organisation, and gain business value much faster, is right now."

Ahmed Mahomed,
Datacentrix Chief
Executive Officer

Datacentrix triumphs at annual
HPE awards, taking six titles

Datacentrix has received four prestigious company awards at the Hewlett Packard Enterprise (HPE) Partner Awards 2022, including Overall Partner of the Year, as well as two individual accolades.

Says Wimpie Jansen van Rensburg, Datacentrix Business Unit Manager: Enterprise Solutions: "Datacentrix is extremely proud to announce that, as a business, we received four awards at the HPE Partner Awards 2022, including: Overall Partner of the Year, Service Delivery Partner of the Year, As-a-Service Partner of the Year, and Aruba Partner Deal of the year.

"Our team was further acknowledged with two individual awards, namely Partner Services Sales Ambassador of the Year and Partner Sales Ambassador of the Year," he continues.

"Datacentrix has enjoyed a long and successful history with HPE and Aruba, marked by our extensive experience and skills in these products and solutions. In addition, we hold the highest level of accreditation as a partner. This includes recognition as a Platinum HPE Partner Ready Solution Provider with competencies in HPE GreenLake Specialisations and Gold HPE Pointnext Services; a Silver HPE Partner Ready Service Provider for HPE GreenLake; and an authorised Aruba Support Partner for 2023."

According to Celeste Le Grange, Country Lead South Africa: Channel, Mid-Market and SMB at HPE, the Partner of the Year award recognises exceptional achievement in all areas of the HPE partnership sphere. "Datacentrix received this award based on revenue, year-on-year-growth, and strategic product revenue contribution, as well as key wins spanning across infrastructure, services and Aruba.

"HPE's as-a-service business is a strategic imperative for HPE, and part of our journey towards everything as-a-service. This said, our HPE As-a-Service Partner of the Year award recognises a partner who is aligned with our vision and strategic intention for accelerating as-a-service growth."

> **Datacentrix has enjoyed a long and successful history with HPE and Aruba ... we hold the highest level of accreditation as a partner.**

Le Grange further explains that the HPE Services Delivery Partner of the Year was presented to Datacentrix based on its operational excellence, compliance to HPE procedures, the customer experience, and customer satisfaction. "This particular award is measured based on using customer satisfaction surveys as a key metric.

"For the Aruba Partner Deal of the Year, as this year's winner, Datacentrix took the award for their displacement of a tough and longstanding competitor to win a large public account. A year in the making, this was the culmination of intense effort, deep product knowledge and valued executive engagement."

The title of the HPE Partner Sales Ambassador of the Year was awarded based on consistency, the ability to drive revenue delivery, number of deals won and strategic direction for the as-a-service business. Furthermore, the HPE Partner Services Sales Ambassador of the Year was selected as a key ambassador who drives HPE's strategic initiatives. This was due to the involvement in renewal business and key business development within the HPE install base, which is of huge importance to the organisation's continued traction within joint customers, says Le Grange.

Jansen van Rensburg adds: "This recognition is a testament to Datacentrix's dedicated commitment to HPE and Aruba and our continued investment with both organisations. We are proud to be recognised as HPE and Aruba's most trusted and valued partner and look forward to continuing our long-standing partnership."

Global survey reveals lack of data capabilities hindering organisational success

A recent global survey by Hewlett Packard Enterprise (HPE) reveals the challenges organisations face in leveraging data as a strategic asset. The survey, conducted across 19 countries with over 8,600 decision makers, exposes the gaps hindering data-driven success. It is based on a maturity model developed by HPE that assesses an organisation's ability to create value from data based on strategic, organisational, and technological criteria.

62 percent of respondents recognise the strategic importance of controlling and extracting value from data. However, organisations struggle to close capability gaps, with an average data maturity level of only 2.6 out of 5. The data maturity scale is a framework that assesses an organisation's level of maturity in being able to manage and leverage data effectively; and provides structure for evaluating an organisation's capabilities, processes, and practices relating to its data management. The scale consists of different stages or levels that represent increasing levels of data maturity. In fact, only 3 percent of organisations reached the highest maturity level, at which they strategically leverage data to drive outcomes, based on a unified access to both internal and external data sources, which are analysed with advanced analytics and artificial intelligence.

Limited data capabilities hinder growth and innovation, impacting sales, sustainability, customer experience, and internal efficiency. Organisations fail to harness the full potential of their data assets.

To address these challenges, a transformational shift is needed. Antonio Neri, CEO of HPE, stresses a "data-first" approach over a "cloud-first" mindset for true digital transformation.

The survey identifies gaps in strategies, budgets, and methodologies. Only 13 percent consider data strategy integral to their corporate strategy. Nearly half allocate no budget (28 percent) or only occasionally fund data initiatives from the IT budget (20 percent). Few focus on providing data-driven products or services (28 percent).

For data analysis, many organisations are still relying on spreadsheets (29 percent) or business intelligence (18 percent) instead of advanced methodologies. The result is data silos, which prevent relevant data from being shared and limit the analysis efforts of organisations, putting them at a disadvantage in a time when aggregating data and insights from multiple sources is crucial for better outcomes.

Over a third (34 percent) of respondents lack an overarching data and analytics architecture, hindering effective data utilisation. Only 19 percent have a central data hub or fabric that provides unified access to real-time data across their organisation, and 8 percent extend it to external sources.

Maintaining control over data and its value creation is deemed important by 62 percent of respondents. Concerns over data monopolies (53 percent), rising cloud costs (42 percent), security (37 percent), flexibility in data architecture (37 percent), and lack of control (32 percent) lead organisations to reconsider their cloud strategies.

HPE's GreenLake edge-to-cloud platform allows organisations to maximise control and outcomes by leveraging data from any location. It provides unified data access, empowering analysis and decision making. New services for HPE GreenLake support a data-first modernisation strategy across hybrid cloud environments.

Enhancing data capabilities is crucial for organisations. Aligning strategies, closing gaps, and adopting data-driven approaches unlock the full potential of data, fostering growth, innovation, and operational efficiency.

HPE GreenLake

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Datacentrix focuses on intelligent finance with its appointment as a strategic GRGBanking partner

GRGBanking, a leading innovative solutions provider founded in Guangzhou, China, in 1999, has named Datacentrix as its new local partner for South Africa.

GRGBanking provides holistic hardware and software products and solutions to the financial services market, including ATMs, VTMs (Virtual Teller Machines), STMs (Smart Teller Machines), cash recyclers, cash depositors, cash sorters, and branch transformation solutions. The organisation also offers smart building, cybersecurity, smart safe and biometric solutions for this sector, as well as industrial transformation, and upgrading for finance, transportation, security, smart retail, and other industries.

Says Tony de Sousa, Datacentrix Divisional Managing Director: Technology Solutions: "Datacentrix is always on the lookout for new markets within which to extend our offering, and we're seeing an impressive emergence of digital transformation within Africa's financial services market, as well as an ongoing requirement for physical infrastructure – like ATMs – across the continent.

"Datacentrix's deep experience within the financial services arena, where we have maintained lengthy partnerships with many local organisations in this space, made our partnership with GRGBanking, as an Authorised Reseller and Service Provider, a natural next step for us."

