

CASE STUDY

Clientèle Life ensures competitive differentiation with consistent uptime and fast data access using Infinidat

Data storage is an ongoing challenge for any business in the era of digital transformation. Clientèle Life, part of the Johannesburg Stock Exchange (JSE)-listed Clientèle Limited Group, is a well-known company in the South African market. It has been offering affordable funeral coverage, health, legal and life insurance for the past 25 years, with convenient, easy to understand products. As part of the insurance and financial services sector, data is a heavily regulated commodity for Clientèle Life. When it comes to meeting compliance objectives as well as performance requirements, the data platform is of the utmost importance.

“When selecting a technology partner to assist with our storage requirements, cost was obviously a key consideration. Performance and support were also two important criteria, as they impact our ability to deliver a better customer experience through consistent uptime and speedy access to information. Infinidat offered us a solution which contributed to this competitive advantage, as well as ensuring that we have the ability to cater to future growth.”



Keith Fagan
Infrastructure Services
Manager
Clientèle Life

THE CHALLENGE

Clientèle Life’s existing data storage solution was reaching end of support. In addition, their foray into hyper-converged storage had not produced the performance benefits that they had anticipated. In order to address this issue, it would have required the costly addition of new compute nodes. This presented an opportunity to find a solution that would better cater to their current and future needs.

Their requirements included a three-tier architecture, high availability, high performance and support for the virtualised environment as well as excellent replication capabilities. Above all, Clientèle Life needed the flexibility to scale on short notice without impacting daily business operations.

Clientèle Life run a 96% virtualised environment, with more than 350 virtual servers hosted on eight production and six Disaster Recovery (DR) VMware hosts. The entire company, ranging from telephony systems to its Structured Query Language (SQL) database relies on back end storage, making high availability critical to its business operations.

“In the past, we needed to upgrade our solution every three years to meet performance, capacity and availability requirements. This became costly and therefore required a more robust solution. This is where Infinidat came into the picture with its reputable solution, augmented by a unique elastic price model. The model allows us to access additional storage instantly whilst only paying for what we use,” explained Riaan Moller, Storage and VMware Environment Manager at Clientèle Life.

THE SOLUTION

Infinidat supplied Clientèle Life with two InfiniBox® F4230 storage arrays, for synchronous replication between its production and DR data centres. The units have a total capacity of 1 Petabyte (PB), of which they are currently using 600 Terabytes (TB) across both environments. Through intelligent software algorithms, the InfiniBox storage arrays use commodity hardware to Pricing is completely transparent and all necessary licensing and functionality are included up front.

Solution Advantages for Clientèle Life



0% downtime



40% improvement
on database
consistency checks



Synchronous replication
enhances performance and
bolsters data security

In addition to supplying and implementing the physical solution, Infinidat provided full training on the system. Consequently, two engineers at Clientèle Life are now certified. This allowed the team to gain an in-depth understanding of their system to maintain and run it independently with the ongoing support of Infinidat at a global level.

This solution has not only met Clientèle Life's data storage requirements from a cost efficiency and performance perspective but also provided the organisation with a competitive advantage. To make sure these benefits are maintained, Infinidat provides local support and offers proactive monitoring to ensure constant uptime and availability.

"When selecting a technology partner to assist with our storage requirements, cost was obviously a key consideration. Performance and support were also two important criteria, as they impact our ability to deliver a better customer experience through consistent uptime and speedy access to information. In today's highly competitive business environment, this often becomes a differentiator when attracting new clients and retaining existing ones, thus making it a strategic initiative. Infinidat offered us an enterprise storage system which contributed to this competitive advantage, as well as ensuring that we have the ability to cater to future growth," said Keith Fagan, Infrastructure Services Manager at Clientèle Life.

THE RESULT

The InfiniBox storage array deliver both high performance and 100% availability. This is critical, as Clientèle Life stores a vast amount of data that needs to be available at all times.

"Since we installed the system, we have experienced zero downtime, thanks to the triple redundancy offered by Infinidat. This also allows us to replace or upgrade storage components without impacting production systems, which would have required downtime on our previous storage arrays. Infinidat gives us greater flexibility and has allowed us to future-proof our storage system, since our capacity can grow alongside our ever-growing business and data requirements," said Moller.

In addition to these benefits, Clientèle Life has seen a 40% improvement on database consistency checks since migrating the SQL environment onto the Infinidat storage array. The previous system performed asynchronous replication, whereas Infinidat offers synchronous capabilities that result in significant performance enhancements. This ensures data is backed up and recoverable at all times, bolstering data security.

FUTURE PLANS

"The technology has met and exceeded our expectations; it simply does what it is supposed to do without intervention. It has given us an even higher degree of confidence with regards to our technology and storage infrastructure. We are assured that our data is secure and can be recovered at all times. Additionally, we have an excellent relationship with Infinidat who provide proactive management and support. Our Infinidat storage arrays is delivering a Return on Investment through savings, enabling us to do more with fewer resources," Moller concluded.

Based on Clientèle Life's need to future-proof its storage, the requirements for an increase in capacity is not a case of 'if' but 'when.' In Infinidat, Clientèle Life has selected an organisation that offers a strategic solution, which can be easily and quickly scaled depending on its requirements.