

GROWTHPOINT
PROPERTIES

From Business Continuity to Cyber Resilience

Growthpoint approached Mimecast to handle a complex communications challenge but has since adopted extended services to improve cyber resilience

Context

Growthpoint Properties is the largest listed South African REIT today by market capitalization and assets, valued at more than R 80.4 billion and R 116.7 billion respectively. Growthpoint is the 21st largest company in the FTSE / JSE Top 40 Index.

The company's diversified portfolio comprises 463 retail, office and industrial properties of the highest quality, located countrywide, including La Lucia Mall, Brooklyn Mall, Woodmead Retail Park and Constantia Village.

Further Growthpoint owns 66% of Growthpoint Australia, which is listed on the Australian Stock Exchange and 25% of Globalworth which owns property assets in Romania and Poland. It has 635 staff located in three regional and several remote sites across South Africa.

At a Glance

Company

Growthpoint Properties is the largest listed South African REIT today by market capitalization and assets, valued at more than R 80.4 billion and R 116.7 billion respectively, and has 700 email users.

Products

- Secure Email Gateway with Targeted Threat Protection
- Archive Power Tools
- SM Lite
- Internal Email Protect

Challenge

When Growthpoint Properties approached Mimecast they were facing a complex communications challenge.

They had over 437 buildings to manage and, 450 staff to provide with communications infrastructure. But after unbundling from their management company, The Investec Group, they didn't own a single PC or server, or even have a designated office.

“Mimecast has changed the way everyone in the organisation uses email, and as the CIO, I never have to worry about it anymore.”

Alec Davis - CIO, Growthpoint

Working off radio links from remote and temporary office locations highlighted to CIO Alec Davis how critical email communication was to the business.

“Initially we were simply looking to create a separate Growthpoint email brand, but soon realised our need for continuous communication and email archiving for compliance purposes. From previously enjoying Investec’s state-of-the-art systems, we were thrust into a position of needing the same level of compliance but without the budget to implement costly infrastructure,” says Davis.

Over the years their needs have changed and while the initial solutions remain imperative to the running of their business, the evolving cyber threat landscape has meant that they needed to review their cybersecurity.

“With so many retail and office properties in our portfolio, we host the confidential data of a number of prominent South African organisations. We started to see an increase in targeted threats such as spear-phishing and whaling, so we needed to urgently implement advanced security solutions to keep this data safe,” says Davis.

Solution

Mimecast provided Growthpoint with an integrated email suite without the traditional hardware, software or capital expense.

“When we first adopted Mimecast it was to address continuity, archiving and email hygiene. But as the threat landscape evolved and cybersecurity became a major concern, implementing advanced security became a no brainer. We already had Mimecast in place so adding additional services was an easy and seamless process. We now have Mimecast’s full security offering, including Targeted Threat Protection, Internal Email Protect and Attachment Protect,” says Davis.

Growthpoint has experienced major expansion they now have the full Mimecast suite that employees use every day.

“Our users love Mimecast’s mobile capabilities and archive search facilities. One of the biggest advocates of Mimecast in the business is our CEO. He uses it every single day and often goes straight to Mimecast before even opening his mailbox, says Davis.

Benefits

Mimecast’s technology gave Growthpoint a single point of control over its email communications that integrated easily into its new IT setup.

“On an operational level, the cost savings were immediate from licensing and infrastructure costs, to a reduction in bandwidth costs”, explains Davis.

Growthpoint gained a comprehensive business continuity infrastructure, which was put to good use straight away during the unbundling. "We all know that any email system will fail at some stage, whether as a result of software error, hardware failure, human error or a possible cyber-attack. We were immediately able to plan and protect our email services appropriately. This helped us avoid the costs and risks that usually stem from email failure."

Growthpoint's complex migration to their own new system meant that they tested the Mimecast solution to its limits. Now, if they ever face a possible outage or disaster, they will have complete access to both new and archived emails.

The organisation has experienced major cost and time savings. The archive's e-discovery capabilities have allowed employees to locate historical emails which have served as evidence in a number of legal matters.

"Having access to every single email ever sent or received saved us from paying R75million in a case that went all the way to the high court," says Davis.

Growthpoint was also an early adopter of Mimecast Targeted Threat Protection, and quickly realised the benefits of having advanced security solutions in place.

"Advanced threats are becoming more prominent and concerning and Targeted Threat Protection ensures we're adequately protected. The threat landscape keeps changing but Mimecast takes the risk and uncertainty away. We are confident that the product works and our emails are safe," says Davis.

Luckily, Davis and his team have not yet experienced a successful cyber-attack. But if a threat was to successfully slip past their advanced security, they are confident they would have a suitable cyber resilience for email strategy in place.

"Cybercriminals are becoming more sophisticated and new techniques could make their way into users' mailboxes. As a result, no security system is one hundred percent effective. An attack may happen and, in the event that it does, we will be prepared. With Mimecast we will be able to continue accessing email while systems are down and we will be able to recover all data from our archive," says Davis.

Davis says that the peace of mind Mimecast offers Growthpoint allows the IT team to focus on the core functions of the business like developing and maintaining applications critical to growth and customer retention.

"It is seamless and operates in the background, and yet it is completely vital to our business," says Davis.