

Sasol head office future-proofs tech for the long term

Working in partnership with Sasol's Information Management Services (IMS) to develop and deliver an integrated IT solution for its new head office in Sandton, professional services company Turner & Townsend has helped Sasol create a world-class workspace not only for today, but also for the future.

Turner & Townsend's role was to bridge the information gap between the building developer and Sasol's IMS team, ensuring that the base build met the IT requirements for now and well into the future.

Says Turner & Townsend's Hendrik Engelbrecht, who project managed the information and communication technology project: "This major project is geared to meet Sasol's present and future requirements as well as allow for global standardisation across the business. Notably, it provides the capacity to grow the network seamlessly, as the workforce increases. The thinking, planning and decisions made in terms of technology for the building are based on agile working principles, connectivity at the core, flexibility, scalability and the requirement to reduce real estate costs and operational risk.

"It incorporates a high speed fibre optic, wide area network (WAN) to facilitate connectivity to services hosted externally to the Katherine Street premises and designed to provide the highest possible level of wireless saturation and coverage throughout the building, which includes all basement levels.

"Technology, such as the latest CAT 7 cables, has been installed to allow Sasol to create an expandable and flexible cabling system that in the long run will save them the expense and time of having to re-wire for new features in the future. In addition, two independent links to different network providers were installed to ensure service availability and resilience, with the total bandwidth capacity of 900 Mb intelligently managed with traffic balanced across the network links."

The new headquarters accommodate approximately 3 500 of Sasol's staff who relocated from 17 previous locations. Turner & Townsend were initially appointed to undertake a review of future technology aspirations and new ways of working - considered as part of the consolidation into a single location.

Says Engelbrecht: "As a result, a holistic and sophisticated IT enablement strategy was devised and presented, demonstrating how business requirements can be achieved through cohesive implementation of specific technology solutions.

"Importantly, during the design stage, we then needed to confirm that the IT design complied with the physical building design and that the network in the new building tied into and integrated with Sasol's existing global solution.

"During implementation we interacted directly with the property developer and contractor to ensure the build complied with Sasol's specification. Then in the final stages we oversaw the relocation of staffs' technology from screens to phones, and docking stations, assisting with first line of resolution and troubleshooting as all the staff settled in at their new workstations.

"We also needed to interface constantly with Sasol's own Project Management Office, taking on the role of Sasol IT's representative to make sure the IT was well considered and fully integrated from start to finish."

The core of the network resides in the building's 500sqm central equipment room, while each floor besides the ground and first floor has three independent satellite equipment rooms providing localised connectivity. Other key features of the project include a distributed antennae system for high speed 4G (LTE) connection to all Vodacom users throughout the building and a cloud-based Cisco telephony solution which includes workspace and meeting room

conference phones.

The project also incorporates security features such as access control, CCTV and alarm monitoring, a parking navigation and guidance system providing motorists with real-time information which reduces the average time to park, a walk-in IT service centre for users who require assistance, and cutting edge audio visual technology for integrated and automated meeting and teleconference rooms.

Says Johanna Malan, Lead Enterprise Information Management & Information Security, for Sasol: "The technology implemented is cost effective and all the technology solutions support the overall Green Rating of the building.

"As a global chemicals and energy player with a high performing and mobile workforce, the selection of flexible technology solutions that allow for future growth while delivering on immediate requirements was the imperative."