

Zain

Nigerian Mobile Operator Minimizes Downtime and Secures Assets with Symantec Disaster Recovery Solution



Leading Nigerian mobile communications provider Zain has built a reputation for having a reliable network and being a company that cares for the community. As its customer subscribers grew and began accessing multimedia services, Zain realized it needed to drive the consolidation of its telecommunications environment and create a more available and stable environment. Working closely with Symantec and Global Infoswift Technologies—a Symantec reseller based in Lagos—project SANKOFA was initiated as a key component of its business continuity and disaster recovery initiatives, which included a comprehensive Symantec product set. It was a complex undertaking that included dealing with multiple vendors, a continually changing environment, and ensuring processes were secure at all stages to ensure no downtime exposure. The project has enabled Zain to mitigate business risk, secure its assets, and minimize downtime.

ORGANIZATION PROFILE

Zain Nigeria in Africa is a leading mobile communications services provider that operates out of Lagos, Port Harcourt, Uyo, Warri, Kano, and Idaban. Zain has acquired vast coverage networks through its aggressive roll out strategy and currently operates in 47 cities and over 500 communities. The company reached its one millionth subscriber five years ago.

INDUSTRY

Telecommunications

SOLUTION

Business Continuity
Disaster Recovery

“We examined a number of products and solution providers and after careful evaluation, we chose Global Infoswift and Symantec as not only did their product set come out on top, but their technical expertise and professional approach was impeccable.”

Femi Odubiyi
Project Sponsor
Zain

Disaster Recovery a Disaster

Ve Networks Limited, trading as Zain Nigeria, is a leading mobile services provider and with its large focus on African telecommunications development the company is certainly a proud example of an innovative organization. With more than 190 international network affiliations and operations within 110 countries, Zain has a large and impressive footprint. For a company that has only been in operation since 2001, its growth and development has been impressive to say the least. The company reached its one millionth subscriber five years ago and continues to enjoy rapid growth.

However, there have been some growing pains associated with this success—especially in terms of technology. While Zain has been busy extending its mobile network reach and its customer volumes, their disaster recovery and back-up solutions required closer examination and improvement. Zain prides itself of its dynamic nature and commitment to its customers and providing cost effective communication solutions to the Nigerian market and therefore immediately set out to rectify this technology challenge.

Project SANKOFA Initiated

Project SANKOFA (internal project campaign) was initiated as a key component of Zain’s disaster recovery for this mission-critical environment supporting applications. The SANKOFA project was complex in that it required dealing with multiple vendors across various platforms, varying leadership and dynamic applications—not to mention a continually changing environment in which to operate. Therefore, Zain required technology partners that could provide accurate consultation on the required product

Symantec implemented business continuity policies and disaster recovery initiatives for one of Nigeria's leading mobile communications providers.

set (for applications) and project implementation plans—while ensuring consistency.

“We examined a number of products and solution providers and after careful evaluation, we chose Global Infoswift and Symantec. Not only did their product set come out on top but their technical expertise and professional approach was impeccable,” says Femi Odubiyi, a Zain project sponsor. “As we required skilled manpower for this project to allow us to focus on our core business objectives, our partnership decision was imperative and as the Symantec consultants used internationally recognized methodology and had hands-on, real-world experience on business continuity implementations, we found them to clearly understand the goals that we were trying to achieve. This meant we felt very comfortable taking their lead on this project.”

Symantec, Global Infoswift, and Zain worked closely together on this project—and this relationship was instrumental to its success. “The dual team process was critical as we brought various sorts of expertise to project SANKOFA. This ensured the technology products not only mapped to the initial disaster recovery challenge but also to the organization's values and vision.”

Beyond Disaster Recovery

According to Henry Akinsowon, Zain project manager, while the SANKOFA project is dubbed ‘disaster recovery’, it goes way beyond it. “The SANKOFA project allows for critical availability, improved resilience, disaster recovery (failover solutions between two sites), and recoverability (backup and restoration) to ensure we can enjoy zero downtime and compete favorably with our competitors. So it's a number of initiatives working simultaneously to improve consumer benefits and provide the most stable mobile environment in Nigeria.”

