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The Shift to Remote Requires Modernization of the Contact Center

With remote contact center agents, you may be free to hire from a larger talent pool that's not location dependent. Perhaps you're thinking about downsizing physical office space, too.

"By 2024, 30% of organizations will have moved their contact centers' operations off-premises, with a 60% jump in remote-working full-time agents."

Gartner: Overcome the Top 3 Challenges to Setting Up Contact Center Agents for Remote Working Published 26 February 2021

Contact Center agents are the first interface for your customers. They need to be able to clearly communicate over the phone and quickly access information to help customers in a timely manner. Any disruption to call quality or application performance can increase the length of calls and reduce customer satisfaction scores. The ability to monitor and manage agent performance ensures you deliver the best customer experience.

We all know SLAs and NPS scores are vitally important, but onboarding new agents, delivering training remotely and the ability to regularly have team meetings are too. With the shift to a hybrid workforce model, IT complexity is increasing. Distributed hardware-based legacy networking and security infrastructure are difficult to manage and keep updated.

Shifting contact center applications to the cloud and decentralizing contact center operations is an important step in a long-term approach to the evolution of the contact center business. A few Gartner recommendations are to:

- Migrate to cloud-based contact center platforms to avoid VPN scalability issues, as cloud platforms do not require VPNs for most contact center operations. Organizations planning to stay on-premises must rebuild their VPN infrastructure to support remote agents

- Establish a secure workstation environment for remote contact center agents by enabling end-to-end security using virtual desktop infrastructure (VDI) tools and WebRTC technology, were appropriate

This can help lower data center infrastructure costs as well. Prevalent use of legacy VDI and VPN technologies, however, can lead to difficulties maintaining security and don't scale for the larger workforce. What's more, SaaS performance with a VPN is going to suffer. Since many enterprise customers maintain at least some infrastructure on-premises, they need a better alternative to traditional VPNs and legacy infrastructure. Additionally, legacy VDI customers may be struggling with connection issues at the endpoint.

"By 2024, cloud contact center agents will outnumber on-premises contact center agents."

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On one hand, this means remote agents only need to be equipped with a thin client, internet connectivity, a browser for WebRTC, and a softphone to use contact center software as a service (CCaaS). But reliance on home Wi-Fi with variable internet connection speeds makes solving remote agents' application performance challenges difficult for IT, especially without visibility into the home network. For the best VoIP and UCaaS app experience, agents need high-quality bandwidth and direct connectivity (local internet breakout) from their homes because these apps are more susceptible to jitter, loss and latency. Without enterprise-grade security at home networks, data and application protection should be provided as a service to ensure threat defence for remote agents.

A Better Agent Experience Drives Productivity and Customer Satisfaction

Collaboration tools are critical in a remote environment to ensure teams remain connected. Onboarding agents quickly and training them without a good plan on how to maintain a consistent experience, can put additional strain on IT and the business.

Citrix Workspace offers secure access with Citrix Virtual Apps and Desktops service and Secure Workspace Access. Citrix Workspace offers agents:

- A single unified, consumer-like experience from which they can work, across all the devices they use – desktops, laptops, mobile devices, company, and employee-owned devices and more from which can securely sign on once to ALL your apps
- Secure access to all apps (Windows, SaaS, Web apps) without complexity. SSO provides secure access to every app and file agents need anywhere they work without multiple passwords
- A secure cloud-based browser, hosted by Citrix, lets agents browse the web without restriction

