



Kiara Health takes to the cloud, outsources managed services to Datacentrix

Pan-African pharmaceutical company, Kiara Health, has kicked off its Industry 4.0 journey, partnering with Datacentrix. This follows Kiara's acquisition of the manufacturing plant and several marketed products from generic drugs manufacturer Sandoz South Africa, a subsidiary of Swiss multinational pharmaceutical company Novartis.

The project, which was completed within a speedy six-month period – despite lockdown-related restrictions – included the rollout of a cloud-based SCADA solution (environmental monitoring system / building management system), a cloud documentation and archiving system, a Wide Area Network (WAN) and related connectivity, as well as on-site infrastructure, including a new printing service.

It also encompassed implementation of a Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) quality, documentation and training management system; a SaaS plant maintenance system; a cloud chromatography data system; the migration of all quality control laboratory equipment into the new Kiara Health environment; and the rollout of all modules of its cloud-based enterprise resource planning (ERP) platform.

Conrad Strydom, Head of Site at Kiara Health, explains that it is not the norm for a pharmaceutical organisation to opt for cloud services. "Pharmaceutical companies generally prefer to

keep their data and its control on site. However, for Kiara Health, because we needed to build an agile, scalable new system that would offer the magnitude to take over from the technology Novartis had in place, the move away from the older, on-premise technology to the cloud made complete sense.

"Not only would the new technology allow us to scale up or down capacity as needed, it would also provide Kiara Health with a solid backbone to enter the Industry 4.0 space. And, as an entrepreneurial South African company, the outsourcing of these matters to Datacentrix would enable Kiara Health employees to focus their time and energy on the core business, instead of trying to keep up with infrastructure maintenance, licence management, backup and restore, cybersecurity measures and so on."

Kiara Health went out to tender at the end of 2019, seeking a like-minded technology partner. "Datacentrix already had an established track record with Novartis, and this experience within the pharmaceutical space made for a natural extension of this relationship to move forward with Kiara Health at the beginning of 2020."

Datacentrix began its formal engagement with Kiara Health in March this year, with execution starting towards the end of May. "We were hoping to have gone live already by then, but the project was obviously delayed because of constraints imposed by the COVID-19 local lockdown," explains Brian Smith,



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Business Unit Manager at Datacentrix. “However, despite the setbacks, we managed to reign in the process and successfully complete the project in July.”

Says Strydom: “On the technical side, Datacentrix is one of the most knowledgeable crews around, so despite these challenges, the project was still completed quickly and efficiently. It would not be possible to deliver what Datacentrix did, over this short span of time, without this type of knowledge and agility.

“Since going live several weeks ago, we've been able to provide our users with a seamless experience regardless of where they are operating from – be it from home, the office, or anywhere else, the user experience is the same across the board, something that was not possible previously.

We've received good user feedback on the new cloud-based environment so far, to the extent that it has been impossible for our people to determine whether they're working locally or in the cloud.

“This success story is emphasised by the complexities of both the environment as well as the constraints emanating from the dramatic COVID crisis in South Africa. Datacentrix successfully met any challenge it faced head on,” Strydom concludes.

Kiara Health differentiates itself within the highly competitive African healthcare space by offering unique healthcare solutions and medical technologies to select high-growth countries to cater to unmet needs. Its offering includes robotics, devices and point-of-care (POC) diagnostics, as well as innovator and generic medicines, and over-the-counter (OTC) products.

Brian Smith, Business Unit Manager: Managed Data Centre and Cloud Solutions at Datacentrix; Eric Hodson, Service Delivery Manager at Datacentrix; Venesia Oxford, Account Manager at Datacentrix and Conrad Strydom, Head of Site at Kiara Health



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