According to Wayne Qiu, Africa Regional Director at GRGBanking, the company was looking to appoint a new local partner, and Datacentrix's footprint within the finance sector and its dedication to building the relationship, made for a strong start to this strategic collaboration.

"Datacentrix has made an intensive and serious investment in ensuring that it has the right technical skills in place, as well as building sales expertise and investing in the demo, test equipment, and spares.

"We look forward to working together to bring greater focus to the intelligent finance business, driving innovation ever further within the African financial services sector," he concludes.

Tony de Sousa, Datacentrix Divisional Managing Director: Technology Solutions

Datacentrix has made an intensive and serious investment in ensuring that it has the right technical skills in place, as well as building sales expertise and investing in the demo, test equipment, and spares.

Datacentrix focuses on using data
to enable potential within SA's transport sector at inaugural Transport Indaba

The use of technology within the local transport industry can unlock a positive contribution to South Africa's economy and its society. This was the central theme of the first Transport Indaba hosted by Datacentrix.

Held at Zebula Golf Estate in Bela-Bela, Limpopo, the company invited players within the transport sector to join the discussion on securing a faster, safer, greener and more effective data-driven industry. The 2023 Transport Indaba was supported by Datacentrix partners Hewlett Packard Enterprise (HPE), Aruba, Fortinet, Veeam, F5 and Teraco.

South Africa on the right road
Veteran keynote speaker Dr Roelof Botha, an economist and Joint Managing Director at GOPA Group SA, gave delegates a view on how economic policy shift may herald sustained growth in South Africa, if several daunting challenges can be overcome.

"The fact is that, despite the precarious state of the country's logistics infrastructure – especially energy, roads, harbours and railways – South Africa's macro-economy is still in good shape. Third quarter GDP growth was positive in real terms,

the ABSA/BER purchasing managers' index (PMI) remains above the neutral level of 50, and the Reserve Bank's leading composite business cycle indicator remains close to its recent all-time high."

Botha drew attention to the fact that the JSE All Share Index had also hit record highs in January 2023, despite load shedding and recession fears, buoyed by China reopening its borders and hopes that the US Federal Reserve may slow the pace of interest rate hikes.

"When looking at our general government gross debt as a percentage of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), under 70 percent, it's clear that we have fiscal stability in this country. Other factors, including the value of wholesale trade sales at constant 2022 prices, and the recovery rate of overseas tourist arrivals being up to 74 percent, with money being spent in our country and creating jobs, combine to highlight the fact that from a macro-economic point of view, we remain relatively sound overall."

Botha outlined the economic significance of local transport infrastructure, stating 'via vitae, the road is life', adding: "The

> Technology can help organisations to become more agile and focused on business outcomes, with digital transformation helping them to drive intelligence from their data, and enabling customised data-first strategies.

transport sector plays a key role in the unlocking of factor and product markets, as it helps to get people and products to market."

Repair of the local road infrastructure is critical, he said, for safety reasons, as well as bolstering the sector's contribution to the GDP through employment. "There are positive economic multiplier effects: for every rand spent there is a R1.27 value add to the economy. If our government were to fix our roads, it would generate great value for the country, while also supporting other industries like agriculture, allowing for economic development through enhanced mobility."

South Africa's total exports record was shattered in 2022, Botha stated, reaching over two trillion rand, with significant contribution from the transport industry, in particular the manufacturing of vehicles. In fact, Stats SA reported that South Africa's manufacturing output rose by 2.9 percent year on year in September last year, after rising by a revised 1.7 percent in August, underpinned by motor vehicles, parts and accessories and other transport equipment.

"We're on the right road now, and South Africa has a lot going for it. My general feeling for the future is one of optimism," he said.

Using data to drive positive business outcomes

In his welcome address, Datacentrix CEO Ahmed Mahomed underscored the fact that technology will be a significant factor in helping the transport sector to tackle today's business challenges head-on.

"Top risks for any business today go beyond political, environmental and macroeconomic pressures such as inflation, interest rates, unemployment and economic growth, and now include technology-related issues such as cybersecurity and disruptive technologies," he explained.

"We are living in extraordinary times in South Africa, where disruptions such as delivery constraints, supply chain pressures and energy challenges all have a massive impact on our businesses, regardless of the sector. From a logistics point of view, we are also being negatively affected by infrastructure challenges, where more traffic equals slower deliveries and escalating costs. When looking at physical security, crime is playing a role in costs, with increasing requirements for vehicle tracking and armed guards further pushing up prices.

"In addition, cybersecurity has become a serious consideration for every business, with PwC's 2023 Global Digital Trust Insights Survey stating that two-thirds of executives consider cybercrime to be the most significant threat of this year. As data becomes increasingly critical and valuable, it has also become a tool for cyber warfare."

Mahomed added that, in PwC's annual global survey says that 40 percent of the chief executives surveyed also believed that their organisations would no longer be economically viable in ten years' time, if their companies were to continue on the current course.

"So, if you don't plan, you will become irrelevant," he noted. "Technology can help organisations to become more agile and focused on business outcomes, with digital transformation helping them to drive intelligence from their data, and enabling customised data-first strategies.

"One of the biggest challenges in achieving better business outcomes though is creating a safe, integrated digital environment with access to real-time data. What is important here is ensuring that you get the fundamentals right – understanding your foundational storage, compute and networking landscape – delivering data securely, and driving intelligence out of this data," concluded Mahomed.

For more information on Datacentrix's 2023 Transport Indaba, please visit
www.datacentrix.co.za/transport_indaba_2023.html

How the SOC plays a vital role
in safeguarding African business

**Monitor and defend customer ICT environments
in real time against potential security threats**

As businesses in Africa embrace digital transformation, despite cyber strategy across the continent maturing, cyberthreats continue to plague the region. Several high-profile cyberattacks have rocked local organisations this year alone – from the retail environment, to the gaming sector and financial services – reinforcing the fact that strong cybersecurity measures are a necessity, regardless of where your company might be based.

In fact, KPMG Africa's recently launched Africa Cyber Security Outlook 2022 survey stated that, while 74 percent of Africa's large companies reported a relatively mature approach to privacy and cybersecurity, local organisations lack confidence in their ability to deal with cyberthreats, with only 47 percent even partially confident.

> The Datacentrix SOC clients are able to tap into a highly intelligent service that provides actionable information to help organisations respond to attacks faster and more efficiently. The flexible architecture deploys security everywhere it's needed, whether on-premises, in public clouds, hybrid clouds or as a hosted SOCaaS solution.

In addition, the survey reported that 75 percent of African companies also struggle with challenges in recruiting and retaining qualified cyber professionals, and only one in three have access to a sufficient talent pool.

Criminals don't ever take a break, explains Brian Smith, Business Development Manager at Datacentrix, making the continuous monitoring, detection and quick, effective response to threats essential to businesses of any size, within any industry.

"However, cybersecurity skills shortages and the cost attached to building and maintaining an in-house security operations centre (SOC) are challenges that are not easily overcome."

The answer to these obstacles, according to Smith, is to outsource this function to a third-party expert that can deliver on a SOC-as-a-Service (SOCaaS) offering.

