

Planning and collaboration are key for successful data migration

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Johannesburg, April 5 - Early mapping, robust methodology and involvement of both business and IT leaders are the top three focus areas for successful data migration projects, according to global IT specialist JMR Software (Pty) Ltd.

This was the message from an interactive workshop led by Barry MacDougall, Service Delivery Director for the company, at this year's IT Leaders Africa Summit. Twenty three CIOs and IT Directors took part in the cross-industry event designed to share insights and provide best practice advice for large scale data transition.

"Navigating data migration can be a minefield if not planned and managed correctly. But choosing not to make the move through fear of failure or potential operational disruption is no longer an option if companies wish to remain competitive.

"By becoming aware of common pitfalls, misconceptions and the benefits of a disciplined strategy, companies are better informed; so more likely to achieve a smooth migration on time and within budget," says MacDougall.

The interactive learning session highlighted the importance of having a clear mapping specification in place before data migration starts. Time invested at this stage was shown to provide an essential baseline for all future activity and greater project control. The same advantages were associated with a disciplined methodology; where a solid structure gives clear direction and a formal process allows results to be compared against multiple iterations.

"Once implementation starts, any problems become exponentially harder to fix, meaning it's essential to know exactly what has happened to the data after it has been moved. It's just not possible to roll back and fix problems in a live system, so if the testing is not laid out in the methodology it becomes a never ending project to clean up and resolve issues (<http://www.jmr.co.za/>)," explains MacDougall.

Given the risks of data migration – over a third are believed to fail or overrun according to results published by Bloor Research – a collaborative approach was seen as essential to countering a potential blame culture and supporting a successful outcome.

"Involving both business and IT departments from the outset creates a team mindset and ownership of the project. Rather than gearing progress around negative penalty clauses - for missing deadlines for example – the ideal approach should be structured towards goals and reward. The end result should then be a successful and accurate migration," advises MacDougall.

JMR Software (Pty) Ltd

An independent South African company, JMR Software (Pty) Ltd has strong international roots and relationships (particularly in the UK) that are built on integrity, expertise, capability and years of successful delivery. The company understands the importance of the data migration process and has

developed its own set of tools - including its comprehensive BITSHIFT data migration solution - which follows a strict methodology and has been tried and tested with clients.

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