Italian Service Provider Transforms Customer Contact Center

WIND reduces call-waiting time by 40 percent and completes service requests 20 percent faster with desktop virtualization

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Customer Name: WIND

Industry: Service Provider

Location: Italy

Number of Employees: 8000

Challenge
· Reduce capital expenditure
· Improve effciency, productivity, and application response time
· Reduce time to implement new contact center site or add agents

Solution
· 1200 agents supporting 22.7 million customers (20.6 million mobile subscribers and 2.1 million broadband subscribers) with new Cisco Desktop Virtualization Solutions based on the Cisco Unified Computing System

Results
· Average call-waiting time reduced by 40 percent
· Agent productivity increased by 20 percent
· Customer relationship management workflow cut by 40 percent, normal service requests completed 35 percent faster

Challenge

One of Italy's leading service providers, WIND offers wireline, mobile, and IPTV services primarily to consumers, but increasingly also to businesses. The service provider's recent merger with Russian operator VimpelCom has created the world's fifth largest carrier, with 173 million customers.

For WIND, customer service is a key differentiator within a marketplace that is becoming increasingly crowded. In Italy, these operations rely on 1200 agents located in four contact centers in Rome, Ivrea, Pozzuoli, and Palermo.

Rapid growth, however, had started to expose the limitations of an aging contact center infrastructure, which had reached capacity and would no longer scale. It was also difficult to manage peaks and troughs in call volumes across the four sites. On average, customers would wait 30 seconds for someone to answer and then a further 30 seconds before the agent could view their records. From an IT support perspective, this environment was a drain on resources. When agents had an issue with their desktops, or a new employee joined the staff (contact centers are renowned for having a high turnover of staff), a technician would invariably have to visit the site to resolve the problem.

WIND's response was bold and ambitious, deciding to become an early adopter of Virtual Desktop Infrastructure (VDI). "We could see tremendous potential for using VDI as a way of growing customer loyalty through better service, and also stripping out costs from the business," says Luca Ferrandino, data center application manager for WIND.

VDI decouples the user's desktop computing environment from the physical hardware (PC, laptop computer, and so on). Instead, desktop computing resources are hosted in the data center on a virtual machine and delivered across the network using a remote display protocol. The end device no longer stores the user's applications or data, which are instead housed in centralized storage residing in the data center.

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Solution

WIND decided to deploy VDI for its call center agents, using the Cisco Desktop Virtualization Solutions, an end-to-end approach for delivering unified workspaces that uses the best technologies in their categories: in this case VMware vSphere hypervisor with VMware View, and EMC storage. The core foundation that connects everything together is the Cisco Unified Computing System™ (UCS™), a next-generation data center platform specifically built to address the essential requirements of cloud and VDI.

"We ran a proof of concept with a number of vendors, and Cisco UCS came out on top," says Ferrandino. "In particular, UCS scored highly for ease of management and scalability, which were critical factors for our large and dynamic VDI environment. Also, because it comes pre-integrated, we knew it would work with all the other components from day one."

WIND's Cisco® UCS deployment comprises 6100 Series Fabric Interconnects, 2104 Series Fabric Extenders, and Cisco UCS B200 M2 Blade Servers powered by Intel Xeon processors. It serves all four sites, but is physically located between two data centers in Rome and Ivrea.

Cisco Desktop Virtualization Solutions architectures enable a more cost-effective approach for managing applications and data. Management of thin clients can be carried out remotely and without interruption. Software upgrades are delivered quickly and smoothly. Individual WIND agents can be added or removed from the system easily through centralized control.

WIND has also invested in Cisco SMARTnet® Total Care, an award-winning support service for improving LAN and WAN performance and IT operational efficiency. The service provides WIND with extensive inventory management and analysis, customized security alerts, proactive diagnostics, and designated operations resources from Cisco.

Results

Using the new Cisco platform has enabled WIND to completely transform customer service, and boost efficiency across the four contact centers. Agents can access the information they need, from any seat, in any location. Average call-waiting time has been reduced by 40 percent. Agent productivity, in terms of calls handled, has increased by 20 percent. CRM workflow has been cut by 40 percent. Normal service requests are being completed 35 percent faster than before.

WIND commented: "We needed to deliver on our promise to be more efficient, effective, and responsive. Cisco's Desktop Virtualization Solutions have re-energized our customer service. Cutting the time it takes to deal with service requests by 35 percent means we're in a much stronger position to grow customer loyalty and manage our cost base."

As well as receiving a more efficient, satisfying experience, through agents being able to resolve issues more quickly, customers also benefit from better protection of their personal data. Rather than having sensitive data residing on the hard drives of desktops located across four contact centers, WIND can now manage, secure, and store this information centrally. As well as assisting with compliance, this move helps simplify business continuity and disaster protection arrangements.

Being able to introduce VDI in a cohesive manner was critical. "Cisco's architectural approach helped to accelerate the rollout," says Ferrandino. "We were able to create common service profile templates to automate and speed-up the provisioning of VDI users. Our Siebel-based CRM system remained unaffected throughout. We did not need to invest a lot of time in re-skilling our IT team or training end users. And, best of all, our customers were completely unaware of the changeover."

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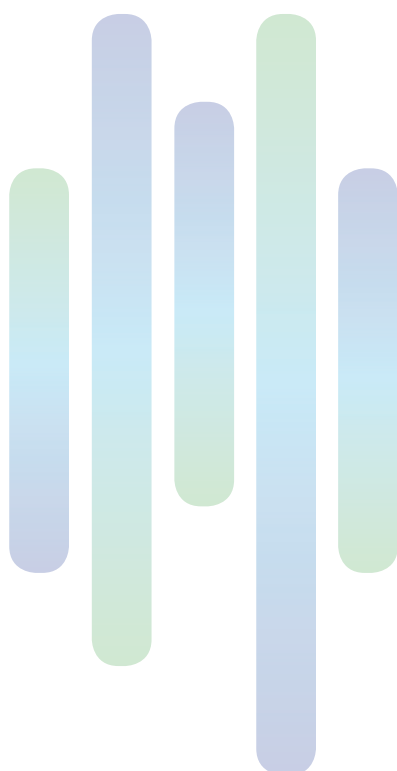
The project has unlocked operating and capital expense savings. The introduction of thin clients has proven to be a huge time saver for WIND's IT team, who no longer need to travel to site to maintain computing hardware, or to carry out software updates. The service provider will also benefit from greener, energy efficient operations and savings of up to 20 percent in power consumption. Capital expenditure will also be lowered over time by avoiding the need to refresh desktops.

WIND summed up by saying: "Cisco UCS as the foundation of Cisco for desktop virtualization, provided several key technology differentiators. Unified fabric will deliver valuable savings on power and cabling. Stateless computing has cut time to provision from days to hours. And unified management provides a single pane of glass and lowers operating costs further still."

For More Information

To learn more about the Cisco architectures and solutions featured in this case study, please go to: www.cisco.com/go/ucs

For Cisco Desktop Virtualization Solutions reference architectures and validated designs , please go to: www.cisco.com/go/vdidesigns

Product List

Data Center Solutions

· Cisco Unified Computing System

· Cisco UCS B200 M2 Blade Servers, powered by Intel 2.66GHz Xeon X5650 95W CPU/12MB cache/DDR3 1333MHz processors

Fabric Interconnects

· Cisco 2104 Series Fabric Extenders

· Cisco 6100 Series Fabric Interconnects

Desktop Virtualization

· VMware View

Storage

· EMC

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