


Case study
Imperial



Unlocking IT efficiency with a single provider

Imperial turn to strategic partner Vodafone to enhance and simplify their IT estate

The future is exciting.

Ready?



vodacom
business

Rapid growth for logistics giant, Imperial resulted in a highly complex IT estate that was challenging to manage and a cause of inefficiency.

Imperial started out as a small car dealership in Johannesburg, South Africa in 1948. Owing to steady growth through acquisition and greenfield start-ups, the Imperial Group now employ approximately 49,000 people in over 30 companies on five continents, operating in the logistics and vehicle sectors.

Imperial had grown into a very complex organisation, dealing with multiple vendors

and suppliers in South Africa. By 2011, managing the diverse IT services for the group was proving very challenging, so Imperial chose Vodacom as their preferred IT solutions provider based on the scale and capability to meet their vast requirements.

That's where the partnership with Vodacom began: the two companies became strategic partners and through learning each other's

processes and businesses, they have been able to create mutually beneficial solutions.

Vodacom is majority owned by Vodafone, one of the world's largest telecommunications companies and provides a range of services including voice, messaging, data and fixed communications.



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One of the main advantages of partnering with Vodafone is that with a single provider, the organisation's IT processes are much easier to manage. The stability of the network and the service level is exceptional.

Kevin Hearnshaw,
Business Solutions Executive, Imperial

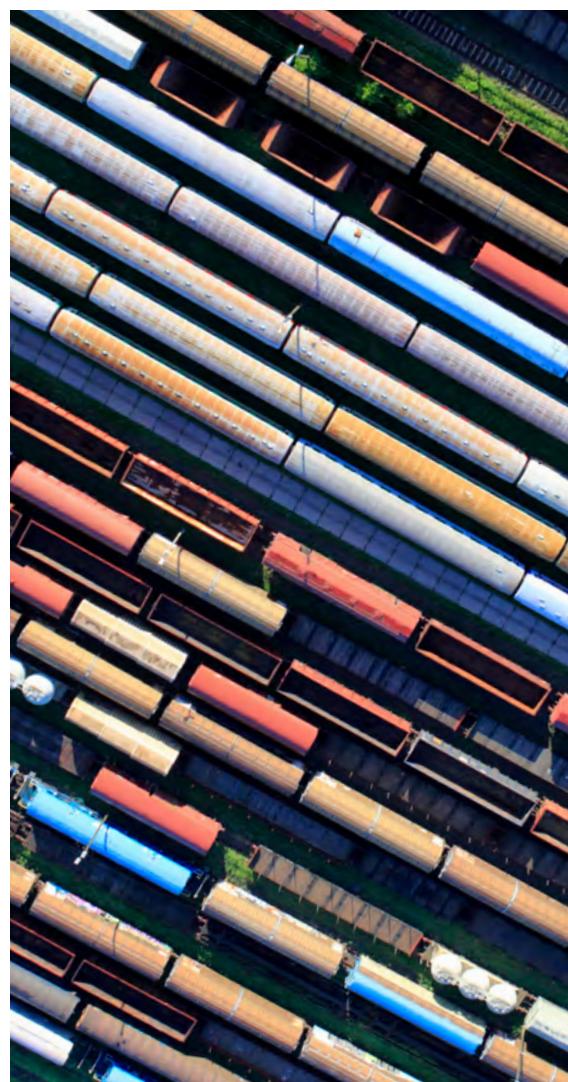
The challenge

Adopt a centralised IT strategy to unlock efficiency and ensure growth

Imperial's strategy and subsequent growth that brought together a number of companies through acquisition and an extremely federated operating model led to a complicated and diverse IT infrastructure. To tackle this, Imperial Online was formed in 2009: a centralised IT function to help reduce operational complexities and improve IT efficiencies in Imperial South Africa. However, implementing a centralised strategy with no single view or platform was not an easy task. Consequently, in 2011, Imperial sought out external expertise to help them manage their datacentre, disaster recovery and hosting requirements – an important pillar of their centralisation strategy.

