



Liberty Improves IT Operations Through AppCentrix Powered by ExtraHop

Customer Case Study: Liberty

“ExtraHop, as delivered through the Appcentrix application performance managed service, provides an unprecedented level of visibility across our technology stack. It has helped us improve performance from the network to the application tier, and allowed us to centralize visibility within the technology domains in order to better meet the needs of the business.”

– Nick Truran, Head of IT Operations, Liberty

The Beginning

Founded in South Africa in 1957, Liberty has grown to become one of Africa’s largest and most progressive financial services institutions with representation in 16 African countries.

As in most global organizations, information technology plays a central role at Liberty, from transactional systems that support internal functions to customer facing websites and mobile apps that help it to deliver asset management, investment, insurance, and health products to hundreds of thousands of people across Africa.

With multiple operating divisions across Liberty, some with separate development and support teams, ensuring consistent performance of the technology and in turn, end-user experience, proved problematic. This led to a major strategic decision to create a centralized enterprise-wide monitoring capability that could provide visibility across all Liberty ICT functions.

As Nick Truran, Head of IT Operations at Liberty, explains, “Our goal was to create a centralized function across the technology stack to streamline and improve service delivery and react faster to any issues.” Key goals included understanding and proactively detecting issues, reducing the meantime to fix any problems, and providing strategic visibility over long-term development programs.



LIBERTY

Company Profile

Liberty is the third largest life insurer in South Africa, and part of Liberty Holdings Limited, a Pan-African financial services company with approximately \$40B in assets under management.

The Beginning

Following strong organic growth and several acquisitions, Liberty had accumulated a large number of mission-critical systems. The complex interdependencies of these systems, integration challenges associated with M&A, and the growth of new internet and mobile app platforms, led to challenges in assuring application performance and end-user experience.

The Transformation

In order to give Liberty greater visibility and control over their infrastructure and applications, Appcentrix, an ExtraHop partner, provides Liberty with a managed service including the ExtraHop stream analytics platform.

Benefits

- Proactive trend analysis helps IT spot issues before they escalate into service outages
- Better understanding of root cause across multiple application and network stacks means faster time to fix
- Real-time visibility over internal and customer facing application performance aiding longer term development processes
- Breaking down of complex process silos and centralization of the helpdesk team to be more responsive.

The Transformation

To ensure the success of its performance management integration initiative, Liberty turned to Appcentrix, a South African specialist in application performance management. Understanding the diversity and complexity of the IT environment at Liberty, the team at Appcentrix built a custom performance management suite, making use of ExtraHop as part of the solution. Appcentrix, who had built the region's first monitoring service to use ExtraHop, were able to provide deeper insight into technology infrastructure and application performance.

As Gustav van Vuuren, CTO for Appcentrix explains, "We've worked with ExtraHop in other managed services deployments, so we knew the value it could deliver to Liberty. Not only does ExtraHop provide full-stack visibility, its Open Data Stream capabilities allow for seamless integration with our other application monitoring and alerting tools."

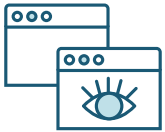
For Liberty, the use of the Appcentrix managed service allows it to gain the benefit of multiple performance management technologies including wire data analytics in a single offering. Appcentrix provides both a real-time monitoring service to detect immediate issues and detailed long-term performance reporting to uncover linear trends.

By monitoring application data flowing across Liberty's WANs and LANs, Appcentrix is completely non-intrusive and avoids the need for local traffic collection applets on Liberty's application servers or disparate diagnostic tools across its network. Appcentrix is deployed across multiple data centers and PoP locations with reporting feeding into Liberty's centralized National Operations Centre based in Johannesburg.

Benefits

Following a proof of concept to help Liberty redefine its IT and application support workflows, the Appcentrix managed service is now helping to deliver enhanced insights across the Liberty application stack.

Proactive Insights for Better End-User Experience



Instead of multiple support structures and inability to correlate performance issues across different departmental boundaries, Truran and his team are now able to pinpoint issues quickly, "By gaining integrated visibility over both the network and application stack, we have a much greater degree of control over our environment. In the past, we often used to find out about problems when end-users alerted us. Now, we can be proactive, detecting trends before they escalate and allowing us to intervene before it impacts end users."

DevOps Visibility Leads to Better Applications and Services



To date, Appcentrix has been deployed to provide performance management for nearly half of the most critical transaction processing systems and Truran and his team are continuing the roll-out to encompass web and mobile-application platforms.

"The benefits go beyond just day-to-day," says Truran, "By gaining a better understanding into the application data flow and relationships between different application infrastructure elements, we are providing our development teams with the hard data that allows them to improve the next generation of applications and build better processes to deliver more reliable services."

A More Helpful Helpdesk



The centralization of application performance management has had an operational benefit for the helpdesk team, "From a practical standpoint, we are better equipped with the knowledge we need to get the job done," says Truran, "We will continue rolling out Appcentrix and ExtraHop across more areas with a recognition that application performance is an ongoing mission. This is a partnership that is helping us deliver the performance and reliability expectation for the wider business, now, and into the future."