"Outsourcing your SOC requirements to a trusted solution provider removes the burden of keeping up with the best, most sophisticated technologies. It also alleviates the ongoing hiring and training process of cybersecurity staff, the 24X7 monitoring requirement, and the unremitting need to stay at the forefront of cyberthreat intelligence."

Datacentrix's industry-leading SOC monitors and defends customer ICT environments in real time against any potential security threats.

"The Datacentrix SOC clients are able to tap into a highly intelligent service that provides actionable information to help organisations respond to attacks faster and more efficiently," Smith continues. "The flexible architecture deploys security everywhere it's needed, whether on-premises, in public clouds, hybrid clouds or as a hosted SOCaaS solution."

The Datacentrix SOC was built based on leading SOAR (security orchestration, automation and response) and SIEM (security, information, and event management) technologies from partner, IBM.

"IBM is a strategic partner for Datacentrix, and one with which we have built deep technical proficiency and expertise as an IBM Platinum Business Partner, Power Specialty Partner and a Storage Expert Partner, so building our SOC using IBM technology made complete sense," he adds.

One of the solutions underpinning the Datacentrix SOC is IBM® Security Guardium®, a comprehensive data protection platform that empowers security teams to automatically analyse what is happening across the data environment.

"Guardium was designed to safeguard critical data, wherever it resides, helping to minimise risk, protect sensitive data from internal and external threats, and seamlessly adapt to changes that affect data security and compliance," says Bruce Johnstone, Security Partner Ecosystem Sales Leader at IBM.

"Guardium provides best-of- breed integration with IBM Security solutions, such as IBM QRadar® SIEM, for proactive data protection. QRadar helps security teams detect, prioritise and respond to threats across the enterprise, using advanced analytics such as user behaviour analytics (UBA), network flow insights, and artificial intelligence (AI) to accelerate detection.

"This is of particular significance for Datacentrix as both technologies are used within its SOC. When working together, Guardium sends its events and database discovery/classification information to QRadar, enabling more effective correlation of threat activity. In addition, Guardium can receive status and alert notifications from QRadar SIEM to help defend against rogue IP sources, rogue users and new vulnerabilities, whether in applications, operating systems or other data sources.

"An excellent example of the two solutions working together is how their integration can help with protection against potential attacks through applications. They are also able to detect database attacks (such as through SQL injection) and block them before data can be extracted, as well as identify vulnerabilities at the application layer for virtual patching remediation."

Datacentrix recently upgraded its SOC to include the newly launched QRadar XDR, an open extended detection and response (XDR) ecosystem that is able to eliminate advanced threats faster.

Brian Smith, Business Development Manager at Datacentrix

QRadar XDR is a comprehensive solution built with open standards and automation, that unifies endpoint detection and response (EDR), network detection and response (NDR) and SIEM in one workflow.

A major benefit of QRadar XDR, Smith adds, is the fact that it helps the Datacentrix SOC to save valuable time by connecting insights and leveraging AI to automate tasks and respond quickly. "This level of automation allows us to find and eliminate threats faster, streamline security operations processes, and also improve analyst productivity, by providing direction. All of these factors fit well with Datacentrix' overall objective of being a service-driven organisation."

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For more details on the Datacentrix's security services offering, as powered by IBM, click here: www.datacentrix.co.za/ibm-security.html

Reducing cyber risk
with next-gen technology

The attack surface within the cybersecurity landscape is ever expanding and gaining in complexity, meaning that today, the securing and tracking of sensitive data is of the utmost importance – perhaps more than ever before.

"In fact," explains Gideon Viljoen, Datacentrix Presales Specialist: ICT Security, "with the introduction of legislation such as the Protection of Personal Information Act (POPIA), organisations can be penalised for not taking every conceivable measures to ensure that data is protected and secured.

"Add to this the fact that businesses are moving from an on-premises environment to the cloud, allowing users access to data sets and information to be used for daily activities, and it's clear that it is becoming increasingly challenging to control and protect information."

> The use of AI and ML technologies and techniques can assist the human resources with the 'heavy lifting' of sifting through the data, analysing it much faster, making a decision based on collected artefacts, and only requiring human interaction for the verification of the presented artefacts.

Reducing cyber risk with AI & ML:

Combat alert fatigue

Improve the quality of alerts

Decrease false positives

Automate repetitive tasks

All these challenges are further exacerbated by the current global shortage of cybersecurity skills, which is a serious growing concern, Viljoen explains.

"Maintaining control and an audit trail of cybersecurity activities can be daunting and expensive if you are investing in human resources to manage and maintain this on your behalf. And it's not just the skilling up of cybersecurity staff that is a challenge – retaining knowledgeable staff is another problem area, as experts in this field are frequently poached by the highest bidder.

"Furthermore, with the sheer amount of data flowing through our organisations on a daily basis, with millions, if not sometimes billions, of alerts and notifications pinging through, 'alert fatigue' has become a real challenge.

Unfortunately, this can equate to significant threats sometimes being missed due to the 'noise' of it all, as it becomes more difficult to identify actionable threats from false positives."

This being said, Mimecast's 7th Annual State of Email Security Report offers some optimism amongst all of these worries, stating that artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML) are helping under-resourced cybersecurity teams stay ahead of the curve.

The report states that 92 percent of companies are either using or plan to use AI and ML to bolster their cybersecurity. Forty-nine percent of those surveyed are already using some combination of these technologies (compared to 46 percent last year and just 38 percent the year before). It also says that, amongst the companies already using AI/ML, more accurate threat detection (50 percent), an improved ability to block threats (49 percent), and faster remediation when an attack has occurred (48 percent) are viewed as the three biggest benefits.

In addition, most SOES participants (81 percent) agree that AI systems that are able to provide real-time, contextual warnings to email and collaboration tool users would be a huge boon. Twelve percent went so far as to say that the benefits of such a system would revolutionise the ways in which cybersecurity is practiced.

Says Viljoen: "The use of AI and ML technologies and techniques can assist the human resources with the 'heavy lifting' of sifting through the data, analysing it much faster, making a decision based on collected artefacts, and only requiring human interaction for the verification of the presented artefacts.

"AI and ML toolsets are becoming extremely useful for our everyday lives and businesses alike, helping to combat alert fatigue, decrease false positives, automate repetitive tasks and improve the quality of alerts to the human for verification.

"These valuable tools play an important supporting role, assisting cybersecurity professionals to do more with less and allowing them to deliver peace of mind in an ever-changing world," he concludes.

Gideon Viljoen, Datacentrix Presales Specialist: ICT Security

AI and ML are helping under-resourced cybersecurity teams stay ahead according to Mimecast's 7th Annual State of Email Security Report:

50%
more accurate threat detection

49%
improved ability to block threats

48%
faster remediation post attack

Breathing life
into data-driven healthcare

By Jaap Scholten, Head of Group
Hybrid ICT Strategy at Datacentrix

Every major technological innovation in healthcare has brought with it rapid growth in medical knowledge, but also the growing generation of massive amounts of data. And while computers have become more affordable over time, and information systems introduced that are geared specifically for the healthcare environment, these technology gains have brought with them the usual traps of the information age: security, privacy, interoperability and standards, and storage requirements.

