dimension data

ZEST Takes Customer Service to New Heights

ZEST Electric Motors

industry:
Manufacturing

country:
South Africa

business challenge:
ZEST's WAN was not adequately supporting the needs of its business users. Application response time was slow which led to user frustration and the inability to respond to queries – and opportunities – in a swift and professional manner. Spiralling bandwidth costs represented an additional concern

solution:
A more cost-effective and reliable WAN based on Riverbed network optimisation technology

services:
• Implementation services for a Riverbed Optimisation System (RiOS)

results:
• ZEST has seen a sharp reduction in bandwidth costs, as it is able to closely monitor and eliminate any unauthorised activity

• Data compression enables the prioritisation of strategic applications to ensure that business critical activities are prioritised

• The scalable platform delivers business agility through its ability to swiftly roll out new applications

Executive Summary

Concerned with the ability of its wide area network (WAN) to **adequately support the needs of the business, customers and end-users,** ZEST turned to its long-term technology partner, Dimension Data. Today, thanks to a WAN optimisation solution, issues such as high bandwidth costs, slow **distributed application response times and limited opportunities for local and cross border collaboration** with customers and internal stakeholders, are a thing of the past.

Client Overview

ZEST markets, distributes and supports a wide range of electric motors, variable speed drives, transformers and switchgear in sub-Saharan Africa. It has specified, designed, planned and implemented solutions for projects as diverse as transformers for the national electrical infrastructure, large mill electric motors in mining applications, and small electric motors for electrically powered lawn mowers. Today, ZEST's customer base exceeds 1,000.

Business Challenge

ZEST has a dispersed business model, comprising a country-wide network of branches and distributors. Users connect to the intranet, e-mail system and internet services across the organisational WAN.

As a forward-looking organisation, ZEST recognised the importance of ensuring that its business users were able to access information at any time and from any location, whether it be its headquarters, a branch office on another continent, or a customer site. As a result, ZEST's IT team was under pressure to deliver an increasing number of applications over the WAN.

In addition to addressing the scale of the load on its WAN, ZEST's IT team sought to demonstrate to its business stakeholders that the organisation was gaining maximum return from the investments it had made in its infrastructure.

Concerns regarding cost containment and the ability of the existing infrastructure to scale to support the growth of the business, added additional pressure.

"The solution provided by Dimension Data has **delivered outstanding results.** Users have reported significant improvements in their experience in using the network . . . and these improvements have **been made possible without the purchase** of additional bandwidth."

Felicity Miners, IT Manager at ZEST

Relationship History

ZEST has enlisted the expertise of Dimension Data on a number of strategic IT projects in recent years. These include maintenance of ZEST's network, consulting services and strategic planning.

"ZEST's partnership with Dimension Data provides us with network stability, guidance in the planning process, exposure to new trends in the IT marketplace, and importantly, a robust and responsive network. Our network is the platform that allows us to interact and collaborate and is therefore a significant business enabler,"

says **Felicity Miners, IT Manager at ZEST.**

Solution Provided

Drawing on our understanding of ZEST's business model, future aspirations and the architecture of its WAN – and the requirements of the people that use it – Dimension Data recommended a Riverbed solution. Riverbed's WAN optimisation technologies accelerate data and applications across the entire network – at the data centre, in the cloud, at branch offices, and even for mobile workers. Its features enable businesses to operate with greater agility and efficiency, save time and reduce operational overheads.

How We Delivered

Together, ZEST and Dimension Data laid the plans for a coherently-managed and risk-free deployment. Initially, the solution was deployed at ZEST's head office in Johannesburg and at 16 branch offices.

Dimension Data's proprietary project management Primer, gave ZEST the assurance that the deployment would be undertaken in a controlled manner and that it aligned to global project management best practices.

Value Derived

Today, through the application of intelligent bandwidth optimisation techniques, ZEST is able meet increased user demands without the need to purchase additional capacity. Operational benefits include improved application response times and the ability to monitor and control bandwidth, visibility into usage patterns and detailed reporting.

"The solution prevails over bandwidth and geographical limitations and improves our employees' productivity, thanks to our ability to better collaborate with colleagues in remote office locations. File transfers that previously took hours, now take minutes or seconds," says Miners.

A Central Management Console gives ZEST's IT team visibility into how applications are performing. Reporting metrics include WAN traffic levels, application throughput performance and transmission control protocol session flow characteristics. Reports can be generated for a specific time period, going back a far as a year. This gives ZEST's IT team the insights it needs to diagnose and swiftly resolve infrastructure-related problems. Greater control over performance and cost also means reduced operational risk and a more efficient – and therefore more competitive – operation.

Miner says: "The solution provided by Dimension Data has delivered outstanding results. The users at our branches around the country have reported significant improvements in their experience in using the network. This was made possible without us needing to purchase additional bandwidth. In addition, having a single, vendor-neutral integrator managing our infrastructure simplifies the vendor management process."