

Case Study: Retail and Consumer Goods

## Secure remote working extends services for a retailer during COVID-19

Implementing Microsoft's cloud-based Windows Virtual Desktop (WVD) solution and an enterprise mobile management (EMM) platform enabled one retail player to ensure business continuity, productivity and the employee experience during the COVID-19 crisis.

Cognizant provides end-to-end consulting, design, implementation, management and support for the retail company's IT services group. As a direct selling company, its core business-driven (front line) users are service center and call center employees who interact with end customers. The retailer was using a legacy on-premises virtual desktop infrastructure (VDI) solution that lacked certain functionalities, including accessibility, performance and scalability, and had data security limitations. The high capital and operational expenses associated with purchasing and maintaining hardware and software for the existing workplace platform were also a significant concern. As a result, the retailer

### At a glance

One of the leading players in the retail and consumer goods sector wanted to redefine its existing workplace platform to enable a modern digital workplace. During the COVID-19 crisis, Cognizant extended our services to enable secure remote working and ensure business continuity for the retailer in five weeks. We implemented Microsoft's cloud-based Windows Virtual Desktop solution and an Enterprise Mobile Management platform based on Microsoft Intune, enabling a modern digital workplace for our client's employees with secure remote access and a great employee experience.

was looking to deploy a cost-effective cloud-based EMM solution that would be resilient and scalable, align with its mobility roadmap and adapt to changing mobility trends.

The unexpected onset of the COVID-19 crisis required employees from all departments to enable remote working to ensure productivity as well as comply with the retailer's security policies. The Cognizant team identified WVD implementation is the best fit for this client, considering it the most secure and productive method to keep the retailer's employees engaged and connected at the most needed times.

The client's need for an engaged and connected workforce was compelling, with the digital workplace transforming how its teams connect, communicate and collaborate. The retailer also wanted anywhere, anytime secured access, an enhanced user experience while enforcing compliance self-services, experience monitoring and auto-healing from the digital workplace services that we proposed.

## The shift from on-premises to cloud

The retailer's digital transformation journey included many hurdles. Issues ranged from business requirements and design considerations to apps integration, migration, network, security, compliance, complex printing and enabling multi-language set up. We overcame all these in the rollout.

Being spun off from its parent company added another layer of complexity to the retailer's mandate to transform to newer technologies. The challenges did not stop there. The COVID-19 crisis necessitated that a critical milestone—the curve out and onboard of all franchises to WVD—be completed in a tighter timeline. All told, 260 GB of profile data and 1.2 TB of file server data had to be migrated to and ingested by the new WVD solution that replaced the client's existing on-premises VDI set up. We

## Outcomes

- Implemented a VDI environment with anywhere, anytime access in five weeks.
- Achieved more than 70% capex savings post digital workplace transformation.
- Created a single unified identity through which employees gain secure access to various productivity applications from anywhere on any device.
- Deployed machines with corporate policies applied on auto-pilot mode in a couple of hours rather than imaging a whole machine for days.
- Provided resiliency and scalability.
- Improved productivity and employee experience.

adopted Microsoft Intune as the retailer's new EMM platform, shifting more than 1,500 users from on-premises to this cloud-based solution.

Cognizant's in-house developed tools helped enable more automation to integrate different aspects of the retailer's applications. We worked closely with client subject-matter experts on the migration and achieved an enhanced user experience during the transformation. We were able to perform parallel migration with astute planning and execution methods, which reduced transformation timelines and satisfied our client.

We integrated third-party cloud apps as well as other data centers using multiple server-to-server (S2S) links (hub and spoke) in the shortest possible time—five weeks. Enabling quality of service in the network S2S tunnel provided less latency. We

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developed the image and a multi-lingual strategy, as well as fixed the retailer's printing challenges without a third-party solution. We performed the profile and data migration on the Microsoft Azure NetApp Files service to ensure high performance. Multiple host pools were created for different sets of users, and implementing FSLogix provided a consistent experience in pooled desktops. The retailer also decided to move another call center in the Dominican Republic to WVD, which we successfully onboarded within the same five-week timeframe.

## **Digital workplace transformation enables agility and secure access for remote working**

Following its digital transformation initiative, the retailer achieved capex savings of more than 70% of its original expenditure. Previously, the client's

environment included legacy applications such as IBM AS/400 and it faced challenges including limited mailbox size in its on-premises Microsoft Exchange mail server and limited access on mobile devices due to security restrictions. This affected employees' ability to remote work. Now, the retailer's employees can access corporate data and applications from anywhere on any device, with all appropriate security measures, helping the client maintain business as usual amid COVID-19 challenges. In the previous set up, employees had to follow a lengthy process to upgrade machines or complete the imaging process. This included complex procedures for application deployment and to enable access to corporate data from anywhere. Now, with the workplace transformation, employees receive the corporate machine directly, on auto-pilot mode and with all corporate policies applied, in a couple of hours rather than imaging a whole machine over days. Users are no longer dependent on corporate machines due to a more secure WVD environment.

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## About Cognizant Retail and Consumer Goods

Cognizant's Retail and Consumer Goods practice partners with retail supermarkets, department stores, specialty premium retailers, and large mass merchandise discounters and consumer goods companies in the grocery, general merchandise, apparel, home and office, and consumer electronics segments to help them both embrace the future of shopping, transform the customer experience in-store and online, and build the capabilities needed to win in the digital world. We work with leading retailers and consumer goods companies around the world, including nine of the top 30 global retailers and six of the top 10 consumer goods companies, and are consistently ranked as a top provider in Consumer Goods Technology's annual Readers' Choice Awards. We leverage our deep domain and consulting expertise to provide supply chain, merchandising, store, e-commerce, trade promotions, sales effectiveness, marketing services and analytics solutions across the retail and consumer goods spectrum. Our experience includes social, mobile, analytics and cloud (SMAC Stack™) and making meaning from Code Halos™—the information that surrounds people, organizations, processes and products—to create unprecedented levels of value for retailers and consumer goods companies.

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## About Cognizant Digital Systems & Technology

Cognizant Digital Systems & Technology works with clients to simplify, modernize and secure IT infrastructure and applications, unlocking the power trapped in their technology environments. We help clients create and evolve systems that meet the needs of the modern enterprise by delivering industry-leading standards of performance, cost savings and flexibility. To learn more, contact us at [simplify@cognizant.com](mailto:simplify@cognizant.com) or visit [cognizant.com/cognizant-digital-systems-technology](http://cognizant.com/cognizant-digital-systems-technology).

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## About Cognizant

Cognizant (Nasdaq-100: CTSI) is one of the world's leading professional services companies, transforming clients' business, operating and technology models for the digital era. Our unique industry-based, consultative approach helps clients envision, build and run more innovative and efficient businesses. Headquartered in the U.S., Cognizant is ranked 194 on the Fortune 500 and is consistently listed among the most admired companies in the world. Learn how Cognizant helps clients lead with digital at [www.cognizant.com](http://www.cognizant.com) or follow us [@Cognizant](https://twitter.com/Cognizant).



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