Harking back to the invention of the stethoscope and X-rays in the 1800s, the healthcare sector has seen a steady

> The concept of data-driven healthcare could be described as industry players generating and analysing data for improved patient care and better business outcomes. However, there are three technology pillars that must be considered for this to become a reality, namely data hosting, data transportation, and data security.

increase in technological innovation, accelerating through the 20th century to the arrival of the pacemaker, CAT scans and ultrasound in the 1960s.

It was here that the computerisation of electronic health recordkeeping (EHR) was considered for the first time. However, at that point, computers were expensive, complex and unreliable, and it was only during the following decade – the 1970s – which brought us MRI machines, that EHR gained greater acceptance. Electronic records stored in databases became more mainstream in the 1990s, albeit in tandem with a huge volume of paper-based documentation.

Fast forward to today
The future is here. The first robotic surgery took place in 1997, followed four years later by remote robotic surgery. And then in 2019, we saw the first remote robotic surgery over 5G. The following year, Google Cloud launched its healthcare interoperability readiness programme, alongside 5G-enabled Internet of Medical Things (IoMT) devices, nanomedicine, rapid drug development, and more.

So where are we now? Data-driven healthcare – or the smart analysis of de-identified healthcare data – is set to be worth $70 billion by 2025, according to Bain & Company research.

Faster network speeds and the Internet have provided the kinetic energy to drive the advances in the medical sector. These include remote patient monitoring, Artificial Intelligence (AI), IoMT, and digital therapeutics (monitoring via wearables).

The concept of data-driven healthcare could be described as industry players generating and analysing data for improved patient care and better business outcomes.

> By accessing and understanding data in real-time, the healthcare sector will be able to improve user experience, increase revenue, decrease costs, and drive efficiencies. This is why a hybrid ICT approach, one that begins with a data-first strategy and provides an 'as a service' experience, is so critical.

Jaap Scholten, Head of Group Hybrid ICT Strategy at Datacentrix

However, there are three technology pillars that must be considered for this to become a reality, namely data hosting, data transportation, and data security.

Data hosting

There's no question that data needs to be hosted in the right place, but this in itself can become a complex process.

For instance, it is critical that a hospital's heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) information is retained on-site, but the same institution's financial information would probably need to be hosted at its head office, which would most likely be kilometres away from the medical facilities.

The medical staff, who want to analyse results, need tools to find trends within masses of unstructured data, so here it would make the most sense to host this information in the cloud where the tools exist to perform the analysis.

Let's stop there for a moment. Fossil fuel cars require a lot of maintenance requirements, from spark plugs to gearboxes, oil changes and timing belts, brake pads and filters. However, electric cars do not require the same level of upkeep, as even the brake pads are hardly used due to regenerative braking, and software updates are received via the Internet. Therefore, you could say that hybrid cars seem to be the worst choice possible – all the maintenance of a fossil fuel car, plus a small amount of the electric benefit. Yet, hybrid cars are an essential steppingstone to get to pure electrical vehicles, for reasons such as erratic electricity supplies, or continuously emerging battery technologies.

When it comes to technology, hybrid ICT – or a combination of cloud and on-premises technology – provides the same steppingstone needed to get to a pure-cloud world, which, realistically, is still many years away.

Hybrid ICT offers the benefits of affordable mass storage, through hyperscaler clouds such as Amazon Web Services or Microsoft Azure, as well as a place for huge amounts of unstructured data – so-called data lakes – to be analysed using Machine Learning (ML) tools to find patterns or trends in the data.

Data transport: networking

Networks always seem to have simple beginnings, yet sooner rather than later they become more complex than originally envisioned. Initially, networking was all about computer data, but quickly moved to voice and video, and it now incorporates Internet of Things (IoT) and of course IoMT devices as well. And each of these network services ultimately need to execute one goal: moving data between humans. There are numerous steps in between, from databases and web servers, to financial systems, operational systems, and of course the cloud.

The networks inevitably need to connect local systems inside a hospital as much as they need to link up hospitals to administrative offices. This means that where we have become used to using cables and data points, we now need Wi-Fi and 5G connectivity.

The network, in whichever form you use it, becomes the measure of your data experience. Your cloud experience is as good as your network connection to the cloud, and users' experience is as good as the Wi-Fi, 5G, or LTE signal to which they are connected.

OpenText names Datacentrix as Regional Partner of the Year for Emerging Markets

Following its local partner award, where Datacentrix was named as 'African Reseller of the Year' for 2022 by OpenText, the organisation has also taken the title of 'Regional Partner of the Year: Emerging Markets' from the information management software vendor.

This award was received by Datacentrix at OpenText World 2022, the world's largest information management conference, which took place in Las Vegas, USA.

Says Shakeel Jhazbhay, Datacentrix General Manager for Digital Business Solutions: "OpenText's Partner Awards acknowledge those vendors, resellers and systems integrators who have developed and delivered exceptional OpenText-based solutions over the past year, finding new and different ways to work, solve problems and improve customer experiences.

"As the largest OpenText partner in Africa and the only Platinum Partner on the continent, Datacentrix has consistently been recognised by our long-term partner over years. 2022 marks the second year that we have been distinguished as the leader within the emerging markets, which include Africa and the Middle East, having received the title of 'Emerging Market Value Added Reseller (VAR) of the Year' winner in 2021.

"The ongoing acknowledgement from OpenText attests to the strength of our more than 20-year mutual partnership, showing that we have the deep skills in place to help local businesses on their digital transformation journeys.

"Our latest award from OpenText is a significant achievement for Datacentrix, and shows that we continue to deliver exceptional value to our clients. We look forward to further building our relationship, helping our joint clients to solve the complex business challenges in today's digital world," states Jhazbhay.

Pervasive security
Gone are the days of a central firewall at the head office, or employing a network security specialist, who holds the keys to the front door. Data has moved out of the head office and off the hospital premises, out to the far corners of people's homes, their notebooks and USB drives, to the cloud, and to the odd hotel where an executive overnights while travelling.

Data is on the move, and there is no stopping it. At the same time, many people want access to data, be it IoMT data, financial data, or patient data, and therefore no strategy is complete without addressing data security.

Security now lives on the network, as well as in the cloud. It has become about identity management, where all correctly identified users may have access, based on their security profile and privileges.

The term used currently is Secure Access Service Edge (SASE), which means the network service indirectly reaches as far as people's homes and overseas hotels. This is the edge of the network, and the only way that it can be secured is by giving users access by means of their identity. Practically, this means that network access to the services are based on Zero Trust – no access unless the users can correctly identify themselves.

Making the case for hybrid ICT
I think it is poignant to note that Sherlock Holmes had already verbalised the importance of data back in 1900, saying that 'It is a capital mistake to theorise before one has data'.

By accessing and understanding data in real-time, the healthcare sector will be able to improve user experience, increase revenue, decrease costs, and drive efficiencies. This is why a hybrid ICT approach, one that begins with a data-first strategy and provides an 'as a service' experience, is so critical.