The farther away agents are from the apps they use, the worse the quality will be due to latency. Traditional backhauling to a data center to reach the cloud uses inefficient routing practices to secure internet egress. Citrix SD-WAN intelligently optimizes traffic and sends it directly to the cloud apps agents need, for an improved experience. Citrix SD-WAN can identify and locally breakout voice and other SaaS traffic to reduce latency while keeping the attack surface secure. By leveraging wireless 4G LTE connectivity alongside broadband, workers have sufficient bandwidth and don't have to worry about network disruptions. IT simply pre-configures the Citrix SD-WAN 110 appliance and ships them to the remote agents quickly at scale.
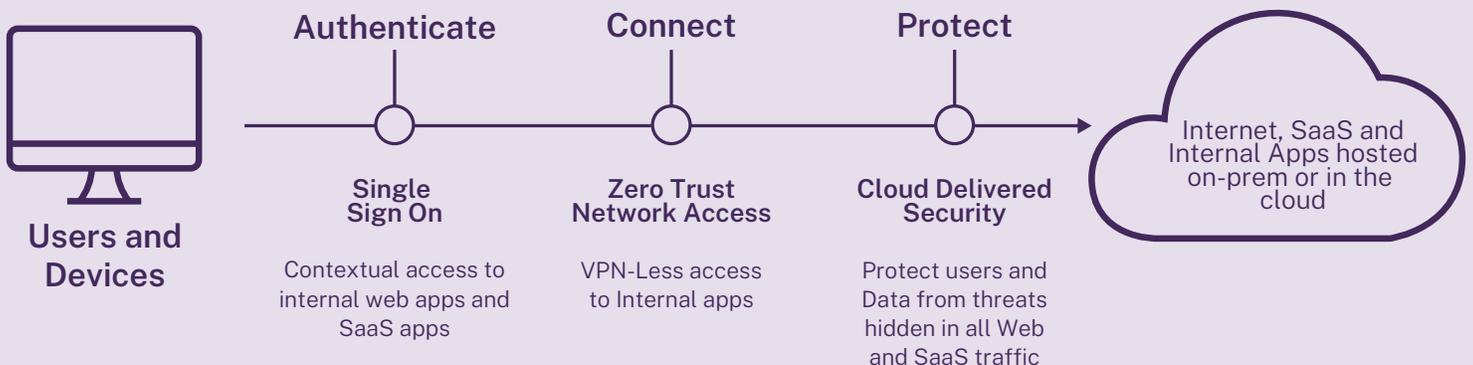
Citrix SD-WAN integrates seamlessly with Citrix Virtual Apps and Desktops service to deliver the best user experience for up to 5x performance improvement. Built-in integration with the Citrix Virtual Apps and Desktops service admin workflow simplifies deployment and configuration for fast migration to eliminate dependency on VPNs. SD-WAN can automatically prioritize real-time Citrix virtual traffic over other less important virtual traffic. Quality of service is measured at the sending and receiving ends to ensure a loss-less voice experience.

Ensure Security and Privacy to Protect Customer Data

Contact Center agents deal with sensitive personal identifiable customer information day in and day out, so data breaches pose a significant threat to the business. As a result, data protection legislation has grown. Maintaining compliance in a world where many agents are working from home and leveraging their home broadband and the internet, protection must extend to the agents and their endpoints.

Protection of customer's PII data should be handled with built-in encryption of data over the WAN, centralized security policies, and seamless integration with a cloud-delivered security service that aligns with a SASE framework approach that includes ZTNA.

Authenticate   **Connect**   **Protect**

Users and Devices

Single Sign On
Contextual access to internal web apps and SaaS apps

Zero Trust Network Access
VPN-Less access to Internal apps

Cloud Delivered Security
Protect users and Data from threats hidden in all Web and SaaS traffic

Internet, SaaS and Internal Apps hosted on-prem or in the cloud

The Citrix approach to SASE offers an integrated, cloud-managed approach to SD-WAN and its security cloud-delivered service, Secure Internet Access (SIA). This unified framework is built on a global cloud architecture with PoPs across the globe. Citrix Secure Access, combines comprehensive, cloud-delivered security with zero-trust network access (ZTNA), SD-WAN, Analytics, and Secure Internet Access. Citrix secures access to web, SaaS/cloud, and legacy apps with solutions that authenticate, connect, and protect users and data from cybersecurity threats.

Users get a unified experience that allows them to access all applications that they need to, without compromising on security or experience. This is designed to simplify operations from Day 0 to Day 2 aligning NetOps and SecOps teams. It protects users and data from threats hidden in all web and SaaS traffic with inline Cloud Access Security Broker (CASB) and Data Leakage Prevention (DLP) and web security for malicious sites, unknown operating systems, and malware.

Citrix Workspace with Secure Workspace Access provides both agent-level security and access based on identity delivered through a VPN-less global network of Points of Presence (POPs) that:

- Protect against threats when accessing apps (Windows, SaaS, Web apps) and maintains compliance of personal data with SSO, MFA and Secure Browser Isolation
- Allow users to access SaaS and web applications with fewer passwords
- Protect BYO devices with policy-based security controls (anti-screenshots, anti-key loggers, watermark) and Citrix Secure Browser service to restrict agents from compromising customer data stored in web and SaaS applications
- Auto-scale to meet any surge in remote workers

Additionally, Citrix SD-WAN's integrated firewall has global policy control, supports zone-based policies so that you can implement granular micro-segmentation of traffic and enforce uniform policy consistently. Citrix

SD-WAN can also intelligently track the fast-changing open ports from SaaS and IaaS apps as trusted traffic and directly breakout the traffic to the internet, enhancing application performance. It also encrypts all branch egress traffic, even when it is transported over a private MPLS line.

