

CUSTOMER STORY

ACCELERATING COLLABORATION WITH MICROSOFT 365

Service remains unaffected and productivity is enhanced as people embrace flexible working

SERVICES

- Workstyle Analysis
- Video and Voice Assessment
- Workplace Technology Integration
- Technology Sourcing
- User Adoption
- Office 365 Transformation
- Video and Voice Transformation
- Service Desk

USER EXPERIENCE

- Enhances agility and mobility
- Maximises efficiency
- Improves access to information
- Improves collaboration and performance
- Improves user satisfaction

BUSINESS IMPACT

- Accelerates innovation
- Boosts business agility
- Strengthens competitive advantage
- Enriches customer experience
- Improves productivity
- Reduces costs
- Supports digitalisation

OBJECTIVE

In early 2020, Computacenter committed to move from their existing unified communication and telephony platforms, and fully leverage Microsoft Office 365 to provide a better user experience. Key to this was to embrace the capabilities of Microsoft Teams via an appropriate adoption approach for the company's 16,000 users. Computacenter were also looking to update or replace their existing meeting room equipment, ensuring integration with Teams desktop video conferencing and the company's collaboration infrastructure.

The COVID-19 outbreak accelerated the programme, including the facilitation of home-working for approximately 90% of the organisation's employees (including all Service Desk staff). This transformation needed to take place without impacting the businesses of hundreds of customers who were relying on Computacenter's services.

SOLUTION

Computacenter replaced their existing collaboration tools with Microsoft Teams, assigning their Adoption and Change team as an integral part of the migration programme. The company's User Adoption Framework was deployed, ensuring successful adoption of the new capabilities and features, thus leading to improved user satisfaction and productivity.

The global pandemic resulted in the launch of Teams being brought forward by 9 weeks to optimise effective home-working for Computacenter's staff. This was achieved by moving on-premises data to the cloud to help reduce the load on VPNs. Additionally, quadrupling the VPN capabilities enabled critical helpdesk staff to work from home, allowing them to continue to support their customers, without impacting service delivery.

Video-enabled rooms were also integrated to work with Teams desktop video conferencing, as well as with customers and partners.

OUTCOME

The programme of rolling out Microsoft Teams to all Computacenter users was successfully delivered within 4 weeks. Furthermore, all users were enabled for remote working, therefore ensuring that the service to Computacenter's customers remained entirely unaffected. Feedback from users has exceeded expectations, with hundreds reporting a significant improvement with their new digital and remote workstyle.



In embracing Microsoft Teams, it was vital that an appropriate adoption approach was deployed – ensuring that each of our 16,000 users could easily adapt to the new ways of working.”

Jacky West,
Head of Adoption, Computacenter



With the global outbreak of COVID-19, we had to rapidly adapt and accelerate our deployment of Microsoft Teams, to support home-working of at least 90% of our staff, including all Service Desk personnel.”

Stephen Pitt,
Workplace Director, Computacenter

OBJECTIVE

Fully embracing the collaborative capabilities of Microsoft Teams

Computacenter employs around 16,000 people throughout the world, working across a widespread network of office, customer, partner and mobile locations. Like any global organisation, the company relies on technology to keep its people connected and productive, and to collaborate with its customers.

Computacenter made a strategic decision to migrate away from their existing platforms for unified communications and telephony, and to fully utilise use Microsoft 365. One of the most important aims was to fully embrace the collaborative capabilities within Teams. The approach needed to include appropriate communication, training, enablement and support.

The overall objective was to derive improved collaboration, end user experience and productivity from a more integrated set of cloud-based tools. Rationalising Office 365 products and utilising the functionality already being paid for would also reduce cost.

Complimentary to embracing Microsoft Teams as a product, Computacenter were also looking to integrate their video-enabled rooms. This was to be achieved by replacing older equipment with Microsoft Teams Room Systems and Surface Hubs, as well as providing gateway technologies from Pexip to the existing conferencing equipment.

The unexpected COVID-19 pandemic meant that the programme required adaptation and an acceleration of the rollout. As an IT services provider, Computacenter’s employees are used to working remotely from customer sites or abroad. However, working within Computacenter’s network full-time, collaborating remotely with customers instead of being on customer sites, and using video conferencing to replace face-to-face meetings with customers or colleagues, was a sudden and major challenge for the infrastructure. In addition, not only was there an adoption challenge in switching from the old tools to the new, but also in adjusting to a new way of working.

