

Bidvest Bank



Industry

Financial Services

Country

South Africa

Challenge

Migrating Microsoft® Windows Active Directory

Solution

Microsoft Solutions

Results

- ▲ Centralised Active Directory to streamline management
- ▲ Creating a platform to ensure future growth
- ▲ Centralised control of the environment enabling standardisation in policies

New Greenfield Site For Bidvest Bank

Bidvest Bank migrates to new Microsoft® Windows Active Directory with the help of Dimension Data's skilled Microsoft Solutions professionals

Executive Summary

Bidvest Bank realised that they required an autonomous Active Directory infrastructure to ensure centralised control and manageability. They subsequently approached Dimension Data's Microsoft Solutions specialists to implement a new Active Directory forest, as well as to ensure smooth migration of over 156 servers and more than 500 work stations located at 66 branch offices to the new domain.

Client Overview

In July 2007, Rannies Bank was renamed to Bidvest Bank. The Bank is a subsidiary of The Bidvest Group Limited, a JSE-listed international trading and services group represented in Africa, Europe and Australasia. They are headquartered in Johannesburg, South Africa and employ over 100 000 people.

Bidvest Bank offers the following services: travel foreign exchange, corporate foreign exchange, foreign money transfers, corporate and consumer card solutions, trade services, a range of deposit and investment options and various lending solutions to corporate and private customers.

Business Challenge

Before Rannies Bank re-branded to Bidvest Bank, it shared an IT infrastructure with a group company. However, to ensure scalability for future growth, Bidvest Bank required its own IT infrastructure, which included the need to implement a new Active Directory environment. The Bank approached Dimension Data for a solution.

The Bank specified that the solution needed to empower them with advanced manageability capabilities. In other words, the new forest had to allow them to apply industry recommended practices to the logical structure of services; standardise configurations of various technologies; automate manual tasks; and implement a set of comprehensive monitoring auditing and management tools.

According to Russell Fogg, Director Information Technology at Bidvest Bank, "Various leading Microsoft certified Infrastructure vendors were approached for proposals at the time. The decision to appoint Dimension Data as our partner in this project was based on their thorough understanding of the requirements, their highly skilled Microsoft Solutions professionals and, most importantly, it was believed they presented the least amount of risk in terms of successful project delivery to the Bank."

Solution Provided

The project was conducted in a phased approach. Dimension Data used its extensive migration skills focusing on Active Directory, as well as their Microsoft® SQL Server scripting skills to customise applications and to cater for the environment.

As a first step, Dimension Data migrated Bidvest Bank's existing Microsoft® Windows 2000 and NT 4 domain infrastructure to Microsoft® Windows Server™ 2003. Dimension Data's consultants then implemented a new Active Directory forest. Active Directory is an essential component of Windows Server 2003 and enables organisations to centrally manage and share information about network resources and users, and acts as the central authority for network security.

Essentially, a single Active Directory forest allows Bidvest Bank to share a common directory, schema, configuration, and global catalog. Once the new forest was set up, Dimension Data started to migrate Bidvest Bank's workstation accounts from their head office to the new domain, followed by the workstations at their branch office. The servers and application services were then migrated to the new infrastructure.



for the change to be implemented across all applications.

In addition, Dimension Data's Microsoft Solutions consultants also built a customised solution to ensure that the Bank's branches can operate without a domain controller to ensure continuity in the event of downtime. "Our solution ensured that the loss of connectivity between a branch office and global catalog no longer impacts the possibility of branch users to log on. In this way, Bidvest Bank can ensure that their branches are supported more effectively and bandwidth consumption over WAN links is reduced," explains Jooste.

Value Derived

"Our Active Directory environment is extremely stable with consistent performance proving the soundness of the proposed system design. Centralised control and management of the environment simplifies the System Administration role within the Bank," comments Fogg.

"Dimension Data's highly skilled Microsoft Solutions specialists have extensive experience in delivering on a project of this nature and they fully understand the risk mitigation required relating to the IT systems of a Bank. They successfully delivered on all the key components of the project."

Russell Fogg, Director Information Technology at Bidvest Bank

"During the migration, we shared our knowledge with the Bank's IT team to empower them to effectively operate the new environment," adds Anton Jooste, General Manager at Dimension Data Middle East & Africa.

Co-existence between the old Active Directory and the new infrastructure during the migration phases ensured that the Bank could seamlessly operate. Once the application services were migrated, the co-existence ceased to exist, and the Bank operated on its own Active Directory infrastructure.

Dimension Data used Microsoft development tools to create synchronisation interfaces that ensure that all changes related to user status, in any of the Bank's systems, are automatically replicated and reflected in Active Directory. When an employee leaves the Bank, their user account needs to be deactivated only once

Bidvest Bank can now provide controlled user access to diverse applications in an auditable, manageable way. Active Directory's Group Policy features give their IT team a simple way to centrally set permissions and reduce risk of unauthorised file access on user desktops.

As Bidvest Bank continues to grow, the Microsoft 'foundation' laid by Dimension Data ensures that they can easily accommodate new systems and requirements. "They can add new desktop and server computers, technology solutions and new user permissions in the support of new branches," concludes Jooste.