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ASCENT TECHNOLOGY PUTS TRANSUNION AUTO ON THE ROAD TO FURTHER SUCCESS

TransUnion Auto is fast becoming the standard of vehicle intelligence in South Africa. The only provider of current market values of used vehicles in the country, TransUnion supplies this essential information for the buying and selling of vehicles, as well as operates an online auction portal. Known as TradeXchange, the portal allows dealers to reduce the time vehicles spend on their floor, while obtaining the best possible price, thanks to national exposure.

With its unique market niche, it is unsurprising that the company experienced rapid growth. This, in turn, led to stability challenges within its IT infrastructure. These challenges meant that TransUnion had to deal with unacceptable levels of downtime and the attendant customer dissatisfaction. The company therefore contacted its hardware technology partner, Dell for help. In turn, Dell called in one of its Preferred Professional Services Partners, in the form of Ascent Technology.

"Effectively, what TransUnion required was a partner that could not only help with its existing challenges, but that could also plan a strategic technology roadmap for the future. Such a partner would need to play a trusted advisory role and bring a deep understanding of complex database environments to the table, and it would need to have skilled and experienced personnel and a strong technical focus," says Kriben Reddy, Technical Manager of TransUnion.

Reddy indicates that the most immediate challenge facing TransUnion was its need for high availability for its entire system. After all, if the system was down, the company was unable to do business.

"Because the organisation had experienced such strong and rapid growth, it needed its entire database environment to be overhauled, to bring it in line with the growing business requirements. As database administration specialists, Ascent was brought in by Dell to focus on the key issues of performance and scalability," he says.

"TransUnion was running Oracle rack clusters, with an applications server operating the online vehicle auctioning portal. While this was certainly the key application for our business, we also required high availability for our business to business (B2B) and business

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to consumer (B2C) portals as well," adds Reddy.

Through the consolidation and upgrading of the company's Oracle database environment, Ascent was able to help TransUnion address the challenges created by the rapid growth. In particular, Ascent was able to take a snapshot of where the organisation was, thereby enabling a seamless migration to the upgraded Oracle technology environment.

"We have partnered with Dell on many occasions, when the company has required the kind of specific skills we can provide. As a Preferred Professional Services Partner, we also offer the kind of industry credibility TransUnion required. Perhaps most importantly, we were prepared to not only assist them with their immediate needs, but were willing to develop a roadmap for the future - and then walk that road alongside them. This is something we have many years of experience in doing," says Johan Lamberts, MD of Ascent Technology.

"We were involved in upgrading their entire Oracle stack. This included database software, clustering and applications servers with portal and PHP. The latter was, in fact, a double upgrade across two different versions of the software. In

addition, we implemented grid control for the monitoring and administration of the architecture moving forward."

Lamberts says that Ascent delivered on all TransUnion's requirements. These included improved performance, increased uptime and better availability. Thanks to the consolidation, management and performance monitoring the company delivered, TransUnion has also realised increased cost savings.

"We have a long history of working with Dell and this project once again emphasised the symbiotic nature of our relationship. Because our two organisations work so well together, we were able to deliver on all the requirements, thereby offering genuine value to the customer."

"This was something we certainly achieved with TransUnion, where we were able to play the role of trusted advisor and partner. By delivering strong service level agreements, coupled with a strategic roadmap for the future, Ascent has clearly delivered to TransUnion's satisfaction. This is evidenced by the fact that we are jointly identifying further projects that will enable us to add even more value for TransUnion in the future," he concludes.