CYBERLOGIC

Transforming IT operations through centralisation.

How a leading food production company transformed its IT operations through the centralisation of data and licensing.

In the heart of South Africa's food product manufacturing industry stands a company with a diverse portfolio of businesses and brands, suppling all the leading South African retailers. This is the story of how they, under the guidance of their Business Systems Executive, embarked on a remarkable journey of transformation and resilience, reshaping their IT landscape to enable centralisation of information, licensing, and reporting.

The Early Challenges: Battling a Decentralised IT landscape

When he joined the organisation in 2018 as the Group ERP Support Expert, the driver of this monumental change initially focused on business systems integration, working on products and third-party systems. At that time, the organisation had a decentralised approach to IT management. With almost 50 sites across the country, collaboration was challenging. Licensing costs were spiralling out of control, and policies and procedures were practically non-existent. The organisation had

plans to list on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange (JSE) and the reporting requirements meant a change was needed. "We had several different business units on 12 different platforms across 20 different servers with information from six ERP systems – some of them manual, some of them on Excel, all being consolidated in Excel spreadsheets in the background and, when we moved towards listing, that was really just not good enough."

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The Quest for an IT Partner

By 2021, the situation had escalated. An intensive IT audit by an external, third-party provider exposed numerous shortcomings, and the company was struggling to move forward. Reflecting on the report, the Business Systems Executive shared, "To be honest, we had nothing. We didn't have any groupwide policies, procedures, infrastructure, or security."

The decentralised approach that had served them well enough up to that point, was proving to be a hinderance. "To get anything done from a collaborative point of view you needed to fight to get 20 people's opinions." Reporting requirements for listed entities are stringent and having the data living in siloed systems, disparate formats, and inaccessible at a group level meant audited reports took far longer to compile than they should have and decisions weren't being made based on cold hard facts. "It's incredibly important that we have access to that information and we have access to it very quickly."

In addition, the incumbent CIO was being transitioned out of the business and, so the decision was made to interview and evaluate potential IT partners to guide the organisation through the necessary changes.

A Critical Incident and a Change in Leadership

During this tumultuous period, a security breach rocked one of the organisation's business units. The Cyberlogic team had been assisting with day-to-day IT operations at another of the business units and, in the immediate aftermath of the breach, they stepped in and played a pivotal role in mitigating the crisis. Reflecting on the breach, the Business Systems Executive shared, "Cyberlogic was an incredible help in turning what could have been a disastrous situation into something we were able to manage. It was still a sizeable exercise, but it could have been far, far worse."

The role they played in managing the aftermath and remediation of the breach, led the organisation to engage Cyberlogic as a technical expert – a Virtual CIO – rather than seeking a replacement for the newly vacant CIO role. "I then approached our CEO and CFO and said I really felt we needed to engage Cyberlogic and bring them on board as an advisor, from a CIO level." With the Cyberlogic team already being familiar with the business and the Business Systems Executive's strong feelings about IT investment, the decision was straightforward. "I don't think any company that is not an IT company should invest in ICT internally."

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The Transformation Begins

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With Cyberlogic managing IT operations at a group level and playing the role of the Group Virtual CIO, the transformation of the IT landscape began in earnest. Bespoke solutions streamlined operations and fostered collaboration among teams. What seemed like a small change, the centralisation of licensing, saved millions across the Group. "In the first year alone, Cyberlogic bringing all the licensing into a centralised unit, I think saved us something like R3m or R4m." The money saved was then repurposed, enabling the organisation to embark on a journey to embrace cloud technology, strengthen security, and enable collaboration across its business units.

Success Amidst Challenges

The outcomes of this partnership speak volumes. The IT landscape, once fragmented and chaotic, now stands as a unified and secure environment. "We have consolidated financials, we have a consolidated Azure data factory, we have one single Azure environment, two smaller SQL environments. It's much more manageable, functional, and safer and we can recover it quickly, thanks to Cyberlogic." The ability to respond swiftly and a focus on centralisation of information defines the organisation's triumphant path. Cyberlogic playing the role of a trusted partner rather than a mere vendor, was pivotal in this transformation. "I go to bed knowing that the work that gets done every day by Cyberlogic – and the work that I have done – has added incredible value to the company and keeps them safe."

