



Accelerate Business through a Cost-efficient Virtual Workforce

Citrix transforms IT into an on-demand service for virtual workers



Table of contents

What is a virtual workforce?	
What is a virtual workforce?	3
Remote and branch office employee	4
Remote employee – mobile and teleworkers	4
Partner, independent worker or outsourced service	4
Key benefits of a virtual workforce to an organisation	
Key benefits of a virtual workforce to an organisation	5
Reduce costs	5
Drive growth and better serve customers	6
Increase business productivity	6
Attract top talent	7
IT challenges and requirements related to a virtual workforce	
IT challenges and requirements related to a virtual workforce.....	7
Optimising performance and productivity.....	7
Maintaining communication and collaboration	8
Maintaining security and compliance while managing risk	8
Providing flexibility.....	9
Keeping infrastructure costs low.....	9
How Citrix solutions address the needs of a virtual workforce	
How Citrix solutions address the needs of a virtual workforce.....	10
Maintaining a high level of performance and productivity	11
Enabling effective and efficient collaboration and communication.....	11
Increasing security and control	11
Providing and maintaining a flexible, low-cost IT infrastructure	12
Providing business continuity.....	13
Summary	
Summary	14

The traditional workforce model of permanent employees located in a single or small number of offices has undergone a significant transformation in recent years, accelerated by the effects of the current economic landscape. Drivers of this trend include initiatives to drive growth and expand into other markets, improve customer service, speed to market, improve decision-making processes, and increase both worker and overall organisational productivity. The trend is further accelerated by the cost-saving advantage across labor, travel and facility budgets, the desire to tap a broader labor pool, and improving employee satisfaction and thus retention.

Today, workers in a single organisation may span physical locations worldwide, from a financial services employee working at a remote branch office, to a doctor roaming the halls of a hospital checking on patients, to an outsourced call centre worker in an offshore location to an employee or even contractor working from home. While a virtual workforce provides many tangible benefits to organisations, it also increases the complexity of the challenges associated with delivering IT to a variety of user scenarios. The challenges include managing productivity and collaboration across various worker types, while securely delivering applications, data, communications, and support to ensure that these workers are as productive as possible, no matter where they are located. These challenges can be easily addressed if the right IT solution is put into place as a foundation for support.

This white paper defines a virtual workforce, describes the challenges and requirements that organisations face when supporting a virtual workforce, and explains how Citrix solutions can address these requirements and scale accordingly to foster and support future growth.

What is a virtual workforce?

The virtual workforce comprises diverse workers distributed across geographic boundaries and between enterprises. A virtual workforce can span any department and role across an organisation, from front-office workers (such as sales, customer service and support) to back-office workers (such as finance, human resources and internal support), to engineering and line-of-business workers. Essentially, a virtual worker can be anyone who doesn't spend their entire day, every day, working at the same headquarters office on the same desktop computer, in addition to nonpermanent staff or those who might share or use resources on a limited basis.

The virtual worker could be:

- **Remote or Branch Office Employee** – From sizable operations to small regional or local sales/service offices, small production plants or even kiosks
- **Remote Employee (Mobile and Teleworker)** – Anywhere from labs, exam rooms, factory floors, warehouses, temporary project sites to customer locations, home, airports or a coffee shop
- **Partner, Independent Worker or Outsourced Service** – On or off-site, those who work independently, for an outside company on a particular project or process as well as business service providers that need access to organisational resources

Remote and branch office employee

Remote and branch offices range in size from substantial operations to small regional teams of a few workers in a local office. These offices include large manufacturing sites to small production plants, large regional centres to small sales/services offices, and retail stores to kiosks, and may even be on or offshore or the result of a merger or acquisition. What these workers have in common is that they are remote from core organisational infrastructure, including corporate IT assets, such as applications and data. Remote and branch office workers require mission-critical-level IT services, the delivery of which is complicated by the distance between these workers and the central IT department for which some companies have unsuccessfully and at great cost tried to solve by creating local IT resources.