The right hybrid ICT partner will be able to assist with a data-centric strategy that includes the fundamental pillars of the ideal data hosting environment, reliable data transport and connectivity, and far-reaching data security.

Three hard truths
about the multi-cloud journey

Businesses are getting smarter, faster and more resilient in the cloud. But it doesn't come easy. On the Futurum Tech Webcast, Chief Analyst Daniel Newman for Futurum Research (an analyst firm focused on technology, digital innovation and market disruption) talks with VMware leaders about the surprising challenges of multi-cloud. Here are three takeaways from their conversations.

1. Your expectations may be unrealistic

"Most customers are coming to this realisation that what they may have thought of as 'cloud first' – where they land every workload on a cloud in a defined period – is not realistic," said Sumit Dhawan, President of VMware. "The reality is most customers are going to be on a journey to determine what's the best cloud for every app," Dhawan adds. We call this a transition in mindset cloud first to 'cloud smart'. Many companies have learned the hard way, struggling with rising costs. And they're not keeping up with the pace of modernisation and digitisation they need.

"Hard trade-offs is the name of the game for today's market," said Dhawan. "You have to prioritise decisions about which apps and on which cloud you're going to modernise. That's, effectively, the starting point of the cloud-smart journey."

2. You may go slower before you go faster

"Applications are really driving the infrastructure choice, and our customers have a lot of choices," said Paula Hodgins, Senior Vice President of Worldwide Cloud Sales at VMware. "This desire to move, be agile and go faster comes with a lot of complexity. Although the vision is there, it's tough to manage, and it slows them down." Rewriting and refactoring applications for the cloud is time-consuming and expensive. Effectively managing new infrastructures requires new skills.

"We see companies that have been on this cloud-native journey for ten or more years, and they haven't fully realised the benefits of public cloud at scale," said Hodgins. "What we can give organisations is the ability to move their applications and take advantage of those public clouds and cloud-native services immediately."

3. Your security model needs an update

"Let's face it – every technology that we use for good, the hackers figure out how to use it for bad," said Newman. "It's

only going to become a bigger and bigger challenge." Since companies expanded to multi-cloud environments, security has become exponentially more difficult. As IT figures out how to use cloud services more efficiently, it's also learning how to secure these services across a much larger attack vector.

"What happened in the past is we had a bunch of technologists that liked the cool new services, and before long we had cloud chaos, this proliferation of applications, workloads and data everywhere,'" said Amanda Blevins, Vice President and Chief Technology Officer for the Americas at VMware. "Cloud smart is all about understanding what happened, why does that chaos exist and what should our intentional path forward be."

The key, said Blevins, is to make multi-cloud security and compliance manageable. For example, "cross-cloud services give you the ability to have the same tool set and operational model to secure your workloads across multiple environments."

But you're not alone on the multi-cloud journey

Becoming cloud smart is a journey, and "a journey is best had with someone you know," said Dhawan. "We want to be the partner to take the customer on that journey."

VMware works closely not only with customers, but also hyperscalers, systems integrators, channel partners and technology partners. Each plays a supporting role in your multi-cloud journey.

"VMware's strategy is based on customers choosing a hybrid or multi-cloud environment, which is the reality," said Zia Yusuf, Senior Vice President of VMware's Strategic Ecosystem and Industry Solutions. "We have deep, committed relationships with all these hyperscalers. You can leverage the best of what they have but then also have a consistent experience with VMware across hybrid environments."

vmware®

Datacentrix earns Cloudflare EMEA Partner of the Year

Shawn Gradwell, Solutions Architect at eNetworks, a Datacentrix company

Datacentrix has been named as 'Partner of the Year' for the Europe, Middle East and African (EMEA) region by Cloudflare, the security, performance and reliability company, at its worldwide 2022 Channel Partner Awards event. In addition, the company also received the individual award for Technical Excellence in EMEA.

Datacentrix was appointed as a Cloudflare Managed Services Partner within the Sub-Saharan African region in 2022, enriching its managed services offering with Cloudflare's cloud-based, services-focused offering, which provides optimised security and connectivity.

Says Shawn Gradwell, Solutions Architect at eNetworks, a Datacentrix company: "Datacentrix's objective since our appointment as Managed Services Partner has been to become Cloudflare's de facto service delivery partner for sub-Saharan Africa."

Adds Gradwell: "Our recent company award demonstrates that we're well on track to achieving this, as it shows that we are the top performing partner within EMEA, highlighting not only a remarkable sales achievement for 2022, but also commitment to skills growth and bringing the best-in-class solutions to Africa."

> Datacentrix's objective since our appointment as Managed Services Partner has been to become Cloudflare's de facto service delivery partner for sub-Saharan Africa.

According to Mohamed Zerri, Channel Sales Director, Emerging Europe at Cloudflare, the organisation's recent awards were given to partner companies and individuals that went above and beyond expectations, demonstrating outstanding commitment to working closely with Cloudflare.

"With partners like Datacentrix, Cloudflare is able to deliver compelling, integrated security and performance solutions to customers around the globe. I would like to offer sincere congratulations to our local partner, as well as thanks for their dedication to delivering a faster, more secure, and more reliable Internet for customers and their users globally."

CLOUDFLARE

Why sweating your assets no longer makes financial sense

Sweating your IT assets beyond the average three-year lifespan may have made financial sense ten years ago, when businesses were looking to keep a lid on costs for as long as possible before investing in a hardware refresh, but today this is no longer a feasible option.

"We're still seeing organisations attempt to extend the longevity of hardware, in particular due to recent, tougher times, but they must be cognisant of that fact that this approach could have a far deeper impact on a business' bottom line than ever before," explains Jaap Scholten, Head: Group Hybrid ICT Strategy at Datacentrix.

"The lifespan of hardware is typically three years, but we're seeing companies attempt to stretch out the lifespan of their hardware for longer periods, even up to five years. And aside from the obvious risks, like equipment failure and greater vulnerability to cyberattacks, there has been a tremendous shift in where a business' costs lie, and this is also affected when using equipment beyond its optimum lifecycle."

Scholten believes this point is of particular relevance to South African organisations, as the country has only recently emerged from its longest consecutive period of rolling blackouts, only to have loadshedding reinstated a mere two days later.

"Power consumption has become a significant operational cost for local companies, and unfortunately loadshedding is a dilemma that will not easily be solvable, even over the longer term. Older hardware is more power hungry and, in light of our ongoing blackout challenges especially, there are cleverer ways of ensuring that your technology stays up to date."

Scholten says that more modern infrastructure uses far less power than older hardware, a point reinforced by Uptime Institute, the global digital infrastructure authority, which states that over 65 percent of power used by IT in data centres is used to process just seven percent of the work, and that this is purely due to aging equipment inefficiencies.

"So, the question is, do you opt to upgrade your hardware more regularly, using Capex budget, with a view towards energy efficiency and performance gains and achieving a faster return on investment (ROI), or do you decide against owning hardware completely?"

Here, there are two potential choices to be made, he continues, the first being the option of leasing hardware from a solution provider.

