

The Journey to the Cloud

# Modernising Data Infrastructure

New hybrid-cloud environment helps data analytics firm redirect internal talent to higher-tier objectives, reduce expenditure and increase innovations initiatives.



**Principa is a data analytics, software and consulting business based in South Africa.**

It provides data-driven solutions to clients across the customer lifecycle. They currently serve multiple industries in over 20 countries and have, to date, developed and implemented over 2,000 analytical projects. Principa built models that deliver over 70 billion credit and propensity scores to clients annually, helping them make informed and profitable decisions.

Principa partnered with First Technology to migrate and modernise its data centre infrastructure, significantly streamline business operations and allow the company to focus on top-tier objectives.

## **A promise made is not always a promise kept.**

**That's the unfortunate reality of our industry - claims of seamless service delivery are rife, but very few truly deliver. Principa found itself in such a position when its previous digital infrastructure partner provided a service that was "less than optimal," explains Jaco Rossouw, Chief Executive Officer at Principa.**

Not only did this hamper our strategic ambitions, it also haemorrhaged the IT department's time and focus into managing and mitigating operational issues. This left precious little time to focus on supporting the business strategy through proactive investment and improvement of required IT infrastructure and services.

For a while there, it felt like we were slowly giving up many of the hard-fought gains made in the preceding years.

**Rossouw, Chief Executive Officer at Principa**

Fortunately, First Technology stepped in as Principa's new Cloud partner, not only helping the company to get back to core business but also supporting its offering in order to meet the demands of the modern market.

## The Journey to the Hybrid-Cloud begins

**First Technology started by highlighting the most relevant range of solutions, guiding Principa on the best way forward given the known constraints, short to medium-term objectives and ultimately the longer-term strategy.**

First Technology's first challenge was transporting all equipment from Johannesburg to Cape Town, bringing the data infrastructure right to Principa's IT support team. This also included setting up all network connectivity, preparing server racks and maintaining data integrity, all within a short timeframe.

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First Technology performed this with flying colours, with Rossouw noting he was most impressed with the professionalism and quality of service. From the smallest details, such as the logical labelling of equipment, to pulling off a massive migration feat that would buckle many other service providers – all while the country was still under severe lockdown.

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*"First Technology was very strict in its service delivery and didn't compromise on a single point of service just to reduce cost. They had reputable standards to uphold and were not shy to challenge our reasoning based on their experience in the field. It is that dedication to quality and service delivery that makes them a preferred partner," marks Rossouw.*

First Technology integrated Principa's infrastructure into a hybrid-cloud environment, bringing them closer to the endless opportunities afforded by the cloud and the related ecosystem of digital innovations. It provided Principa with dedicated server racks in a FirstNet Cloud environment with five-nines uptime availability (an average of less than 6 minutes downtime per year).

This meant little to no issues with crucial features such as power, cooling, network connectivity, and robust physical and digital security measures. The latter is critically important, as Principa's clients demand and deserve assurance that their data is processed in a highly secure environment, eliminating serious risks such as data or security breaches.

*"Everything happened according to plan. First Technology fulfilled every single one of our requirements, within the budget and on time. In a nutshell, they did exactly what they said they would. In my experience, that is something that is surprisingly rare," says Rossouw.*

## High-Level Support

Previously, Principa struggled with consolidating infrastructure efforts as responsibilities were spread across multiple service providers. With First Technology, all IaaS and SaaS needs are addressed under a single roof. There is no need for additional support.

*“Working through multiple partners means an increased risk of bad, or even non-delivery. It cultivates an environment of blame-shifting and a lack of accountability. With First Technology, there is a single point of service to address all issues,” says Gerhard Horn, Datacentre Architect at First Technology Western Cape.*

Like Johan De Villiers, Managing Director at First Technology Western Cape explains: *“With First Technology, there is only one throat to throttle”*. Fortunately, Rossouw notes that, while it’s reassuring, it has never been necessary to “pull that lever”.

## Embracing a Brighter Future

First Technology has provided Principa with a stable infrastructure foundation from which to drive and deliver its various initiatives. Using First Technology’s wide range of solutions, Principa is now able to expand both its IaaS and SaaS capabilities, allowing them to better serve its client base and remain a relevant competitor in the market.

*“The primary focus of our engagement with First Technology was the migration and upgrade of our data centre and related services in order to position ourselves for the future and address the growing risk and demands identified in the current environment. This led to an annual saving of circa R500k through improved efficiencies and service levels as a result of this migration,” explains Rossouw.*

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Backed by First Technology solutions and support, Principa can now fulfil operational objectives with relative ease while maintaining impeccable governance standards. Now, Principa can focus on delivering data-driven software solutions for their clients while First Technology focuses on evolving their infrastructure and software ecosystem in support.

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*“From a Principa perspective, working with First Technology is a seamless experience. They are a partner we (Principa) can confidently travel into the future with. Of all the things that may concern me in a day, First Technology is not one of them,” says Rossouw.*

## About Principa

We are an international data analytics company based in South Africa. Our data scientists, developers and consultants work together to develop data analytics products and solutions that derive answers, predictions and recommended actions from large and complex data sets for over 150 companies in 30 countries in Africa, Middle East and Europe.

We are experts in using data insights to predict human behaviour and drive the optimal outcome: from identifying the most profitable customers or account holders to target, to identifying and targeting your most cost-effective marketing initiative for a defined market segment. Our aim is to turn data into wisdom that enables companies to work wonders.