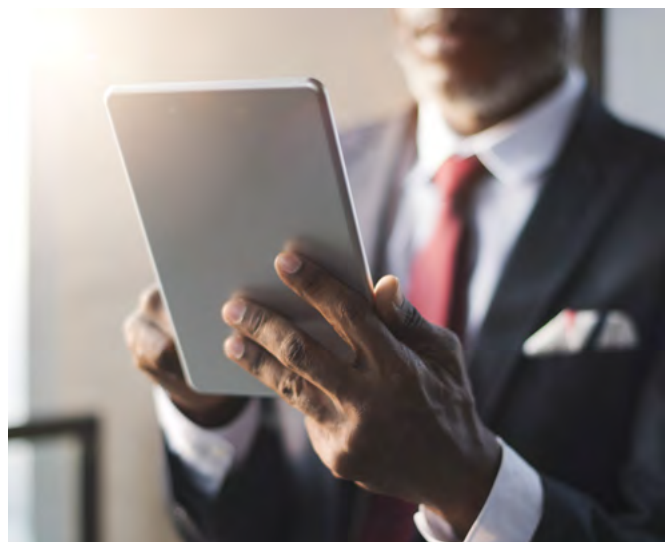
Also required were high-end hosting facilities with redundancies and backups, alongside a managed solution.

Therefore, Imperial decided to appoint Vodacom as their single service provider to deliver a centralised managed hosting solution in South Africa. Vodafone understood Imperial's challenges and tailored their offering to suit Imperial's needs of simplifying and consolidating IT processes for all their subsidiaries to reduce the hassle and expense of managing their hosting in-house. The solution provider solution enabled Imperial to handle their IT processes more effectively, making the company's operations more seamless and transparent.



Imperial's relationship with Vodafone is more like a partnership: we understand each other's processes, and Vodafone as our strategic partner is an extension of our business. All this allows us to compensate for one another when necessary and improve together.

Kevin Hearnshaw,
Business Solutions Executive, Imperial



The solution

From a managed hosting provider to a total communications partner

Imperial turned to Vodafone to manage the critical hosting and disaster recovery requirements for their group of businesses, including the logistics division (Imperial Logistics), and the vehicle division (Motus Corporation).

Hosting Imperial's IT infrastructure in Vodafone's award-winning, accredited datacentre estate delivers the high capacity connectivity and superior security they need. It gives Imperial a safe pair of hands with one centralised point of contact, rolling out high-end access infrastructure to businesses across South Africa, wherever they are located. Two of the most valuable features of Vodafone's services for Imperial are their network stability and high service levels.

The initial solution included managing Imperial's hosting footprint of 39 cabinets in Vodafone's Midrand datacentre and providing a colocation service with a third party hosting environment for disaster recovery purposes. This gave Imperial a single platform and the ability to manage their complex IT estate, resulting in simplified management, seamless operations, reduced costs and being primed for further expansion.

As Imperial's business continued to grow and develop, they viewed Vodafone as an organisation that is ahead of technology, innovative and a partner to ease their communication and IT challenges, to meet their demands in this digitally disruptive world. Over the subsequent six years, Imperial turned to Vodafone to deliver additional communications services including:

A high-speed MPLS network serving over 700

Imperial sites – secure and cost-effective solution, offering reliable connectivity between Imperial and its subsidiaries.

A Broadsoft hosted PABX solution across 30% of Imperial sites

– secure and flexible communications with low costs, offering the benefit of a voice platform over existing infrastructure and setting them up to move into a true unified communications environment.

A dedicated hosting environment for their critical SAP HANA application

– flexible and scalable access to and performance of Imperial's SAP application from a certified SAP partner.

