

# Thanks to its digital workspace strategy, hessnatur enjoys sustainable growth

With the support of Citrix and the IT group K-iS Systemhaus, the fair-fashion pioneer is paving the way for a hybrid workplace

Thanks to its innovative approach, fashion house hessnatur is driving the ecological transformation of the textiles sector. The company is also breaking new ground within its internal organization. hessnatur introduced a digital workspace solution from Citrix to develop more modern, flexible work processes and provide optimum support to employees working in offices, stores, and at home.

hessnatur is Germany's best-known sustainable fashion brand. Founded in 1976, the trailblazing company has been committed to raising environmental and social standards in textiles production for more than 45 years. In 1991, hessnatur was the first company in the world to pioneer the production of organic cotton. The company's mission: to make the entire manufacturing process as fair, sustainable and environmentally sound as possible – from resource production to coat hangers.

Each and every day, hessnatur is proof that the environment and economy can work together in harmony. The company is now one of the world's largest producers of natural fabrics and, in the financial year 2020/2021, posted sales in excess of 100 million euros for the first time. The current product range includes men's and women's sustainable fashion, outdoor clothing, home furnishings and products for babies and children. hessnatur has a workforce of around 340 and runs its own stores in Butzbach, Düsseldorf, Frankfurt, Hamburg and Munich, as well as its online shop and mail-order business.

## hessnatur's longstanding commitment to flexible working

Innovation and teamwork are the basis for the company's success. hessnatur therefore strives to create a modern and inspiring workplace for all its employees. "Over recent years, we have put a great deal of thought into the best ways to support our employees and to ensure they enjoy a good work-life balance," says Jens-Uwe Rau, IT Manager at hessnatur. "Flexible home-working options have been a part of our corporate culture for more than 15 years."

Working with K-iS Systemhaus corporate group, hessnatur's IT team implemented a Citrix infrastructure in its own data center. [Citrix Virtual Apps and Desktops](#) enables employees to access their workspace digitally from any location or device.

*hessnatur*  
FOR A BETTER TOMORROW

**Industry**  
Retail

**Location**  
Germany

**Citrix products**

- [Citrix Virtual Apps and Desktops](#)
- [Citrix Gateway](#)

The infrastructure is secured by a [Citrix Gateway](#) solution. This encrypts all data traffic between devices and servers and uses two-factor authentication to protect all access when working from home.

The solution was well received by employees from the very start. hessnatur therefore continued to expand its virtual workplace and integrated all the applications needed by employees for their work. The IT specialists from K-iS Systemhaus helped the company to develop the infrastructure further and migrate additional applications. Today, even graphic-intensive applications such as Adobe's creative tools, run virtually on the Citrix servers. This allows hessnatur's designers to work on new collections from any location, without compromising the user experience. The centrally available applications run almost as efficiently as locally installed applications. In the future, the IT department wants to deploy GPU virtualization in the Citrix environment using NVIDIA graphics cards for particularly demanding design work.

### Digital workspaces enhance teamwork during the COVID-19 crisis

"This flexible workspace solution enabled us to respond rapidly to the challenges arising from the COVID-19 pandemic," says Jens-Uwe Rau. "Within a few short days, almost all our employees were able to move to remote working, without us needing to make significant changes to the infrastructure. We simply increased the number of servers and repurposed some of the existing PCs as secure endpoints for home working. The Citrix environment itself responded exceptionally well to the different conditions and continued to operate with a high degree of stability."

To facilitate virtual collaboration, hessnatur then introduced a raft of new communications and collaboration tools. Today, employees mainly use Microsoft Teams to communicate with colleagues when working from home via video call. The IT department has provided employees with an online-telephony solution based on WebRTC.

With the support of K-iS Systemhaus, these applications were also seamlessly integrated into the Citrix Workspace architecture. "This means that users can launch online meetings direct from their digital workspace, for example," explains Rau. "Citrix optimization technologies for Microsoft Teams guarantee optimum audio and video quality. The transmission of speech and language is crystal clear and lag-free."

### The new strategy benefits users – and the environment

The pandemic has accelerated the digitization of work and business processes in many ways at hessnatur. For example, in just 12 months, the company's e-commerce revenue increased by an impressive 45 percent. And the tools for virtual communication and collaboration newly introduced during the coronavirus crisis have quickly become mainstream. It is now hard to imagine everyday working life without Microsoft Teams.

"We are gearing up for a hybrid workplace in the future; one in which our employees can switch as necessary between the office and homeworking," says Rau. "That makes us a more attractive employer to those professionals who don't necessarily want to move house in order to take up a new position. And of course, this strategy also helps us to reduce commuter traffic, therefore making us even more sustainable."

### Key Benefits

- **Optimal user experience:** whether on a Microsoft Teams video call or using Adobe graphics applications, hessnatur's staff can rely on seamless application performance at all times, thanks to Citrix
- **Highly secure remote access:** Citrix technology provides full protection for sensitive data when employees access their digital workspace from home or on the move
- **Improving operational efficiency:** the IT department has significantly reduced the time spent on routine administrative tasks and can now devote more time to innovative projects and developing the digital workplace

## Citrix technologies facilitate transformation and reduce IT workload

The workplace changes can now also be seen at hessnatur's company headquarters. A shared-desk model with a booking system was recently introduced for on-site staff. In certain departments such as HR, there are now more employees than office workspaces.

With the Citrix infrastructure, the IT department has created the conditions to support the transformation very efficiently. Applications and updates are centrally managed and available, and the device administration required now is minimal. Furthermore, a large proportion of the company's PCs have been replaced by low-maintenance, energy-saving ICEL thin clients.

"PCs are now no longer used in our stores and customer care center," says Jens-Uwe Rau. "Staff access their applications using thin clients only." This has vastly reduced the workload for the IT department, as the Citrix und IGEL solutions enable administrators to fully manage the endpoints remotely for all branches, saving them time-consuming, expensive on-site visits.

As a result, the IT manager believes that the business is well-equipped to take the next step: "The more we reduce the time spent on administrative tasks, the more resources we have to design a modern digital workplace tailored to the needs of our employees."

**"Citrix is enabling us to transform our workplace for the future. We are aware that our colleagues' expectations of their workplace are changing. Through our digital workspace strategy, we can give them the flexibility that they desire."**

Jens-Uwe Rau, IT Manager  
Hess Natur-Textilien GmbH  
& Co. KG

### Enterprise Sales

North America | 800-424-8749

Worldwide | +1 408-790-8000

### Locations

Corporate Headquarters | 851 Cypress Creek Road, Fort Lauderdale, FL 33309, United States

Silicon Valley | 4988 Great America Parkway, Santa Clara, CA 95054, United States

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