



## Call Center Cuts Costs



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**Mark George**

**Vertex Customer Management**

### **Vertex Customer Management, Manchester, United Kingdom**

In the call center business, it is important to manage the ebb and flow of customer calls while responding quickly and efficiently. As Vertex Customer Management expanded their call centers to more locations with more agents to meet demand, they needed a centralized infrastructure to give everyone access to feature-rich applications. They chose Wyse thin clients and thin computing to reduce the cost of owning and supporting an extensive user network while improving the working environment for employees.

Vertex Customer Management, a subsidiary of FTSE 100 company United Utilities PLC, manages millions of customer interactions every year for leading organizations worldwide. Vertex delivers superior customer service through consulting, technology, and out-sourced service provision with over 9,000 employees in 69 UK and international locations, 1,500 employees in India, and 700 in North America

### **Challenge: Reduce Downtime and Increase Flexibility**

In 2000, Vertex transitioned their IT infrastructure from two data centers with UNIX-based billing engines and Windows NT-based desktop PCs to a Citrix MetaFrame environment with centralized application processing. They reduced support costs by 50 percent with the locked down PCs, but still spent valuable time upgrading and repairing the individual machines.



### Solution Architecture

- Wyse Products
  - Wyse® Winterm™ Thin Client devices
- Applications
  - Microsoft Office
  - AttentiV

As the company grew through acquisitions and business development, they went from 1,500 agents to more than 7,000 located in 14 centers in the U.K. and India. Mark George leads the five-member infrastructure team at Vertex responsible for setting IT strategy and standards for infrastructure, network servers, desktops and application delivery.

"We realized that centralization would provide us with a lot of business benefit in terms of continuity and flexibility" says George. "We could run any contract from any contact center while sharing operations between them to support peaks in one operation with troughs in another. Otherwise we would have to have hundreds of applications running on each PC."

### Solution: Wyse Thin Clients

As the company shifted to a thin computing solution, they realized that they needed thin clients rather than resource-hungry PCs. They evaluated several vendors' products and settled on Wyse.

"We looked not only for the right technical fit of the device but also for a vendor that would maintain a leading position in the market for at least the next 3-5 years" he says. "Wyse shone in our performance testing and we recognised its pedigree."

When new call centers opened and business expanded, George standardized on Wyse thin clients as the sole desktop device. As older PCs failed, they were replaced with the low-cost, reliable thin clients. Approximately 2,000 Vertex agents and 2,000 staff members in United Utilities North West use thin clients to access all the major line of business applications including a multi-utility billing system, SAP, Microsoft Office, call center applications and asset management systems.

According to George, "While locked-down PCs reduced support costs, the Wyse thin clients were half as costly again, reducing our total support costs to 25% of the original."

### Benefits: Seamless Service and Support

Even as the company grows and responds to fluctuating customer needs, the complexity of the infrastructure has been reduced. Data has been centralized on secure, reliable servers. The IT team upgrades applications quickly and efficiently on the Citrix servers without having to touch the thousands of thin clients in all the different call center locations.

"We found that deploying a Citrix server and Wyse thin computing infrastructure was about 80% of the capital cost of deploying a traditional PC-based infrastructure," said George. "However, our operational and support costs fell by 60-70%."

The call center operators prefer the smaller, quieter thin clients as well. Paired with a flat screen display, they take up very little space on the desktop. Because the thin clients have no moving parts, they are quieter, produce less heat, and last

much longer without fail. Agents no longer have to wait for engineering to troubleshoot their PC if there is a problem. If a thin client fails, a rare occurrence according to George, they can simply unplug it and replace it with a new one without losing time or information.

### Results: Real Savings

For George and his team, thin computing with Citrix and Wyse thin clients have reduced costs and improved productivity, helping Vertex provide better service and more flexibility to their customers. Furthermore, instead of requiring 20 staff members to support a 2000 seat installation of servers and PC desktops, Vertex is able to support that many thin clients with just 2-3 people.

"It's our responsibility to deliver business continuity, reduce costs and complexity and provide the right applications to users," said George.

# WYSE

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