

Mail sorted! Business continuity at its best

Leading Johannesburg Stock Exchange-listed property group Growthpoint Properties takes business continuity beyond disaster recovery with Mimecast.

Context

Growthpoint Properties is the largest listed property company in South Africa today by market capitalization and assets, valued at more than R19 billion and R29 billion respectively. The company’s diversified portfolio comprises 437 retail, office and industrial properties of the highest quality, located countrywide, including La Lucia Mall, Brooklyn Mall, Woodmead Retail Park and Constantia Village. The company has built an image as a cutting-edge organization that is way ahead of the pack. It is a national concern with over 450 staff located in three regional and several remote sites across South Africa. The company outsources its IT infrastructure, partnering with Dimension Data for network services

Challenge

What do you do when your organisation is facing the ultimate in business communications crises? You have over 437 buildings to manage and, 450 staff to provide with communications infrastructure, but since unbundling from your management company you do not own a single PC, or server, or even have a designated office. You call on Mimecast for an integrated and seamless email solution.

Up until May 2007, Growthpoint had been part of the Investec Group, housed and managed as part of its head office. The decision to unbundle the company from Investec did more than shake up the staff. It also presented Growthpoint with an IT problem needing rapid solutions and a new direction. Working off radio links from remote and temporary office locations highlighted just one thing to CIO Alec Davis: how critical email communication was to the business’ operational functioning.



AT A GLANCE:

Company

- Growthpoint (www.growthpoint.co.za)
- Industry: Financial, Real Estate
- Number of Email Users: 450

Objectives

- Business critical services without the cost infrastructures
- The need for a holistic email management system

Benefits

- Cost savings
- No fragmented systems

“Initially we were looking for a means to create a separate Growthpoint brand on email as we unbundled from the Investec Group. As we investigated this, we also realised our need for a way to deal with email archiving for compliance purposes. From previously enjoying Investec’s state-of-the-art systems, we were thrust into a position of needing the same level of compliance but without the budget to implement costly infrastructure,” says Davis.

Solution

Growthpoint's investigations of the various products in the market led the company to Mimecast. "Once we found ourselves at Mimecast's door, we realised there were a range of 'hidden' benefits that have made it virtually impossible to consider any other service or vendor for this purpose," says Davis.

Mimecast provided Growthpoint with a completely holistic solution to email communication without the traditional hardware, software or capital expense. The Unified Email Management services provided by Mimecast immediately saved Growthpoint from needing to invest in gateways, anti-spam systems, email archives, continuity facilities, email marketing, policy control and virus protection.

Benefits

On an operational level, the cost savings were immediately apparent across Growthpoint's licensing and infrastructure costs, all the way to a reduction in bandwidth costs, explains Davis.

Additionally, Mimecast's technology gave Growthpoint a single point of control over its email communications that integrated easily into its new IT setup, ensured the integrity of email receipt, delivery, policy enforcement, tracking and retention, and provided the online archive enabling a practically bottomless email storage facility.

Most importantly, Growthpoint gained a comprehensive business continuity infrastructure, which it has already actively used to great advantage during the unbundling. "We all know that any email system will fail at some stage, whether as a result of software error, hardware failure, or human error. During the unbundling, we gained some insights into possibilities for

downtime. With Mimecast we were immediately able to plan and protect our email services appropriately to avoid the significant costs and risks that email failure presented to the business, and that did not necessarily only include complete disasters like fire and flood."

Mimecast has changed Growthpoint's disaster recovery perspective completely by delivering a unique gateway-based email continuity solution as a service via the Internet.

"It is seamless and operates in the background, and yet it is completely vital to our business." "We had a definite opex saving with the implementation of Mimecast – with benefits specifically in terms of the time taken to prove email distribution and delivery"

- Alec Davis
CIO
Growthpoint

"Growthpoint users have ongoing access to their new and archived email in practically any possible outage or disaster scenario – including complete failure of in-house email systems," says Barry Gill, Technical Lead at Mimecast. "Most companies will never have to test it – Growthpoint's complex migration to their own new system meant that they tested the Mimecast solution to its limits... and they know that it works 100%."

"We run regular disaster recovery simulations at Growthpoint and know that our email service is simply not affected. Our users can work uninterrupted in the event of any email outage," adds Davis.

Davis says that the peace of mind Mimecast offers Growthpoint allows the IT team to focus on the core functions of the business, especially developing and maintaining business applications critical to the business' growth and customer retention.

"It is seamless and operates in the background, and yet it is completely vital to our business," says Davis. Asked how he sees email today, nearly three years down the line with Mimecast, Davis says, "I just don't worry about email anymore!"

Mimecast makes business email and data safer for thousands of customers and millions of employees worldwide. Founded in 2003, the Company's next-generation cloud-based security, archiving and continuity services protect email and deliver comprehensive email risk management.

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