It was essential that all Service Desk personnel, whose calling infrastructure was historically on-premises, needed to transition to home-working. This would enable them to offer a seamless support service to Computacenter’s customers. As well as the technical challenges this provided, it made the need to move to Teams and Exchange even more significant, to free up the VPN capacity to meet the Service Desks needs.

Additionally, working across countries required Computacenter’s IT department to work closely with local entities, such as workers councils and Data Protection Officers, to meet the legal requirements of each country.

SOLUTION

A hugely-accelerated deployment of Microsoft Teams to deliver the appropriate collaborative capability to 16,000 users

The solution deployed by Computacenter was initially in-line with many collaboration transformations provided to their customers, all critically centred around User Adoption. However, the unique element of this deployment was that the solution had to be rapidly accelerated and delivered under extraordinary circumstances.

From a technical perspective, Computacenter were looking to take full advantage of Microsoft 365. However, the company also needed to meet legal requirements in all countries. For example, German law requires alignment with workers councils and Data Protection Officers. Wolfgang Fehr, member of the Workers Council and Solution Manager for Microsoft Teams in Germany says: “Talking with our IT Services right before the COVID-19 lockdown, we recognised



Due to COVID-19, we had to bring forward the launch of Microsoft Teams by 9 weeks and facilitate the home-working of c.90% of our workforce. To accommodate this, we moved VPN-intense services to the cloud and quadrupled our VPN capacity for our service desks and customers' needs. As a result, our customer services remained unaffected."

Gwyn Smith,
Solution Leader, Computacenter



The introduction of Teams has fundamentally changed the way that we work together now and in the future. It has been a genuine game-changer."

Stephen Pitt,
Workplace Director, Computacenter

that increasing our VPN capacity would not be sufficient. Most of the data across VPNs was mail-related. We quickly recognised that speeding up our Exchange migration would provide VPN capabilities needed elsewhere. Within the same day we were able to work with our Workers Council to provide the legal foundation, therefore enabling us to move the data off premises."

From a user perspective, to ensure there was an Adoption strategy in place for Microsoft Teams, the company's Adoption and Change team was assigned to the migration programme. As Jacky West, Computacenter's Head of Adoption explains: "This was to ensure that the deployment of Teams was looked at through the eyes of the users, rather than from just a technology perspective, and that the view of the user is represented at all stages of the programme."

Computacenter used its own User Adoption Framework throughout the programme. The framework's overriding aim is to ensure that investment in digital transformation projects has a quicker return by ensuring users' adoption of new technology, tooling, processes and services. The framework focuses on how the transformation will impact the user by contextualising the value of the new technology and tooling to the way the user works, so that they can see why and how it can improve their working life.

One of the first actions was to create a brand for the programme, while a Yammer channel was created to compliment this along with a dedicated mailbox to help with early-life support and feedback. A microsite [a small auxiliary website designed to function as a supplement to a primary website] was then created to host all material for information, education and feedback.

Business Champions were elected, trained and tasked with ensuring awareness was communicated to all users at all stages of the programme across all countries – naturally sharing their experiences, updates, hints and tips through Microsoft Teams. Computacenter's Solution Leader, Gwyn Smith, was one of those elected Champions. He says: "I was passionate about helping the business get quickly up to speed, giving people the skills needed to help our customers in a time of crisis."

Full support for Microsoft Teams and Exchange Online was also made available through Computacenter's Service Desk via multi-channel support, whilst learning guides and FAQs were issued for users across all geographies.

Collateral was created to help with common adoption challenges, including targeted webinars and knowledge sharing. Features were also matched with personas to help specific groups use the tools in their daily work – i.e. the Personal Assistant community. Elsewhere, dedicated and personalised video-based training was created for VIP users.

All was proceeding to plan until the COVID-19 crisis meant that the deployment of Microsoft Teams was brought forward by 9 weeks. However, despite this aggressive acceleration of the programme, the company's deadline was achieved, bringing with it the collaborative improvements to how users work.

The global crisis also impacted some of the original communication and training plans [posters, digital signage, branded merchandise], and with everyone now working from home, there was no requirement for planned drop-in centres or for Business Champions to be floor-walking. As a result, Computacenter had to adapt from face-to-face education sessions to video enablement, with online training available in three languages: English, French and German.

The acceleration of the programme meant that Teams was deployed to all staff within a 4-week period during March 2020. User performance was significantly boosted by moving additional on-premises services to Microsoft 365, and adjusting the network and VPN infrastructure to enable users to access their data directly from the cloud. For example, Exchange was switched to Exchange Online, thereby moving mail data traffic off the VPNs.



