

# A digital hub for a utility leader

With Citrix Workspace, ACEA develops the best user experience for employees

ACEA is a leading multi-utility company in Italy, operating in the distribution, production and sale of electricity, and the water and waste management sectors. Investments in innovation (€600 million expected in the three-year period from 2021-2024) are central to all of the latest industrial plans developed by the ACEA Group, which employs around 7,600 people and is Italy's leading water operator, serving approximately nine million inhabitants in Lazio, Tuscany, Umbria, Campania and Molise.

As Ivan Vigolo, CIO of ACEA, explains, "The main KPIs indicating the efficiency of our water networks place us in a leading position within Italy and Europe. This is the result of a strategy geared toward innovation and sustainability, focused on prevention rather than reaction, and which can also be applied to digital infrastructure. There is a reason why the department I manage has two divisions: traditional ICT (Information and Communications Technology) and open innovation, which studies and promotes innovation across the group with initiatives such as hackathons. The latter is at the heart of ACEA's strategy, not only from a technology point of view, but also in the company culture at all levels. We believe that if we motivate our people and provide the right tools, they will contribute to the innovation of the company and the services we provide."

With 120 people employed in ICT-related roles and increasing to approximately 350 including external consultants, ACEA developed a modern and efficient software and hardware infrastructure by adopting a 'cloud-first' strategy leveraging its own datacenters and widespread use of IaaS, PaaS and SaaS solutions.

## Plans won't be derailed by the pandemic

Thanks to ACEA's proactive approach, the company was almost ready to roll out smart-working for 90% of its employees when the first COVID-19 lockdown measures were rolled out, equipping them with company laptops in the first few days of March 2020.



**Industry**  
Utility

**Location**  
Italy

### Citrix products

- [Citrix Workspace](#)
- [Citrix Content Collaboration](#)
- [Citrix Secure Workspace Access](#)
- [Citrix Microapps](#)
- [Citrix Analytics](#)
- [Citrix Application Delivery Management](#)

### Key Benefits

- Ease of management and centralization of the environment
- Satisfying and consistent user experience
- Enhanced performance and security compared to VDI technology

“The employee journey was already fully digital,” explains Ivan Vigolo, “but what we lacked was a welcoming and functional digital hub. Our employees had to navigate an environment composed of applications that didn’t all respond in the same way, and while efficient, the virtual desktop infrastructure (VDI) technology did not guarantee a consistent user experience across the various applications.”

ACEA sought a ‘single point’ solution with a truly modern user experience similar to that offered by social networks. Already an established Citrix customer, ACEA turned to [Citrix Workspace](#), identifying it as a solid base upon which to build a single point of entry for every employee, accessible from any device, anywhere.

“The pandemic accelerated a process that was already underway,” explains Ivan Vigolo, “and Citrix offered us exactly what we needed: a solution that went far beyond the technological aspect. A solution that made it possible to build a journey and evoke emotions, and which would ultimately change the lives of our employees for the better.”

### A complex system, developed in three months

ACEA purchased approximately 4,500 Citrix Workspace licenses in late 2020 and, after two rapid prototype stages, the system named ‘Digithall’ was in production by April 2021. A month later, over 100 staff in ACEA’s IT department were using the new platform as a single point of access. With the integration of [Microapps](#), those users can now quickly access key tasks and actions within applications such as SAP and ServiceNow. This offers a highly efficient and engaging experience and a level of security exceeding that offered by traditional VDI technologies and virtual private network (VPN) connections.

“For example,” says Ivan Vigolo, “our employees can complete all the various steps within a purchasing cycle without ever leaving the workspace and, if necessary, they can also open SAP directly from their smartphone much faster than on the previous system. Integration with Microsoft Office 365 also allows users to receive notifications when new emails arrive, or if a meeting is about to start, and they can respond directly from the workspace.”

The new workspace also includes microapp integrations with Back-To-Office, IT Self-Service, HR Self-Service, Well-Being and many other employee services - all from a single app, no matter the device or location, without traditional VPN. ACEA has already implemented an FAQ section to provide IT assistance and has plans to develop a similar system for HR (for example, for how to request annual leave). Employees can then find everything they need, including intelligent social and business feeds, calendars and messaging, ultimately reducing the time spent searching for information and increasing productivity.

As part of ACEA’s commitment to the well-being of its workforce, a new microapp ‘Happy Meter’ is also being rolled out which allows employees to rate their experience of the new workspace. These valuable insights help ensure that employees are satisfied with their workspace platform and feel engaged, valued and productive.

**“We favored Citrix because the solution goes far beyond the technological aspect. It has allowed us to build a journey, to evoke emotions; ultimately it has changed the lives of our employees for the better. Citrix has a vision that aligns with our own, which we didn’t find in any other vendor.”**

Ivan Vigolo, CIO, ACEA

Citrix Application Delivery Management (ADM) and, in particular, Citrix Analytics, also provide ACEA with a clear overview of the entire platform and insights into how it is being used, which helps to continuously improve security and the user experience of its employees. ACEA plans to roll out the workspace to its HR function in late summer and to the rest of the organization by the end of the year.

“Unlike other vendors, Citrix has put virtualization and security management capabilities at the center of its technology, providing an environment where we can run our applications without worrying about security and policies, coupled with the flexibility of combining on-premises and cloud resources,” explains Ivan Vigolo.

For this highly innovative project, Citrix Consulting Services and the Citrix research and development group were directly involved and assisted by partner Accenture, which guaranteed a high-quality result. At the same time, the priority support service addressed ACEA’s requests promptly with the product team. Citrix and Accenture, thanks to a world-class partnership, work together to create the most advanced workspace concept currently available.

### A future of gamification and engagement

According to Ivan Vigolo, “Every day, a new piece of the puzzle falls into place. It might be the management of tickets, vacation days or salary statements. My dream is that, in the near future, we will reach a point where we have centralized management and a single environment from which we can access any application, using the hub to share content and as a tool for collaboration, thereby taking the virtual desktop concept to the extreme. Ultimately, a unique, abstract environment that is completely independent from the device, allowing us to perform all tasks linked to company operations.”

As the pilot phase is now complete, ACEA is preparing to roll out the new ‘Digithall’ environment to all employees. “It’s a challenging process of change management because the population of the group is extremely varied,” concludes Ivan Vigolo. “Having completed a highly significant test phase we are convinced of the solution’s value to the extent that we are already considering further developments. Among other things we will be offering gamification activities designed in partnership with Citrix to engage all users in a natural way.”

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