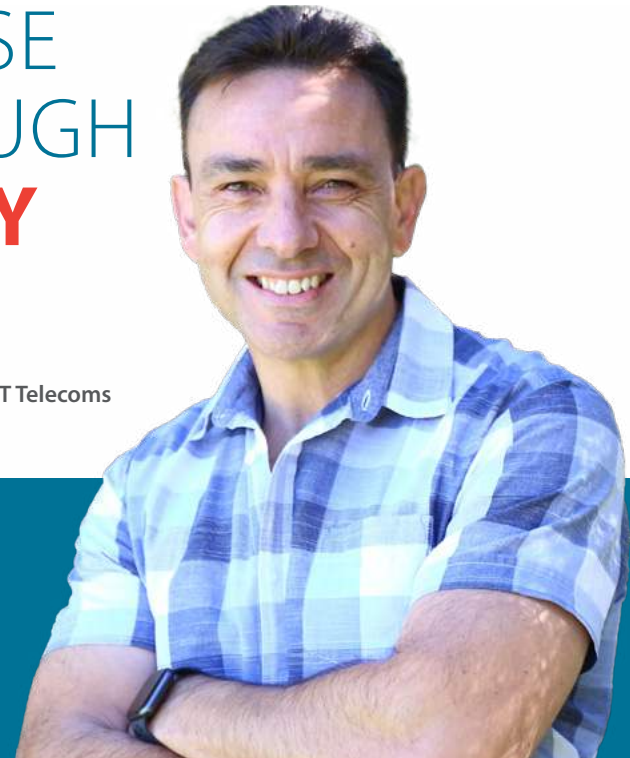


ENHANCING ENTERPRISE BUSINESS VALUE THROUGH DATA & CONNECTIVITY MANAGEMENT

An interview with Deon Hattingh - Head of Data & Connectivity Solutions at Adapt IT Telecoms
by Katucia Moussongo



While some businesses needing mobile data and connectivity management are still seeking ways to easily acquire Access Point Names (APNs) or manage data on different mobile networks, Adapt IT Telecoms comes to the market with a leading configurable APN solution termed APN-as-a-Service. What's unique about this solution, and is it accessible to all? We invite you to learn more with Deon Hattingh - Head of Data and Connectivity Solutions.

What is your role in the Telecoms Division, and what makes Adapt IT the right place to be?

My title is Head of Data & Connectivity Solutions. My role is to ensure that the infrastructure and services we use for our solutions are suited to delivering our products and services. In addition to the latter, it is to ensure that as the mobile data market, customer behaviour and requirements evolve, we remain relevant and differentiate ourselves as a leading solution provider.

What I enjoy most about working at Adapt IT is that we work in an intriguing field that is frequently on the cutting edge of Technology. If you're a technologist at heart, this is the place to be because you're continuously exposed to new and emerging technologies.

It's fascinating to watch how the market and client base evolves over time when new products and services are introduced.

What is the role of APN-as-a-Service Technology?

An APN is purely a mechanism to deliver data to multiple people or devices in an organisation. Instead of managing data consumption at a single device level via individual contracts, an APN allows for the sharing of a single large bundle of data. It gives an organisation a way to pool data and manage data consumption for the entire business.

The challenge with pooled data is often related to the detail of how data is allocated across the mobile user base and how consumption is managed to mitigate financial and operational risks. This is where **APN-as-a-Service** comes in. An APN is a wonderful tool for any organisation to have and use, but it

does have certain limitations. Our solution addresses a couple of key challenges found with managing APN data across multiple Mobile Network Operators (MNOs).

It is quite a complex and expensive process for an organisation to purchase their own APN from the MNO. It is a time consuming and complex task to determine what type of APN you require, what bundles size and contract term to pick and whether it will be sufficient for the organisation's needs. We try to address these dilemmas by removing all these complexities when providing APN-as-a-Service to our partners.

We've basically created an environment in which APNs can be utilised on at least two of South Africa's main networks, and we've combined these **APNs into a single cloud-based platform**. We make these APN services available to our end customers and provide the relevant technical expertise to get the customer up and running in as little time as possible. With APN-as-a-Service, we completely remove the contractual obligations that typically come with procuring APN services, such as long-term contracts and upfront bundle commitments.