"This decision will certainly assist a business that is struggling to find Capex in their budget cycle, but it also raises the issue of whether it doesn't then make more sense to embrace the second option, which would be to move to the cloud?" Using a cloud service provider will remove the burden of hardware ownership and its related challenges – like power consumption – from the client, while also ensuring that the company still has access to scalable, powerful infrastructure with guaranteed availability.

"Sweating assets is very last decade and simply not a practical approach for organisations today. It's time to embrace digital transformation and leverage the simplicity and agility of the cloud to build a successful, modern business," Scholten concludes.

Sweating assets is very last decade and simply not a practical approach for organisations today. It's time to embrace digital transformation and leverage the simplicity and agility of the cloud to build a successful, modern business.

Datacentrix takes title of Cisco
Services Partner of the Year for Middle East and Africa

Datacentrix is thrilled to have been acknowledged as Services Partner of the Year for Middle East and Africa at Cisco's global Partner Summit 2022, which took place in Las Vegas, United States.

Cisco's global partner awards recognise top-performing partners' business success, innovation and best-in-class sales and service delivery that enable substantial business outcomes for customers.

"Cisco partners are engines of growth and innovation in our shared success. Together, we have come through a challenging year to achieve outstanding results, respond to customer challenges and meet our business imperatives," said Oliver Tuszik, Senior Vice-President, Global Partner Sales and Routes to Market at Cisco. "Congratulations to Datacentrix for being recognised as the Services Partner of the Year for Middle East and Africa. The company has demonstrated its expertise and commitment to performance and is well positioned for continued success in the Age of the Partner."

"Datacentrix has taken its partnership to the next level with Cisco, recently attaining Tier One Gold Level partnership status, which demonstrates our deep knowledge and expertise and confirms our status as a strategic local Cisco partner," explains Chris Pretorius, Business Unit Manager at Datacentrix. "This is further confirmed by the Services Partner of the Year award win for Middle East and Africa.

"Our Cisco partnership is truly growing from strength to strength. In fact, 2022 has marked one of our most successful years together, with growth of more than 25

> Our Cisco partnership is truly growing from strength to strength. In fact, 2022 has marked one of our most successful years together, with growth of more than 25 percent, an excellent achievement by any standards.

percent, an excellent achievement by any standards," he notes. "We're anticipating additional positive development in the new year and look forward to making even greater headway together."
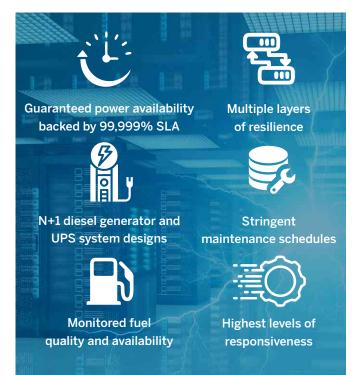
Datacentrix is a Tier One Cisco Gold Certified Partner with reseller specialisations in advanced data centre architecture, security architecture, collaboration architecture and enterprise networks architecture. The company is authorised to sell enterprise agreements in data centre, cloud, security and collaboration.

Alleviate the crippling effect of loadshedding on your business operations

Keep the lights on with hosting and colocation services from Datacentrix, powered by Teraco

Loadshedding is here to stay and as a result there has been an increased drive towards colocating in data centres. Critical workloads need to be hosted in a resilient facility due to the national power grid's challenges. Those who are already in data centres are critically evaluating the resilience of such sites; those looking to move are needing to evaluate their options carefully.

Any data centre move needs to be carefully evaluated to prevent choosing a facility that may seem more cost effective from the onset, but that may have hidden costs such as surcharges in the event of Stage 6 or above, for example. Not all datacentres are created equal: differences in builds and particularly in proven operational track records to meet exacting requirements of critical infrastructure need to be leading in any review. Certainly with the current strain on the national power grid, businesses need to be prudent to select the right fit for such infrastructure, for literally 'keeping the lights on' during loadshedding, without nasty surprises of extra charges for maintenance, repairs, diesel, and so on.

Take back the power

Teraco has long maintained its power uptime service level agreements (SLAs) through its resilient electrical designs, critical electrical component maintenance, and fuel management policy. As such, Teraco continues to offer and exceed its SLA of 99.999% power availability.

The Datacentrix-Teraco partnership ensures that customers enjoy consistent power quality in an environment where the electrical grid is under serious strain.

Focusing on our core business so you can focus on yours

- Utility power provided with as much infrastructure resilience as possible based on South African utility provider restrictions.
- Concurrently maintainable designs with elements of fault tolerance built into asset levels.
- Resilient diesel backup generators are fueled to provide a minimum of 48 hours of back up fuel, boosted by guaranteed diesel delivery agreements should municipal supply fail.
- Fuel scrubbers are installed to ensure fuel quality with periodic fuel sampling at registered laboratories.
- Power Distribution Unit (PDU) technology manages power to socket level within cabinets, in addition to remote management capabilities.
- Power is supplied in 1.1 kVA increments. Higher power configurations are available.
- Detailed measurement and proactive notification of power usage are effected via a secure client portal.

A winning partnership

The Datacentrix-Teraco partnership provides customers with the facilities, network availability, security and systems integration for fully-customised cloud computing and peace of mind.

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Multiple layers of resilience

N+1 diesel generator and UPS system designs

Stringent maintenance schedules

Monitored fuel quality and availability

Highest levels of responsiveness

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- ⊘ AI-Based Anomaly Detection
- ⊘ Malware Scanning
- ⊘ Immutability
- ⊘ Automated, Intelligent Recovery
- ⊘ Non-Disruptive Recovery Rehearsal

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Unlike point products or cloud service provider tools, Veritas Alta provides application resiliency solutions that support all major cloud infrastructures whether virtual, containerized, or bare metal.

This common set of tools safeguards your mission-critical services against unplanned downtime in several key ways:

- By enabling highly available applications across a multi-cloud environment
- By delivering the agility to respond at scale to ever-changing business needs
- By making it easy to move applications across public and private clouds or repatriate them to on-premises

Illuminate and remediate information risk.

Veritas is the industry's #1 choice for data capture and content classification. We offer the only suite of solutions with flexible deployment options - from on-premises, IaaS, hybrid, virtual, and SaaS.

Our compliance and governance offering unites cloud functionality and enables organizations to make informed decisions about all the information they store.
With Veritas Alta you can automate content classification, easily discover relevant data for legal proceedings, eliminate "dark data" to reduce risk and optimize your data footprint.

VERITAS

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The predictive network comes
to the fore

As data moves out of the data centre and flows freely between devices everywhere, organisations are rapidly losing visibility and control of their ecosystems. So says Chris Pretorius, Business Unit Manager at Datacentrix who explains that because of this, traditional monitoring solutions are no longer applicable to the modern, internet-centric business.

"Many companies are operating at some level within the cloud, meaning that their data is now more dispersed than ever before. As a result, they just don't have visibility of what is happening inside the cloud. This is a real concern, as cybercriminals today are using increasingly sophisticated attack strategies to bypass defences, with more than six million distributed denial of service (DDoS) attacks seen in the first half of 2022 alone worldwide.

"At the same time, a dependable, seamless user experience – from wherever they may be accessing the network – has also become critical."