A cloud backup and storage

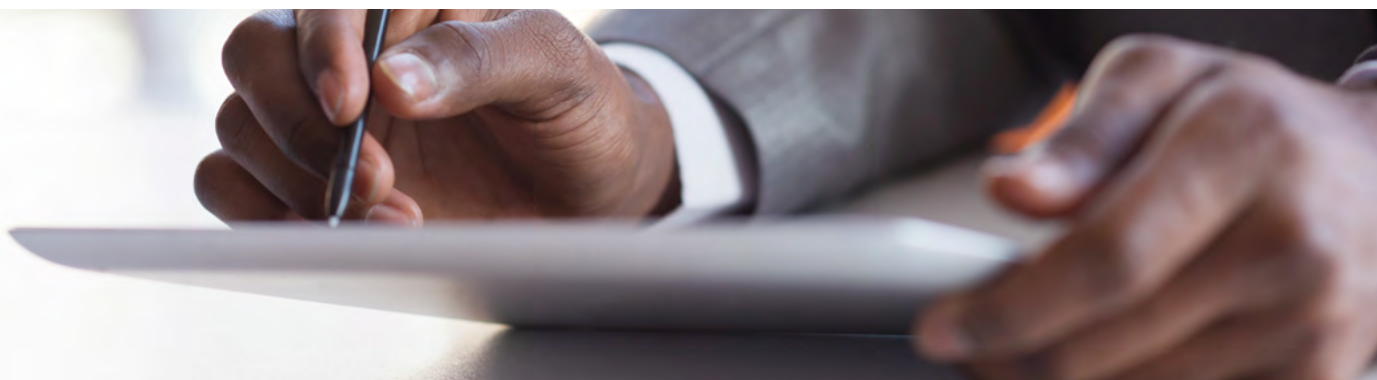
– a cost-effective, compliant solution for growing data storage needs.

Security services

– including a 24 hr CrowdStrike Strategic Operations Centre (CSOC) for added peace of mind.

As a trusted total communications provider, Vodafone help to make sure that Imperial, their people, their places and their assets are always confidently connected at all times.





The bottom line

A flourishing partnership adding value today and into tomorrow

Imperial needed an IT and communications partner who could scale and grow with them and over the past six years Vodafone have done just that. With the necessary size, scale and credibility, Vodafone has been able to act as a strategic business partner to Imperial, recommending and delivering an increasing range of technologies and services to better meet the customer's changing needs.

As a global company, Vodafone has already overcome the types of issues faced by a rapidly growing group of businesses like Imperial, passing on the benefits of our experience. By trusting Vodafone to solve their IT challenges, Imperial has greater visibility of their IT operations which allows them to focus on their core business and innovation, rather than managing IT infrastructure, delivering a better experience for their internal users.

More services, more flexibility, more value

Imperial has unlocked greater savings and efficiencies by adopting more services into their Vodafone solution. For example, with a high speed MPLS network already connecting their sites, Imperial were able to start rolling out Vodafone VoIP services to selected sites over this network. By offering a hosted PABX service from a single provider for sites with fewer than 120 employees, Imperial unlocked significant savings against the previous model of managing and paying for Voice and PBX services from multiple service providers.

With bandwidth costs in South Africa still at a premium, Imperial are now also able to leverage their existing enterprise grade infrastructure to offer a broadband option and deliver more internet and more scalability to their businesses. As a strategic partner, Vodafone delivers additional value-added services to Imperial to meet their specific needs, such as the ability to quickly and easily spin up hypervisor cloud-based environments for internal development and testing.

Vodafone's flexible commercial model allows Imperial to turn IT operations into an operational expense (OpEx), as opposed to a capital expense (CapEx), eliminating the need for large investments, replacing them with predictable monthly fees.

The future

Working collaboratively, Vodafone's experience is helping to find new and innovative ways for Imperial to improve their business offerings and offer differentiated services to customers. As a global leader in the Internet of Things (IoT), Vodafone is currently running multiple Proof of Concept projects around adopting IoT services into Imperial's business. One proposed application is providing a platform for their transport division which will provide complete visibility, real-time access to essential information on their drivers from various connected devices, to help drive efficiency. Another is utilities monitoring and workforce enablement which will enable Imperial's vast employee network to be communicated with via a single platform.

With a prosperous partnership in place and an ever-growing range of services and solutions in place, Imperial can rely on Vodafone as a strategic partner to continue to support their ambitious growth plans as they go from strength to strength.

About Imperial

From a single car dealership to a leader in logistics

Imperial Holdings Limited, headquartered in Bedfordview, South Africa, is a JSE-listed holding company, active exclusively in the logistics and vehicle sectors in over 30 countries. Imperial has over 49,000 employees who generate annual revenues in excess of R120 billion, mainly in Africa and Europe.

For more information, please visit www.imperial.co.za.

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www.vodacombusiness.co.za

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