Data: The Future Frontier

The organisation's journey towards data maturity is in its early stages. The consolidation and centralisation of information from various business units has vastly improved with the migration to a secure Azure cloud environment, enabling them to understand markets and customer needs better. As the data accumulates, they are poised to unlock valuable insights, drive efficiency, and make informed business decisions.
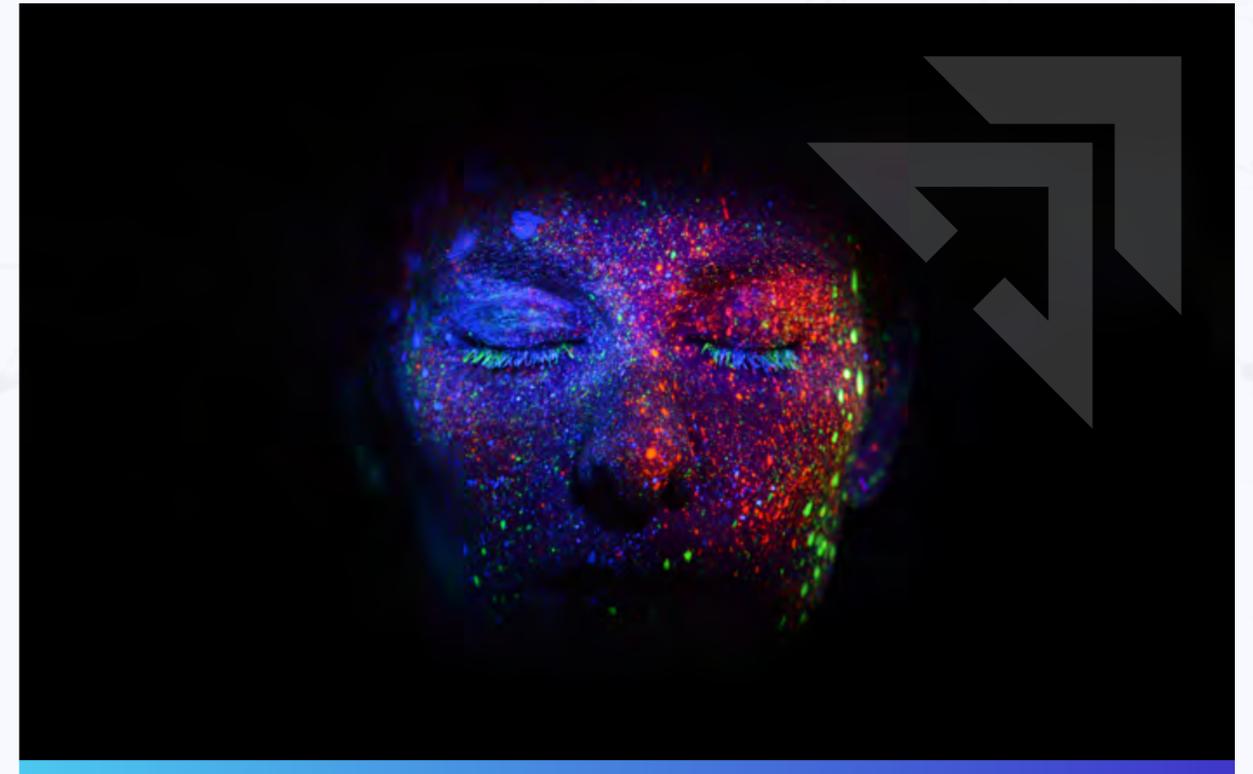
Trust as the Cornerstone

Above all, this success story is rooted in trust. The decision to bring Cyberlogic onboard was driven by a profound sense of trust. "That was ultimately the reason for the decision, out of all the vendors we spoke to, the only vendor I truly trusted to look after us was Cyberlogic." This partnership has been marked by a genuine commitment to shared objectives, creating a relationship far beyond a mere transaction.

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The transformation of the organisation's IT environment under the guidance of its Business Systems Executive, and in partnership with Cyberlogic, exemplify the power of trust, resilience, and strategic IT planning. This journey, from chaos to consolidation, sets the stage for continued growth and success in the dynamic world of food manufacturing.

To find out more about how Cyberlogic can help optimise your business's IT environment to foster success, get in touch.