Datacentrix partner, Cisco, sums up today's technology challenge as follows: "…IT environments have grown overwhelmingly complex, and user expectations are higher than ever. The connections that businesses rely on have multiplied in number and diversity. This has resulted in a network and overall IT experience that is more fragmented, less secure and increasingly difficult to scale.

"Today's business environment is predictably unpredictable," Cisco continues. "Organisations depend on digital experiences to keep their workforces productive and ensure

> Organisations depend on digital experiences to keep their workforces productive and ensure they are exceeding expectations for customers and partners. To build business agility and resiliency, IT teams require unified solutions that bridge an organisation's technologies, locations, teams and devices.

they are exceeding expectations for customers and partners. To build business agility and resiliency, IT teams require unified solutions that bridge an organisation's technologies, locations, teams and devices."

Managing the borderless network

Says Pretorius: "Our borderless networks have become incredibly complex, and IT teams are struggling to manage hybrid work environments, growing cybersecurity threats and

**Chris Pretorius, Business Unit Manager
at Datacentrix**

other disruptions, while being expected to also provide an excellent employee and customer experience.

"They need help to simplify operations and the answer is a smarter, unified, self-healing network.

"The network of the future will be able to learn, plan and predict, using a collection of observability, visibility and detection technologies that gathers data from many sources. It then learns patterns, recognises trends, and uses this data to predict user experience and application issues, forecast and prevent network outages, and protect against attacks before they happen."

Predictive network technology also puts forward potential solutions to the issue, which can then be implemented automatically or manually, at the discretion of the IT team.

"By enabling IT teams to shift focus away from networking challenges towards preventing those issues that affect the business, it is possible to improve operational efficiencies, deliver improved digital experiences, and maximise the cloud environment," Pretorius concludes.

Datacentrix is a Tier 1 Gold Certified Cisco Partner with reseller specialisations in advanced data centre architecture; security architecture; collaboration architecture; and enterprise networks architecture. The company is authorised to sell enterprise agreements in data centre, cloud, security and collaboration.

Driving deliberate digitisation and hybrid cloud strategies

- ○ **In-depth client consulting**
- ○ **Extensive technical capability**
- ○ **Top tier technology partnerships**
- ○ **Instant cost savings**

"It's more than client engagement, it's understanding the client's business and assisting them navigate the challenges of cloud to achieve the right business outcomes."
Ahmed Mahomed, CEO at Datacentrix

Driving business strategies, efficiencies and growth to futureproof organisations

Watch the video >>
https://youtu.be/ZZxCQfvA-qg

Datacentrix wins three Veeam
awards, including 'Value Added
Reseller of the Year, South Africa'

Datacentrix has received the 2022 'Value Added Reseller of the Year, South Africa' award, one of the highest partner accolades from Veeam® Software, the leader in modern data protection and ransomware recovery. The awards are held annually to reward the outstanding success and the commitment of Veeam ProPartner Value-Added Resellers (VAR) and Veeam Cloud & Service Provider (VCSP) partners who leveraged customer support and product expertise to deploy modern data protection in increasingly complex IT environments. Datacentrix collaborates with Veeam to ensure that the most diverse workload types, data, and applications are protected cost effectively, as well as available for all business purposes at all times.

In addition, Datacentrix was also named as winner of the 'Best SMB Reselling Partner of the Year, South Africa' and 'Best Kasten Reselling Partner of the Year, South Africa' titles.

"We are thrilled to recognise and honour Datacentrix as the winner of these three awards," said Lisa Strydom, Senior Manager: Channel and Alliances – Africa at Veeam. "We're committed to our partners' success and during the past year, we were able to further strengthen our relationships and help our reseller partners profitably leverage their offerings in respective local markets. Here, the dedication and loyalty to Veeam showcased by Datacentrix was extraordinary.

"They evangelise the principles of modern data protection and execute its best practices with great professionalism and expertise so that our joint customers are able to enjoy resiliency through data security, data recovery and data freedom for their critical IT to keep their businesses running. With Datacentrix they achieve unparalleled data availability, mobility, visibility, automation, and governance across data centres, at the edge and in the cloud. We congratulate Datacentrix and look forward to even greater mutual success in 2023."

"Datacentrix not only took the top title of 'Value Added Reseller of the Year, South Africa', for demonstrating the highest growth in Veeam sales during 2022, but the company showed that it is able to cater for clients of all sizes by also winning the 'Best SMB Reselling Partner of the Year, South Africa' award," explained Wimpie Jansen van Rensburg, Business Unit Manager: Enterprise Solutions at Datacentrix.

Wimpie Jansen van Rensburg, Business Unit Manager: Enterprise Solutions at Datacentrix

"This particular award was given to Datacentrix for achieving the most SMB deals over the period.

"Our final award, which was for 'The Best Kasten Reselling Partner of the Year, South Africa' was an extremely important one for Datacentrix, given that the increased use of Kubernetes in production environments means these workloads also need modern data protection," he added. "Winning this award proved that we managed to close the most successful Kasten deals in South Africa over 2022, including a noteworthy win with a local retail clothing group. We're particularly proud to have won this title for 2022, as this was the first time it had been included in the award line-up for Veeam.

"Veeam has been a phenomenal partner for Datacentrix," Jansen Van Rensburg continued. "We've enjoyed a lengthy relationship now, proving time and time again that Veeam's solutions deliver valuable backup, recovery and data management solutions. And with the backing of Datacentrix's technical and support expertise, this makes for a compelling offering to local businesses."

Datacentrix secures two titles at
annual Red Hat partner awards

Johan Scheepers, Red Hat Solution Architect Lead – SSA; Ian Russell, Red Hat Partner Account Manager and Team Lead; Conrad Dellar, Datacentrix Pre-sales Converged Solutions; Quintin Brussow, Datacentrix Solution Architect Converged Solutions; and Brendan Widlake, Red Hat Senior Commercial Sales Manager

Datacentrix has won two awards at the Red Hat Annual Awards, which took place in Gauteng at the end of 2022 for their 2021 financial year end. The annual awards acknowledge Red Hat's certified Premier and Advanced Business Partners for their business success stories and other sales and service deliveries.

Quintin Brussow, Solution Architect: Converged Solutions at Datacentrix, explains: "Having been a Red Hat partner since 2015, Datacentrix has invested significantly in skills training, culminating in the attainment of sufficient Red Hat certified engineering skills to become a Red Hat Premier Business Partner earlier in 2022. This makes us one of just a few local companies to reach this partnership level from the world's leading provider of enterprise open source solutions.

"We are now very pleased to also have been awarded the Red Hat Rising Star Award, as well as the Red Hat Deal Award, for their 2021 financial year."

Brussow clarifies that the Rising Star Award was presented to Datacentrix to acknowledge its continued investment, within a short timeframe, in certified Red Hat skills, as well as to take cognisance of an 83 percent revenue growth in the period under review.

With regards to the Red Hat Deal Award, he notes that here, Datacentrix won the title in recognition of its negotiation of several complex deals that were brought to fruition, as well as for delivering a number of net new logos and net new business for Red Hat.

