

# Operational Transformation at Scale

How a leading South African MSP cut headcount by 44% while growing revenue by 70%

Industry	Geography	Engagement	Role
Managed Security / BaaS	SA, UK, Portugal, Kenya	2021 - 2025 (4 years)	Group COO

## The Problem

A specialist backup and data protection MSP had grown to 34 staff across multiple locations (Cape Town, Johannesburg, Durban, PE, Kenya, Angola, Botswana, UK). Growth was real, but internal operations had not kept pace. Manual processes, siloed data, duplicated effort, and tribal knowledge created a situation where a significant portion of headcount existed to compensate for system gaps, not to deliver core value.

## The Approach

**Diagnose first. Automate second. Restructure third.**

- Operational Audit:** Every manual process mapped, stress-tested, and costed before any automation began.
- Systematic Automation:** Highest-volume, lowest-complexity tasks automated first. Service monitoring, alerting, client onboarding, reporting, and cross-location tooling consolidated into unified systems.
- Change Management:** Staff shown how new processes removed their daily friction. Experienced team members involved in workflow design, converting resistors into advocates.
- Structural Rationalisation:** Roles that existed to compensate for manual gaps were wound down through attrition and deliberate restructuring over multiple years.

## Spotlight: Enterprise Backup Automation

The organisation's flagship client (a major SA retailer, 2,500 daily backup jobs across national stores including rural satellite-connected locations) was at existential risk. Out-of-SLA failures were perceived at 8-12% against an industry standard of under 5%. An 8-month in-house project automated reporting, failure diagnosis, classification, and client-facing visibility. Manual overnight overtime rosters (4 technicians) were eliminated entirely.

## Results: Full Transformation (4 Years)

Headcount	<b>34 to 19 (44% reduction)</b>
Revenue during transformation	<b>70% increase</b>

## Results: SA Retailer Sub-Project

Out-of-SLA failure rate	<b>8-12% down to 0.8%</b>
Daily manual labour eliminated (reporting)	<b>2 man-hours/day, 7 days/week</b>
Daily manual labour eliminated (diagnosis)	<b>8 man-hours/day (4 overnight staff)</b>
Direct monthly saving	<b>~R51,000/month</b>
Client app users at launch	<b>~2,000 across national estate</b>
Flagship client relationship	<b>Existential risk to fully recovered</b>

*The organisation did not just reduce its cost base. It rebuilt its operational architecture and positioned itself to grow without the constraints that had been accumulating for a decade.*

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