

Consolidation is coming

David Caygill, business unit director for Software Infrastructure and Security & Storage

How many people are in your team, and what do they do: The Software Infrastructure business has channel managers for Microsoft and Adobe. We have a business development manager for Microsoft, two account managers responsible for selling software infrastructure products to our largest customers and three sales assistants as well as one technical support manager for the Citrix products.

The Security & Storage business has a channel manager for McAfee and Mail Marshal and two Symantec channel managers, one focusing on Symantec security and the other on Symantec availability products. There is one Symantec business development manager and one storage engineer. This business unit has an account manager and a sales assistant who manage our strategic customers.

What products are in your division: Software Infrastructure consists of Adobe, Attachmate, Citrix, Microsoft and Novell; Security & Storage is Marshal, McAfee and Symantec.

Please give a brief outline of each of the product lines/brands:

Microsoft - Server and desktop operating system software, network management and office productivity suites.

Novell - Open enterprise software. These products offer security and identity management, while resource management software helps system administrators control their IT environment from handhelds to workstations.

Citrix - Software offering flexible and secure access to information, from any location and using any device.

Adobe - Software for the print publishing, digital imaging, Web imaging, Web design and development, video and audio markets, as well as e-learning software and the complete Acrobat family (create, manage and view PDF files).

Security - Symantec, McAfee and Marshal, including a broad range of solutions for anti-virus, firewall, data protection, intrusion detection and security management.

Storage - Symantec (including the products it acquired with Veritas) catering to backup hardware, consumables and management.

In your experience, what is the biggest challenge that resellers are facing today: By operating in a fast-paced, ever-changing environment, it is important that Comstek ensures that we are always equipped with the latest technologies. Our resellers are used to a very high level of customer service and to add to our best-of-breed offerings becomes more challenging in this fast paced and ever changing environment.

How are you working to help them in this regard: By helping them sell the solutions, products are no longer stand alone. By improving our engagement model we will see a much larger adoption rate of new technologies in the segments. By striving to deliver excellent service to our resellers in both South Africa and the rest of Africa, we can more efficiently sell solutions and help our resellers grow their businesses.

In your experience, what is the biggest challenge that distributors are facing today: The country's economy downturn in business confidence, largely due to the high interest rates. The industry pundits are predicting a slowdown in IT spending this year.

What do you think the solution is: It is vital that the company together with its channel partners focuses on market segments that will augment their revenue streams and profits in tough economic conditions.



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In your opinion, what are the new technology trends and directions we can expect in the next 12 months: The key messaging coming from our vendors will be the increase in the consolidation of server environments as a result of the drive around virtualisation. The security and availability of data in these environments becomes paramount as we move towards work from anywhere environments across different endpoint devices.

How is your division at Comstek changing and growing to meet current and future demands: By growing its software portfolio with key brands for the commercial market space, Comstek has not only established itself as a solutions-focused distributor, but has also catapulted itself into the top three bracket of specialised software distributors in South Africa.

How does your division work with others in Comstek to offer the dealer a complete solution: The Software Infrastructure brands combine to offer operating system and networking software, server console and terminal emulation as well as graphics and e-paper software, thereby providing resellers with holistic solutions.

The Security & Storage brands offer best-of-breed products that complement each other and, when combined, let a reseller to provide the best solution.

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