With effective business continuity policies and disaster recovery initiatives, the project is designed to bring OEMs together into a large robust system, which will allow for reduced footprint of hardware and improved manageability of systems. According to Odubiyi, “Consumers will be able to operate in the most stable environment possible, re-

SOLUTION AT A GLANCE

Business Drivers

- Safeguard the continual, rapid availability of data across multiple mediums
- Ensure impeccable customer availability by driving consolidation of the network environment
- Improve network resilience to provide world class customer services

Technology Challenges

- Create an infrastructure that is scalable, consolidated and reduce hardware footprint
- Overcome complex project challenges
- Consolidation of multiple vendors and accurately utilising and managing array of existing applications within a continually changing environment

Solution

Complete data protection and disaster recovery solution for a heterogeneous environment

Symantec Products

- Veritas™ NetBackup Enterprise Edition
- Veritas™ Storage Foundation for Oracle
- Veritas™ Cluster Server

Technology Environment

- Servers : two SUN™ E25K servers to house critical applications
- Storage: Netapps and IBM™ tape library
- Disaster recovery solution between two sites: Lagos Island and Lagos Mainland

Symantec Services

- Symantec Consulting Services

Symantec Partners

- Global Infoswift Technologies PTY Ltd

“Symantec provided us with a more effective way to secure our most valuable asset: information. I can sleep at night as I know that our infrastructure is protected through technical and business expertise from Symantec.”

John Ayuh
CIO
Zain

“Global Infoswift and Symantec have shown their ability to solve the challenges we faced in terms of exponential information growth through the development of a stable, flexible and robust business continuity solution. We look forward to our continued working relationship with them.”

Femi Odubiyi
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BUSINESS VALUE AND TECHNICAL BENEFITS

Availability

- Helped to ensure the continued, uninterrupted availability of data and services
- Developed plans for reducing the frequency and duration of IT downtime
- Multi-media services platform availability and reliability greatly improved to ensure end user service excellence

Disaster Recovery

- Effective failover solutions implemented between two sites
- Redundancy consultancy and plan development

Improved Resilience

- More available and stable environment developed
- Wide and disparate network consolidated and managed for efficiency and flexibility
- Improved customer features such as prompting information to customers

Recoverability

- Implementation of specific applications for backup and restoration should data be lost

Risk reduction

- Reduced risk in terms of customer portfolio loss, network failure, data loss, and global connectivity
- Reduced risk for brand protection

ceive prompt information, and make calls when they need to. In addition customers will be able to use an array of multi-media services which will improve the customer experience and ultimately satisfaction.”

The Plan Unfolds

Following a business impact analysis and risk evaluation, the project technical lead from Symantec guided the Global Infoswift team of certified Symantec consultants through the installation and configuration of the product set to efficiently support the SANKOFA environment. The team also deployed Symantec solutions across Zain’s mission critical applications, ensuring enterprise wide data protection and high availability with Veritas NetBackup™, Veritas Storage Foundation™, and Veritas Cluster Server™ software from Symantec.

Part of the implementation included server consolidation, data protection, and high availability solutions for its mission critical

cal data to support applications such as billing, e-mail, call history logs, call center operations, human resources management, and financial solutions. Furthermore, the team worked with networking equipment, hardware vendors, database administrators, system administrators, and system software managers to collaborate existing equipment and solutions within the new solution and product set. All of which proved to be a complex but successful process. Now that the SANKOFA environment has been installed and is in operation it manages and houses more than 12 critical business applications ranging from fileshare and interconnect through to call data/history and Ebills.

“Global Infoswift was responsible for the design of the solution as well as the implementation. In addition, they were involved in the project management of the SANKOFA project,” comments Odubiyi. “The project was implemented with no disruptions to our services, which was crucial.”

The SANKOFA project is one of the initiatives within a larger disaster recovery program. Zain is confident of rising up to the challenges faced internally and externally whilst achieving their vision of securing assets and minimising downtime. “Global Infoswift and Symantec have shown their ability to solve the challenges we faced in terms of exponential information growth through the development of a stable, flexible and robust business continuity solution. We look forward to our continued working relationship with the two companies,” concludes Odubiyi.