"We are very pleased to see our Red Hat partnership growing in leaps and bounds over the past seven years," says Brussow. "Last year was a very successful year together with excellent recorded growth as noted. With our ongoing Red Hat investment, Datacentrix continues to see encouraging growth in enquiries and interest."

"The Red Hat Partner Awards are an opportunity for us to show our appreciation and gratitude for the partner community. We view our ecosystem as an extended arm of the Red Hat team, so we were delighted to publicly recognise Datacentrix for their hard work and commitment to Red Hat over the past few years," comments Samantha Harper, Senior Marketing Manager for Partners and Alliances, Middle East, Turkey and Africa at Red Hat. "Datacentrix absolutely deserved the Rising Star Award, due to fantastic turnover increases, training their people on Red Hat solutions, and becoming a Premier Partner – Red Hat's highest reseller achievement.

"The second award – the Red Hat Deal Award – reiterated this, with Datacentrix growing share in multiple key customers in Sub-Saharan Africa. We look forward to a continued successful relationship with Datacentrix," she adds.

"As a Red Hat Premier Business Partner, we are very excited to continue bringing Red Hat's enterprise open source solutions to local businesses – to very positive effect already, as acknowledged by these two awards. Datacentrix is optimistic about continued good growth in collaboration with Red Hat moving forward," concludes Brussow.

Datacentrix prevails as
Dell Storage Partner of the Year

Datacentrix has been presented with the Storage Sales of the Year Award for South Africa at the Dell Technologies Partner Awards.

Says Rudolf van der Gryp, Business Unit Manager for Dell Technologies at Datacentrix: "Datacentrix brought home this award based on the fact that we had generated the highest storage-related revenue in South Africa over the past year, including for hyperconverged infrastructure (HCI).

"We've had an excellent year together, with a massive 280 percent uptick in revenue over the 2021/2022 financial year, assisted by insights from Dell, which have helped us to plan, size and scope correctly for our clients. This allows Datacentrix to deliver the right, most cost-effective equipment to local businesses in a timely manner.

"There has been very good traction in terms of new accounts for Datacentrix and Dell together for the past 12 months, and we will continue to build momentum for the next period moving forward," he adds.

We've had an excellent year together, with a massive 280 percent uptick in revenue over the 2021/2022 financial year, assisted by insights from Dell, which have helped us to plan, size and scope correctly for our clients.

Datacentrix is a Dell Technologies Titanium Partner, forming part of a niche group of partners that are recognised for their expertise in the South African industry, able to support customers across the full solution stack.

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Use information to make sense
of today's disruptive turbulence

By Shakeel Jhazbhay, Datacentrix General Manager: Digital Business Solutions

The past several months have been a time, globally, of polycrisis. Not only has the world gone through Delta, Omicron, the Great Attrition, brutal inflation rises, trillions of dollars lost on US markets, and Russia's war on Ukraine, in South Africa, we've experienced the added socio-economic challenges of energy security, infrastructure development and maintenance, job creation, and more.

Add to this the deeply personal journeys of individuals, and it is fair to say that this has been a time of massive, permanent change.

At a technology level too, we've seen information become a disruptive force, leveraging extreme automation, extreme computing and extreme network connectivity. Information is abundant. It is everything and everywhere, at all times, originating from both humans and machines.

Information – a disruptive force

Organisations are facing an unprecedented set of business, market, technology and talent disruptions, all at once. In the midst of this sweeping acceleration – whether it is cloud, 5G, internet of things (IoT), artificial intelligence (AI), machine learning (ML) or the new dawn of quantum – the question should be asked: what is the disruptive force? It all points back towards information.

The domain explosion of information is real – across business, wearables, cars, transportation, logistics, shipping, agriculture, medicine and health, sports, communications, behaviour – and everything else. Machines generate far more data on a daily basis than humans, and it is only accelerating. There is zero friction with information, and zero marginal cost in its growth.

> Information has a lifecycle and it needs to be managed: stored, exchanged, enhanced and transformed. It can be unleashed via business applications to drive information-led transformations, but needs to be properly architected with modelling, simulations, insights and learning

Managing the information lifecycle

Information has a lifecycle and it needs to be managed: stored, exchanged, enhanced and transformed. It can be unleashed via business applications to drive information-led transformations, but needs to be properly architected with modelling, simulations, insights and learning. And where information and global processes meet, compliance and risk management strategies play a pivotal role.

So, how do organisations turn rapidly accelerating disruption into exponential opportunities and sustained business value? The answer is optimised information.

**Shakeel Jhazbhay, General Manager:
Digital Business Solutions at Datacentrix**

Leveraging information

Information provides a competitive lift that comes from using it to its full potential. This differentiation is what happens when a business transforms the way it manages, leverages, and applies information.

Today, this information edge happens in the cloud: a new digital fabric, underpinning every business and empowering organisational intelligence, connectedness, and responsibility. How is this possible?

- Intelligent organisations drive business processes with simplicity and security, by removing friction and generating crucial insights for better, faster decisions.
- Connected organisations ensure customers, partners, talent and machines are linked at the core as well as at the edge via sophisticated trading grids.
- Responsible organisations safeguard their information and use it to solve the next big problems – from climate and sustainability goals, to diversity and inclusion objectives, as well as governance and trust aims.

With this information-driven advantage, businesses are able to tackle exponential problems and to do so at speed. This will be critical in moving forward, as – with the correct partners and solutions – the future is not something to predict, but rather something to build.

Datacentrix is OpenText's largest partner in Africa, as well as being one of two Platinum Partners and the first Cloud Reseller Partner in the region. For more information, contact Shakeel Jhazbhay on sjhazbhay@datacentrix.co.za

Modern leaders opt for data before cloud

A data-first strategy provides a roadmap to digitalisation and Datacentrix's advice is to start with the low-hanging fruit within the organisation, extracting intelligence from existing data sources, applying this and scaling up as you go along. This strategy accelerates an organisation's time to market.

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GAUTENG

Corporate office
Corporate Park North
238 Roan Crescent
Old Pretoria Road
Midrand, 1685
Tel: +27 (0)87 741 5000

Logistics Centre
26 Landsmark Avenue
Kosmosdal
Extension 11
Samrand, Midrand
Tel: +27 (0)12 657 5000

COASTAL

Cape Town office
18 Oxbow Crescent
The Estuaries. Century City
Cape Town, 7441
Tel: +27 (0)21 529 0700

Durban office
Ground Floor, 6 The Terrace
Westway Office Park
Westville, Durban
Tel: +27 (0)31 389 0500

Gqeberha office
Southern Life Gardens
Ground Floor, Block B
70 2nd Avenue, Newton Park
Gqerberha
Tel: +27 (0)41 391 0200

East London office
Suite 2
11 Cavendish Road
Vincent
East London, 5217
Tel: +27 (0)43 705 8000

MIDDLE EAST

Dubai office
One Business Centre DMCC
Unit number One JLT-6-00
Plot number DMCC-EZ1-1AB
Jumeirah Lake Tower
Dubai, United Arab Emirates
Tel: +971 55 917 5028

Doha office
Eighteen Tower
19th Floor, Office 1972
Lusail
Doha, Qatar
Tel: +974 4007 1793

www.datacentrix.co.za