

Transforming the future of contact centers

Capita plc transitioned 18,000 contact center advisers from office to homeworking in just three days with Citrix.

As the UK's largest business process outsourcing and professional services company, Capita provides customer contact, support and management services to government and well-known companies. It operates contact centers in the UK, South Africa, Europe and India.

"Citrix has always played a primary role within our customer management function," says IT Director Adrian Whitaker. Capita used Citrix to deliver a secure and stable desktop to contact center advisers' thin-client terminals from an on-premises datacenter. Whitaker and his team were in the process of migrating the datacenter to Microsoft Azure when the COVID-19 lockdown was announced. The traditional model for contact center operations is office-based.

"When the pandemic arrived, we didn't have a homeworking solution in place for our advisers," Whitaker says. "Overnight, my team of 10 was tasked with implementing a solution for the 18,000 contact center advisers, in three countries, plus Capita's corporate personnel, so we could move them seamlessly to a full home-working solution that would mimic exactly what they had on site."

Consistency was key, Whitaker explains, "A change in environment can be quite daunting for a contact center adviser, so we had to present something that was the same as they were used to using in the office. A lot of our agents don't have the luxury of office space at home, so they might be working on a kitchen or dining room table. We were asking them to use laptops rather than Wyse terminals, so there would be an aesthetic change, as well."

Capita's IT platforms team included several highly experienced Citrix engineers and they quickly recommended [Citrix Workspace](#) as the best solution to provide users with simple, secure access and consistency of experience. "From the time of our decision to deploying a homeworking solution took just three days. We stood up an environment to support 18,000 users, and commenced the transition with unique apps required for each client, all presented via Citrix Workspace."



Industry

Professional and Public Services

Location

UK

Citrix products

- Citrix Workspace
- Citrix Cloud services

Key Benefits

- [Citrix Workspace](#) provides a simple, secure and familiar desktop to 18,000 homeworking contact center advisers

Familiar desktop eases stress and supports productivity

Capita moved quickly to provide its agents with laptops so they could easily work from wherever was easiest in their homes.

“As you can imagine, there was a lot of nervousness amongst advisers,” Whitaker explains. “Amidst the huge disruption of the pandemic they were having to get used to the idea of working from home and were understandably anxious about using new technology.”

Citrix Workspace provides a simple way for everyone to access their work.

“Using VPN just wasn’t viable. With Citrix Workspace, people just use a simple URL,” he says. “Citrix handles all the multi-factor authentication and determines whether the user needs to be directed to our on-premises solution or the Azure solution, depending on the client project. Everyone comes through the Citrix Cloud Connectors which gives us a secure, encrypted link into Capita. The agent logs on with their credentials – and is presented with the desktop (including all the client-specific apps) – that they use when they’re in the office. After that, it’s business as usual. The simplicity of the desktop experience was paramount in our decision to choose Citrix Workspace.”

Very soon, agents were using Microsoft Teams to connect with each other, while team leaders used the tool for morning huddles and other activities to “help them feel part of the Capita family”. To support advisers in the strange experience of working from home, alone, the Capita IT team ran regular show-and-tell sessions using Teams. Quickly, even the most apprehensive agents moved from their initial concerns to embracing the technology.

“Deploying Citrix Workspace desktop was seamless,” Whitaker says. “It’s such a simple tool to use, anyone who’s used a computer before can connect to it.”

A rapid response to supporting clients and critical services

Capita’s clients include many organizations with critical customer support requirements, such as utilities, animal welfare and mobile telecommunication providers. During a period when care for elderly or vulnerable customers was vital, Capita’s rapid response was important and appreciated.

“We were able to deploy a homeworking solution for all our clients in a very short space of time, and that is testament to the team,” Whitaker says. “Clients have said, ‘thank you for doing what you’ve done, so quickly’. We’ve delivered faster than some of our clients’ own IT teams. Citrix Workspace has enabled us to do that.”

In a period of upheaval and transformation, the business was even able to help new retail clients struggling with unprecedented demand introduce intelligent self-serve technology such as, conversational AI to allow organizations to support more customers, and offer additional support for public healthcare organizations and government initiatives to help tackle the effects of the pandemic.

“Citrix is simple and secure. Strategically, choosing Workspace has enabled us to re-think the future of contact center operations to benefit our colleagues, our clients, and Capita.”

Adrian Whitaker
IT Director
Capita Management

“We saw a massive increase in activity in some areas,” Whitaker notes. Capita’s response was supported by the scalability of Workspace and Azure – an original driver of Capita’s cloud migration project – and by the commitment of its staff. “Productivity for our clients has gone up. We’ve seen that people want to do all they can to help, as well as to support each other. Agents working on some of these critical services are dedicated to doing their bit to support the response.”

Transforming the future of contact center operations

Capita’s rapid and successful response to an unprecedented situation will have a sustained effect.

“The future of contact center working has changed within this pandemic period,” Whitaker feels. “People have reflected on the art of the possible, things like digital transformation of customer journeys and virtual working have accelerated. For multinational corporations, you can see the benefit of hybrid working models because less real estate will be required if people can work from home. There are huge benefits for the employee, too. They can avoid the cost and time of commuting. They can be flexible, working different hours, say, to cover travel-related support services during rush-hour periods. And, for single parents, the ability to work flexible hours from home enables them to take a job when they couldn’t before.

“We’ve just completed a survey with employees,” he continues, “and the predominant choice for future working was a mixture of both home and office working.”

The experience of managing the rapid transition to homeworking has also influenced IT strategy.

“The tech teams adopted a really empathetic approach to helping homeworkers get online. That’s given us a deeper insight into how people will accept new technology. Making our systems easier to use will help staff retention, as will the ability to offer homeworking. If you come into the office two days and work from home for three, work-life balance improves. People get to see their family. Attrition rates will drop and the overall investment we need to make in training and retaining people will be lower.”

Looking ahead, Whitaker hopes to refine Capita’s homeworking solution by replacing the emergency laptops with low-energy, thin-client devices which will be more secure and easier to manage. The migration from on-premises to Microsoft’s environmentally-friendly Azure datacenters is scheduled to be complete by the end of 2021. This will further enhance Capita’s flexibility and – along with the reduced travel requirements of homeworking – contribute to its sustainability goals.

“Citrix gives us a flexible, scalable platform that enables us to respond quickly to client needs, whatever the situation,” Whitaker concludes. “Citrix is simple and secure. It presents a desktop, which we control, to agents in the UK, Europe, South Africa, and India, while data is retained securely onshore in UK datacenters. That’s important to our clients. Strategically, choosing Citrix Workspace has enabled us to re-think the future of contact center operations to benefit our staff, our clients and Capita.”

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