



ABSA

Large Financial Services Group Archives What Matters Most

Email has become the most preferred and also one of the most instant communication tools in business. Due to the sheer volume of information being shared it has become critical, from both a business and legal perspective, that information is effectively managed and catalogued. As one of South Africa's largest financial services groups, Absa has deployed Enterprise Vault™ from Symantec to meet this requirement. Absa is proactively preventing the risk of data loss and policy violations, while rapidly and cost-effectively responding to electronic e-Discovery requests. By deploying this solution, Absa has also been able to significantly improve email archiving efficiency and increase productivity.

ORGANIZATION PROFILE

ABSA Group Limited is one of South Africa's largest financial services groups. As a subsidiary of Barclays Bank, Absa's offerings include retail, commercial and investment banking as well as wealth management.

INDUSTRY

Financial Services

SOLUTION

Archiving
Data Loss Prevention
Discovery & Retention Management
Endpoint Management
IT Compliance
Messaging Management

The Rise of Email Communication

ABSA Group Limited is one of South Africa's largest financial services groups. As a subsidiary of Barclays Bank, the Group interacts with its customers in South Africa and Africa, through a combination of physical and electronic channels, offering a comprehensive range of banking services, bancassurance and wealth management products and services.

Absa has certainly successfully positioned itself in the South African market with approximately 950 physical outlets, 8,000 automated teller machines, 36,000 permanent employees, and 9 million customers. With its volume of clients and employees consistently growing, the sheer volume of information that is shared in Absa, has burgeoned to almost unmanageable proportions. With millions of emails disseminated throughout Absa every month, it became critical that this information was effectively managed and catalogued to not only streamline business requirements, but meet legal and compliance requirements as well.

As an enterprise architect at Absa Group IT, Mark Uren was aware that it was not only about finding a technology that could do the archiving, but rather sourcing a technology that would be able to drive 'auditability' and manage business critical information from origination to termination and above all, best fit the company's IT strategy. "Our Enterprise Content Management (ECM) strategy required us to work with someone who had insight and understanding of Absa's architecture and strategy, we chose to work through an alliance integration partner, Dimension Data. A number of proof-of-concept products were presented and we had an assortment of different solutions at each site to support them," he says.

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Mark Uren

Enterprise Architect
Absa Group IT

One of South Africa's largest financial services groups deploys Symantec Enterprise Vault to reduce storage costs, protect critical regards, help achieve compliance, and improve employee productivity.

“Absa has taken a sophisticated approach to their IT strategy and Enterprise Vault™ was a logical extension to their architecture, especially as the company was not looking for a technology to drive their strategy, but one that was able to take their strategy forward.”

Sheldon Hand

Storage Specialist for Africa
Symantec

Cost-Effective, High-Performance Archiving

“Of all the different email archiving solutions, Symantec Enterprise Vault was superior in ease of installation, the level of granularity in the setting up of archival policies and the robustness of the software during the proof-of-concept phase,” says Uren. Absa took the decision to deploy Symantec Enterprise Vault. It is now providing Absa with a single, unified solution to reduce archiving cost and risk and improve Exchange performance while balancing the need for security and discovery.

Using Enterprise Vault, the team benefits from centralized management of the entire archiving and recovery environment—including real-time monitoring, historical reporting, alert management, and troubleshooting. Unlimited scalability means that the software adapts to the company's growing demand for data. Enterprise Vault software also provides a cost effective, innovative, and easy-to-administer approach to efficiently and effectively manage email storage via automated, policy-controlled archiving to online stores for active retention and seamless retrieval of messages and attachment.

Absa is implementing the solution on all email accounts, and is now about halfway through the process of removing individual information management and creating a more centralized storage strategy.

Savings in storage will be significant. After a 30 to 45 day archiving period, messages are now automatically archived to second tier storage, and in the process, Enterprise Vault compresses and 'deduplicates' them. As a result, according to Uren, “We're projecting a substantial reduction in email space requirements once we bring all our archiving policies online.

