

# Is South Africa ready for autonomous IT?

By [Niral Patel](#)

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The fourth industrial revolution is upon us and it is imperative for business leaders to ensure their organisations are future-ready and that they reskill their workers for the tidal wave of change. The time is now for local businesses to turn to autonomous technology to lower cost, improve efficiency, and be more competitive - all key business fundamentals.

According to Gartner's 2018 CIO Agenda Survey, the role of the CIO in Europe, the Middle East, and Africa is changing. CIOs in this region are spending more time focused on business leadership, and becoming more open-minded, showing a greater capacity for change.

In South Africa, there is a new appreciation for business leadership and a clear understanding that it is critical to drive collective action.

To keep pace, the most forward-looking CIOs will need to capitalise on autonomous services.

## What are autonomous services?

Today, autonomous represents a new category of cloud services; empowering businesses to lower costs, reduce risk, go beyond predictive insights to suggested action and steer innovation into the fast lane. Offering unprecedented levels of simplicity, self-service and security, through being self-driving, self-securing and self-repairing, autonomous cloud services are setting a new industry standard for IT.



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The resulting 'autonomous enterprise' won't need people to run, maintain, integrate, develop and secure its core IT systems. Instead, AI and automation will work together to manage everything from database to application development and provide actionable insight around business processes, all without human input.

## Closing the skills gap

Keeping our region's youthful population in mind and the need to create jobs, businesses should do their part to skill the workforce for the world of tomorrow. At Oracle we prepare young South Africans for employment in the ICT sector through our Oracle Graduate Leadership Programme that equips them with specialised IT and leadership skills. To date, 84 students

have successfully completed the programme since its inception in 2014.

Looking at it from a people perspective, companies must ensure their employees are ready for an autonomous cloud technology-driven environment and are able to capitalise on its benefits.

Re-training existing members of staff is critical. There is a range of options to help organisations upskill their IT teams through training; from government programmes through to vendor academies, such as the Oracle Academy. The latter are useful for providing both the technical skill set required and the necessary security and compliance training.

## **Work smarter**

CIOs don't just want to save costs – they want to move faster and smarter to take the business in more exciting directions than ever before. Autonomous will be key to fulfilling those aims.

Accenture, for example, needed a better way to manage its large-scale professional services workforce. Trialing an autonomous cloud solution against its key, data-intensive HR application, the company can get quicker and more personalised analytics to make smarter, faster workforce decisions.

Similarly, Hertz has used an autonomous cloud solution to remove the pain of administration and focus on delivering faster projects. Instead of setting up and tuning a server and database, the team can invest its man hours in innovation – delivering the right products to market, and customers, with more speed.

## **Build security resilience**

By 2022, Gartner predicts that a company's cybersecurity rating will become as important as its credit rating to customers, suppliers and partners. Yet, security attacks and breaches are increasing, and humans can't keep up. In fact, Gartner previously predicted that 95% of cloud security failures will be the customer's fault.



Niral Patel, MD and technology leader for Oracle South Africa

With AI and automation, businesses can automate the detection, prevention and response to security breaches, performance anomalies, and vulnerabilities. Only by using machines to fight machines can companies reprioritise and rethink about how they defend their information.

Autonomous services are precisely the kind of technology that forward-looking CIOs in South Africa should strive to adopt. The power of autonomous services, capable of self-patching, self-tuning and automatically optimising performance while running, is just the start.

It won't be long before autonomous cloud services bring simplicity, self-service and security into all areas of the business, providing new fuel for innovation.

Some organisations are ready. What about you?

## ABOUT NIRAL PATEL

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