

GERDA WILKENS

Cape Town, South Africa | gerda.wilkens@gmail.com | +27 82 332 8963

Executive Summary

Strategic Data & Program Management Leader with extensive experience in Data Warehouse, MIS, and enterprise governance. Proven ability to lead large-scale transformation programs, cloud migrations, and automation initiatives that modernize legacy environments while ensuring compliance and resilience.

An exceptionally driven leader with a reputation for delivering results others consider unachievable. Known for turning challenges into opportunities, inspiring teams, and aligning data initiatives with strategic goals. Skilled at vendor and contract management, stakeholder engagement, and executive influence — consistently delivering secure, scalable, and business-critical data solutions.

Key Skills

- Data Governance & Stewardship
- Data Centre Operations
- Program & Project Management
- Automation & Process Optimization
- Campaign Data Management
- Regulatory Reporting & Compliance
- Cloud & Infrastructure Transformation (AWS)
- Stakeholder & Executive Engagement
- Vendor & Contract Management (SLA Oversight)
- Team Leadership & Mentorship

Core Strengths & Traits

- Strategic Vision & Execution – translating business goals into measurable data outcomes
- Analytical Problem-Solving – delivering solutions to complex data, governance, and infrastructure challenges
- Collaborative Leadership – fostering high-performing teams and cross-functional alignment
- Stakeholder Influence – trusted partner to executives, business leaders, and external partners
- Integrity & Professionalism – consistent focus on compliance, ethics, and data stewardship
- Results-Oriented Delivery – driving automation, modernization, and cost efficiencies
- Adaptability & Resilience – thriving in high-demand, changing environments
- Big-Picture Perspective – balancing long-term strategy with operational execution

Professional Achievements

- Directed Data Warehouse & MIS operations – ensured governance, compliance, and business-critical data delivery at enterprise scale.
- Negotiated a vendor deal at ABSA/Barclays where the vendor paid the organization, saving hundreds of thousands of rands.
- Spearheaded automation of legacy data processes – reduced manual effort by 70%, accelerated delivery, and improved reliability.
- Led a R145M AWS Cloud migration program – successfully transitioned from legacy Data Centres, aligning vendors, executives, and technical teams.
- Decommissioned 750 physical and 370 virtual servers – achieved R50M in cost savings through optimized infrastructure, energy, and space usage.
- Partnered with broker firms and banks – resolved complex data challenges, strengthening service delivery and campaign effectiveness.
- Delivered data centre transformation initiatives – enhanced resilience, compliance, and operational efficiency across critical infrastructure.
- Established best practices in data stewardship and governance – embedded DAMA framework standards, ensuring regulatory alignment and improved quality.
- Implemented secure AWS-based data and communications solutions – enabled scalable, compliant, and cloud-first operations.

Career History

Director | Data Lead | Product Owner | Data Steward

Blue MP (Consulting to Old Mutual) – May 2019 to Present

- Shaped enterprise data capabilities, translating business vision into prioritized data features and technical deliverables.
- Owned and optimized Old Mutual's Data Warehouse platform, ensuring scalability, reliability, and compliance.
- Directed large-scale AWS Cloud migration, managing vendors, executives, and technical teams across the full program lifecycle.
- Embedded data governance best practices (DAMA framework), balancing delivery speed with compliance and quality.
- Mentored 40+ senior analysts, developers, and administrators, building in-house predictive modelling and analytics expertise.
- Designed and implemented secure AWS-based architectures supporting multi-segment data ingestion, processing, and reporting.

Senior Manager: Data Centres | Head of Migrations | Implementation Manager | IT Environments Manager

ABSA / Barclays Africa – Jan 2015 to May 2019

- Oversaw multi-phase Data Centre refurbishments and migrations, including Tier 4 build and relocation of 800+ servers.
- Established IMAC (Install, Move, Add, Change, Decommission) standards, streamlining processes across all Data Centres.
- Directed environment strategy for SAP, Workday, ServiceNow HR, and multiple downstream systems.
- Provided cross-border governance for 20+ Data Centres across Africa, ensuring alignment with compliance and performance standards.
- Developed environment calendars and run books that became central references for program teams.
- Delivered executive-level reporting on readiness, risks, and mitigation to steering committees.

Senior Project Manager | Solutions Architect

Standard Bank South Africa – Apr 2010 to Jan 2015

- Directed large-scale server migrations and environment builds to strengthen infrastructure resilience.
- Developed infrastructure solution designs integrating compliance, security, and high availability.
- Introduced governance and deployment frameworks improving predictability and reducing risk.
- Collaborated with cross-functional teams to align infrastructure solutions with long-term strategy.
- Enhanced operational readiness through risk assessments, contingency planning, and robust cutover strategies.

Earlier Career

- CEO / Owner – eZee Business Management (2002 – 2010): Founded and grew a software services company delivering payroll, stock control, POS, and financial reporting solutions.
- Training / Infrastructure / IT Manager – Prodata Computer Services (1999 – 2002): Led infrastructure rollouts, Y2K projects, and technical training.
- Senior Accountant Clerk – SAPS (1994 – 1999): Managed financial processes, HR functions, and staff training.
- Clerk / Department Second-in-Charge – ABSA Bank (1989 – 1994): Oversaw client services, reconciliations, and staff training.

Certifications

- SharePoint 2013 Site Owner – Bytes People Solutions (Dec 2016)
- First Aid Level 2 – Action Training Academy (May 2016)
- Certified Data Center Professional – EXIN (Oct 2015)
- Agile@Barclays – ESI International (Sep 2015)
- Pearson Test of English (PTE Academic) – Pearson PLC Group (Aug 2015)
- IELTS International General English – IELTS (Mar 2015)
- Microsoft Project Skills for Project Managers – Xpert Academy (Dec 2011)
- SAP Solution Consultant: Human Resources – SAP Academy (Sep 2009)
- Microsoft Certified Professional (MCP) & Microsoft Certified Systems Engineer (MCSE) – Microsoft (May 1999)