The new system will do away with personal folders and the risk associated with these in terms of .PST files not being backed up and corruption to mission critical information. The pilot rollout for Mailbox Optimization has been implemented, and the change in the new system will ultimately allow Absa employees to store, retrieve, and delete files, regardless of their size, on Enterprise

SOLUTION AT A GLANCE

Business Drivers

- Introduce single solution for managing information risk
- Proactively prevent the risk of data loss and policy violations
- Increase efficiency
- Align IT more closely with the needs of the business

Technology Challenges

- Streamline and enhance information life cycle management
- Rapidly and cost-effectively respond to electronic discovery requests

Solution

Expanded archive management, personal store migration, ease of use and deployment, and archive recovery from Symantec Enterprise Vault

Symantec Products

- Symantec Enterprise Vault™
- Symantec Brightmail Antispam and Antivirus™
- Symantec Enterprise Security Manager™
- Symantec Ghost Solution Suite™
- Symantec DeepSight Alerting System™
- Symantec DeepSight Threat Management System™

Symantec Partner

- Dimension Data

BUSINESS VALUE AND TECHNICAL BENEFITS

Vault. This ability carries enormous benefits for both employees and the organization, and will go a long way towards solving capacity and folder management problems.

“The true power of Enterprise Vault software lies in the way it presents archived content back to the business and Absa has certainly been proactive in their IT approach to storage,” says Sheldon Hand, storage specialist for Africa, Symantec. “Absa has taken a sophisticated approach to their IT strategy and Enterprise Vault was a logical extension to their architecture, especially as the company was not looking for a technology to drive their strategy, but one that was able to take their strategy forward.”

Compliance is an overriding consideration

As with any financial services organization, compliance is an overriding consideration in any IT strategy, and Absa needed to be certain that the correct information would be stored for compliance and policy procedures. Enterprise Vault helped Absa achieve a higher level of backup service level compliance, providing a consolidated view of compliance to multiple regulations and standards, and automated evidence retention.

“Even in the first phase of the project, we could easily see the business value of our investment come through,” says Uren. “The solution, to name but a few value adds, allows us to manage internal and external mail, audit email archives with ease, and undertake legal and content discovery effortlessly. The solution automatically manages the email life cycle and protects our corporate intellectual property.”

Compliance

Assisted the company in meeting its compliance requirement with industry and government regulations concerning emails, instant messages and other electronic communications and collaboration

Efficiency

Projected reduction in email storage requirements
Enabled the company to proactively prevent the risk of data loss and policy violations, while rapidly and cost-effectively responding to electronic discovery (e-Discovery) requests
Assisted the company with capacity and storage challenges

Productivity

Ability to categorize and filter mails to ensure the company only receives business critical mail
Facilitate greater benefits due to easier administration through automation
Projected reduction in information management costs by moving from paper to digital enterprise content management

Finding the business value

“There is an inevitable cost saving to this advanced archiving solution and the business value will not only impact the bottom line, but will enhance Absa’s corporate responsibility and ensure business critical mail take priority—ultimately facilitating business operations and efficiency,” says Hand. “Not only will it save time and money spent retrieving and recovering old or lost email, but will also provide immediate recovery of key individual mailboxes.” Email archiving aids the long-term retention, management and discovery of information, optimizing IT efficiencies and lowering business risk.

With seamless end user access and comprehensive search functionality, Absa can optimize storage and utilize cost effective options. Email archiving is the first stage of Absa’s records management strategy and as they extend their usage of these technologies, the company will look to incorporate other technologies to manage instant messaging and implement SharePoint to name but a few considerations. Enterprise Vault has certainly integrated smoothly into the company’s strategy, making a difference to operations internally and the efficiency in which services are delivered to clients.

“The deployment of Enterprise Vault is just one component of our Enterprise Content Management strategy,” Uren says. “As we move from paper to digital information processes, and enhance process automation and information lifecycle management, we’re expecting a reduction in the cost of managing information.”

As the Enterprise Vault deployment nears completion, Uren looks back: “Dimension Data and Symantec have shown their ability to solve the challenges we faced in terms of managing email and meeting compliance through the development of a stable, flexible and robust archiving solution. We look forward to our continued working relationship with the two companies.”