We've seen 430,000 meetings in the last 30 days and we average over 1 million individual calls a month."

Gwyn Smith,
Solution Leader, Computacenter

Additionally, the VPN capacity in the company's main data centers was quadrupled. This enabled Computacenter's call centres to leverage additional capacity to remotely assist their customers from their home offices for the first time ever, meaning that service to customers was not impacted.

From a traffic perspective, the VPN was configured with split-tunnels and in-country access gateways. This means that data, such as emails and video conferencing is now accessed directly from the cloud, while in-company data can be accessed via VPN routes in the UK, Germany and South Africa.

Once the deployment of Microsoft Teams was complete, further enablement activities were actioned, including integration of the meeting rooms and the transfer of Public Telephone functionality and devices [PBX, PSTN] to Teams. As Wolfgang Fehr explains: "We were able to equip some meeting rooms with the Microsoft Teams Room system and provided Cloud gateway technologies with Pexip to integrate existing equipment, customers and partners."

For each updated meeting room, a series of appropriate user guides have been written (i.e. Booking Guide and In-room Guides which include step-by-step guides and troubleshooting tips), along with FAQs and service desk support.

OUTCOME

Delivering cost reduction, workforce flexibility and business agility

The programme to migrate all Computacenter users to Microsoft Teams was successfully completed 9 weeks earlier than planned. In addition, the initial target of enabling c.70% of Computacenter's employees to work from home was significantly exceeded. All employees who were not required to work on-site, were able to access all their IT services remotely. This included all the geographically-dispersed Service Desk staff, meaning Computacenter's service to customers remained unaffected.



Microsoft Teams' call quality is so much better for me and really easy to use.

Teams has been fantastic for me! Thank you for all efforts in getting this to us in record time!"

Computacenter user feedback

At the heart of this success was Computacenter's much-proven User Adoption Framework, ensuring that communication, training, enablement and support met the needs of all the different end users within the company. When circumstances changed with the onset of the global pandemic, the company showed great agility to meet changing requirements – such as adapting office-based education and enablement to be delivered remotely by Teams, or the provision of "Working from Home" and "Good Meeting Etiquette" tips through company webinars.

Feedback from users has also exceeded expectations, with hundreds of staff reporting a significant improvement on quality and functionality. Solution Leader Gwyn Smith provides some remarkable supporting statistics. "Our adoption is impressive in numbers, too. We've seen 430,000 meetings in the last 30 days, and we average over 1 million individual calls a month. Of these calls, more than 97% are rated as "good quality" within Teams, and our users have rated performance at 4.8/5 stars or above on many thousands of occasions."

One of the other key success factors, particularly in Germany, was the close collaboration with data protection officers and workers councils. Computacenter's German Employee Council played an important role in delivering this solution to the revised, aggressive timescales, following Germany going into an earlier lockdown than the UK. The council recognised that the already-upscaled VPN was running at c.85% and sought an emergency meeting and approval for accelerating the Exchange migration. As a result, mailboxes were migrated to Office 365 ahead of schedule, thereby freeing up the required VPN capacity to enable Computacenter's service desks to continue serving their customers from home without impact to customer service.



Thank you for Teams!
Working a dream for me!

Great experience so far
and every day I am finding
new apps that are making
working life so much easier!"

Computacenter user feedback

Other benefits derived from the programme are:

General benefits:

- A richer, more integrated set of cloud-based tools that give users more functionality and capability than before.
- Effective adoption of Microsoft Teams (and the rest of Office 365), which is enabling users to work in exciting and innovative new ways.
- Improved collaboration between Computacenter's users, teams, customers and partners.
- Better performance by avoiding VPN bottlenecks for cloud services such as access to mailboxes, collaboration and video and voice meetings.
- Improved end-user experience, user productivity, and business productivity.
- Removal of duplicate costs, through consolidation on to a single collaboration platform.
- Reduced costs due to the optimisation of the Office 365 suite of tools.

Wider benefits:

- The availability of Microsoft Teams helped to facilitate the move of c.90% of Computacenter's users to home-working, enabling Computacenter to deliver uninterrupted service to their customers during the COVID-19 crisis.
- All IT services are now available remotely.
- The quality of support remains high thanks to the outstanding collaborative functionality that Teams offers, while User Adoption facilitated the introduction of new tools in a much-changed and agile working environment.

MORE INFORMATION

To find out more about our enterprise services and read more customer case studies, log on to www.computacenter.com