Become More Resilient to Adapt Faster

Your contact center relies on live communications with customers to stay competitive. Downtime not only results in lost sales but can also worsen brand perception and NPS scores as well as decreasing agent retention. Resiliency helps your businesses overcome disruption with less effort while also ensuring interactions with customers don't suffer. By focusing on employee and customer engagement, remote access, onboarding and communication strategies, your business will be able to adapt faster and improve the customer experience.

Citrix Workspace with Citrix Virtual Apps and Desktops help to quickly onboard remote new hires. Citrix Workspace drives talent engagement in hybrid environments by keeping them connected through communication and collaboration tools, allowing for delivery of real-time training, and putting a focus on employee well-being by streamlining access to apps and data.

Citrix Workspace allows employees to feel connected and safe with built-in Back to Office and Employee Well-Being micro-apps. Citrix Secure Workspace Access can auto scale to meet any surge in remote worker requirements. What's more, it provides secure access to all apps and files with SSO and MFA authentication to reduce the number of passwords agents need to manage and hackers try to exploit.

The Citrix SD-WAN 110 platform delivers a reliable experience for remote workers by bonding together multiple connections including broadband and 4G LTE. By doing so, it protects against a single carrier outage or link congestion. Failover at the packet level is completely undetected by agents on calls.

Visibility Empowers IT

Lack of visibility impairs IT's ability to solve agent's application issues that can lower productivity. To further complicate matters, agents and IT staff are now working remotely on personal and corporate devices connected to their home networks. And when you have disparate apps including web, SaaS and traditional enterprise apps, it's more difficult to determine where an issue is without visibility. For example, how do you determine if an issue is due to network connectivity, latency, or a problem with a server or cloud?

Citrix Workspace integrates with Citrix Analytics to provide real-time insights that make it easy to monitor, troubleshoot, and resolve issues fast. Citrix offers the option of adding analytics for both security and performance.

Citrix Analytics is an intuitive analytics service that allows you to monitor and identify inconsistent or suspicious activity on your networks. Using machine learning and advanced algorithms, it provides actionable insights into user behavior based on indicators across users, endpoints, network traffic, and files. Citrix Security Analytics helps prevent zero-day and internal attacks with:

- SSL certificate monitoring
- Monitoring of the workspace environment and detection/flagging of bad actors, behavior changes, and anomalies to stop malicious activity and prevent data loss

Citrix Performance Analytics provides sophisticated machine learning capabilities to help IT and admins determine the root cause of performance issues across virtual infrastructure and to understand the impact on agents. Performance Analytics:

- Aggregates site-performance metrics into easy-to-view user experience and infrastructure dashboards that you can use to analyze user experience and optimize the usage of your Citrix Virtual Apps and Desktops sites.
- Aggregates performance metrics across your cloud and on-prem setups.
- Quantifies user-performance factors and classifies users based on these factors. It provides actionable insights into troubleshooting failures, screen lags, delayed session logons, and other performance indicators.

Since connectivity and performance issues can be network related, a centralized monitoring and management tool for the network will help provide visibility into the health, usage, quality, and performance of the entire network and can provide the ability to drill down into individual sites and associated connections. Citrix SD-WAN Orchestrator is a cloud-hosted, multitenant management service available to Do It Yourself enterprises and Citrix Partners. It provides the ability to centrally monitor the health, usage, quality, and performance of your whole network allowing you to drill down into individual sites and their connections. Troubleshooting is improved with device and audit logs, diagnostic utilities such as ping, traceroute, packet capture to troubleshoot network connectivity issues. For Citrix Virtual Apps and Desktops customers, it provides deep visibility into that HDX traffic at the site, session, and user level for faster troubleshooting.

Future-proof your Remote Contact Center

Having a trusted partner that understands the contact center's unique needs and has the expertise in solving remote work challenges, can make your transformation seamless. The last thing you want is a disruption to your business especially with a hybrid workforce or a shift to the cloud. Citrix solutions can help you securely deliver all the tools your employees need—SaaS apps, web apps, virtual apps and more—while simplifying management and speeding up deployment.

Gartner, Overcome the Top 3 Challenges to Setting Up Contact Center Agents for Remote Working, Pankil Sheth, Steve Blood, Stuart Downes, 26 February 2021

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