Our platform makes mobile data available across the two largest national mobile networks and we provide our customers with a single pane of glass through which they can **observe, manage, and control their data consumption**.

We accomplish all of this through a single point of contact, where our partners define their connectivity requirements and access rules and are then able to augment the service with any additional products or services, they wish to offer their customers.

What is the difference between APN-as-a-Service and Data Connectivity Management?

APN-as-a-Service is where we take the actual APN product that is available from the MNO, and we package it in such a way that it's easy for our partners and their respective customers to use. It is literally taking the actual product and tailoring it for a specific market segment and making it available through a channel that the customer can easily access.

Connectivity Management is the layer below the APN component. The APN is a product that the MNO provides to you as a customer, and how you use it is entirely up to you. We control the connectivity layer below the APN using a software stack that we have developed locally, and which stems from our years of experience in the mobile system integration space.

It is this custom software stack, as well as our deep understanding of the mobile connectivity landscape that enhances and complements the APN solution. For example, when a device connects to our APN-as-a-Service environment, clients can choose which IP address the device receives, and which connectivity rules apply to this specific device. The device can have several connectivity options, or the customer can configure it so that it can only communicate with one specific destination IP address on a specific network. It is this configuration and connectivity management element that we refer to as Connectivity Management, where APN-as-a-Service refers to the larger solution.

Can we argue that Adapt IT Telecoms competes with MNOs?

It may appear that way, but it is not. We do have a dual relationship with some of these MNOs as both vendor and a customer. There is a thin line between the two, which is sometimes difficult to manage. But measures have been taken to differentiate between the two types of relationships. First and foremost, we do not deal with the consumer or end consumer directly. Our platform was specifically designed for our resellers and partners.

We've developed our products in such a way that every potential partner who approaches us for service must meet certain minimum qualifying criteria, such as managing X number of devices or X amount of data for their customers. In addition, we focus on long term engagements where we assist our partners in growing their business with them.

Who is this Technology positioned towards, and can you provide insight into which target market would make use of it?

The product is primarily aimed at enterprises requiring connectivity and connectivity management across several mobile networks. If you generally use a single mobile network, you can obtain an APN from a preferred Operator, who will also provide you with a tool to manage that APN. That's where our solution is different. Our target market requires connectivity from at least two operators, and many of them will need dual SIM connectivity in their respective solutions. They might

deploy their solution in a rural area, and if one network fails, the second network will come online and continue to service the solution that they are offering.

Most of our clients have this or similar requirements. Our solution enables clients to deliver a precise, tailor-made solution to their end customer's needs, rather than having to hunt for an off-the-shelf product from a specific service provider that may only meet some of the end customer's criteria.

How does APN-as-a-Service Data Connectivity Management resolve customer challenges and what benefit does it offer to enterprise environments?

APN-as-a-Service serves as an enablement platform for our partners. Although most customers have similar requirements, they are almost always not identical. While customers A and B may have a similar basic requirement, the customisation they require would differ. Our platform enables our partners to customise the connectivity journey for each of these customers.

Additionally, it enables multiple connectivity use cases from a single platform. A customer may want to manage IoT SIMs in metering devices that only occasionally uses a tiny amount of data. Conversely, the same customer may also have a mobile workforce that consumes a lot of data while working remotely as well as an IT Support team that need very specific access to company infrastructure. Our platform enables our customers to handle all these scenarios from within the same platform. You can separately configure each of these use cases on our system, and entirely control how connectivity functions for each of those scenarios. Everything is cloud-based, and it's all part of the same ecosystem.

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What role will humans play in the expanding world of Automation and Self-Service?

I don't think we can ever get rid of the human element. Even though AI and automated systems are good at doing repetitive tasks, they cannot enhance or think out of the box. You can program AI and implement automation that continuously repeats the same thing and provide data, but you still need somebody to interpret this data to influence an outcome.

The world still needs individuals who can see the big picture and innovate. There must be a human soul, a driving force, with a passion to see or visualise a concept and the enthusiasm to push the boundaries and strive for the next big thing on the horizon.