A S C E N T

TECHNOLOGY

ABSOLUTE DATA EXCELLENCE

ASCENT UPGRADES MTC'S MISSION-CRITICAL ORACLE VLDB ENVIRONMENT WITH NO DOWNTIME

make the connection
mtc

As the largest mobile operator in Namibia, MTC (Mobile Telecommunications Limited) is a company that requires enormous amounts of business intelligence (BI) in order to successfully serve its customer base. With over 1,7 million subscribers, the company has a clear need to understand customer wants and needs, as well as develop a better understanding of market segmentation, with a view to delivering relevant products and services.

With this in mind, MTC had implemented a database environment designed to meet these BI requirements. With a 30 Terabyte environment that has in the region of 45 million records loaded into it per day, this solution is what is known as a Very Large Database (VLDB) environment. However, due to a hardware fault, the VLDB began to experience problems with data corruption, leading MTC to call in the experts.

Konrad Swart, Manager: IT Infrastructure at MTC takes up the story: "We realised quickly that we needed to sort this issue out. However, our senior in-house database specialist had recently resigned, leaving us short of the necessary skills. This was when we engaged with Ascent Technology."

"Ascent not only offered a deep understanding of complex database environments, but was also able to bring both skilled personnel and a strong technical focus to the table. The company's assistance meant that not only were we able to recover all the corrupted data, but we were able to do it without any significant downtime. They adopted a step-by-step approach and developed an action plan with specific schedules and timelines. This meant that MTC's management was constantly kept apprised of the situation and exactly where the project stood at any given time. We have now restored the availability in this environment to well over 99%, which is a significant improvement on where we were before Ascent became involved."

Johan Lamberts, MD of Ascent Technology, points out that the organisation went the extra mile to ensure that MTC's environment was properly taken care of. Ascent also offered to upgrade MTC's Oracle database to the latest version available, version 11. This, he says, was done at the same time the corruption issue was being solved.

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"Upgrading MTC to the latest version, has enabled the company to make use of features like advanced compression and partitioning. The upgrade also reduced the complexity of the VLDB environment, thus simplifying the management thereof. The task was complex, but we drew on our extensive expertise to ensure that the entire project was completed in just two months. Moreover, the vast majority of the work was done remotely, by our team based in South Africa."

"There was an enormous amount of additional effort put into this project by the Ascent team, but this extra effort only serves to underline Ascent's flexibility and focus on service excellence. We are an organisation that makes its experts available to its customers on a 24/7 basis – even when the customer is based in a different country altogether," states Lamberts.

Swart indicates that although MTC only faced the challenge of data corruption on one of its numerous Oracle databases, Ascent also assisted with the maintenance and management of the rest of its database environment. He says that in addition to this, Ascent also offered to train and upskill MTC's own in-house database administrators.

"Although this upskilling was not part of the original agreement, Ascent insisted that on-site skills are a necessity. Therefore the company provided training to our people to ensure that we not only have an optimal database environment, but also the skills close at hand to keep it that way. Clearly, we made the right choice in bringing Ascent on board."

Swart states that now that the data corruption is a thing of the past, Ascent is helping MTC to assess its future requirements and to plan a strategic roadmap to assist the business to get to where it wants to be. He says that the mobile operator is so impressed with Ascent's professionalism, availability, knowledge and skills that it has chosen to enter in a co-sourcing agreement with the company. MTC has therefore signed a service level agreement that will see Ascent continue to provide support and services, in conjunction with MTC's own in-house database administrators.

"Our two organisations have developed a trusted and fulfilling partnership, and we are looking forward to a long and fruitful relationship with Ascent well into the future," concludes Swart.