Remote employee – mobile and teleworkers

The remote employee considers their office to be anywhere they are currently located, whether that is at a customer site, at home, a lab or exam room, a factory floor or warehouse, a temporary project site, in a hotel, or even at a café. Although they are often mobile, these workers must have access to all corporate applications and data needed to do their job efficiently.

Today, many organisations are encouraging teleworking to improve business productivity, lower facility costs and to provide employees work-life balance. According to Forrester Research, “The growth of consumer broadband – 56% of US households use it today, up from 10% in 2002 – has enabled more employees to work from home.”¹ In fact, according to WorldatWork, over the last 5 years the number of telecommuters in the U.S. has risen by 43%.²

Partner, independent worker or outsourced service

A business partner or consultant, a contingent employee (such as a contractor or temporary employee) or an outsourced team – essentially any non-employee – provide services for your company. They may be individual temps or contractors with specific skills engaged for a short or fixed term and/or on a project basis, or they may be providing their services as part of an outsourcing agreement between your organisation and a service provider; located onsite or offsite, these workers need access to your organisational resources.

According to Forrester, “As companies streamline their workforces to focus on what differentiates them, they must outsource large chunks of work. And that means that they must form deep partnerships with suppliers, partners, and customers and work in distributed “B2B” teams.”³

¹ The Sun Never Sets On The Global Workforce, Distributed Teams Need Real-Time Collaboration Tools, Forrester Research, September 2008

² Telework Trend Lines, WorldatWork, February 2009

³ The Sun Never Sets On The Global Workforce, Distributed Teams Need Real-Time Collaboration Tools, Forrester Research, September 2008

Key benefits of a virtual workforce to an organisation

Organisations today are embracing a virtual workforce because this solution provides many key benefits that, combined, become a formula for success. A virtual workforce enables organisations to cut costs – across labor, travel, and facilities, retain and attract the best talent at the best rate, as well as better serve their customers – with higher response rates, better decision making and greater speed to market – ultimately positively impacting the bottom line.

Reduce costs

A virtual workforce enables organisations to shift labor costs to lower cost resources, slash travel and expense budgets, and consolidate and reduce fixed facility costs. First, through a virtual workforce, organisations have a greater degree of flexibility to take advantage of lower cost labor regardless of location – and engage workers only when and where the business needs. As an example, many workers sourced from outlying areas rather than major metropolitan areas as well as offshore locations, such as China, India, the Philippines or even Eastern Europe, either from direct employment or through an outsourcing or staffing contract, have significantly lower wages than similarly qualified resources.

Organisations also look to retain their best talent and avoid the costly loop of recruiting, hiring and training qualified replacements. According to the Turnover Cost Calculator from the Corporate Leadership Council (CLC) mid-size organisations easily spend multi-million dollars per year in replacing departing employees with new recruits. For example, accepting the CLC assumptions about average costs and lost productivity related to worker departure, a 5,000 person organisation with a 14% annual attrition rate, loses \$21,875 to the cost of turnover per departing employee assuming an average salary of \$58,500 + 6% for the average cost of benefits. This is an annual cost of \$15.3M incurred by the organisation.⁴ By improving employee satisfaction and providing tools that foster a work-life balance, organisations can decrease their attrition rate and lower their related HR costs.

Second, having workers located in the regions where organisations do business minimises the amount of travel required for each worker to reach prospects and customers, when compared to using out-of-region resources. Online collaboration tools further reduce the need for frequent business travel and enable workers to be virtual workers and still collaborate with peers and managers, and customers from anywhere.

Third, enabling a virtual workforce offers organisations the potential to reduce facility costs – the second largest budget item for a typical organisation. Facility costs of course include the real estate office space and also all related fees, often comprising 1/3 of the typical facility budget, including utilities, tax, insurance, security, janitorial, repair, maintenance, and management fees. According to The Real Estate Executive Board, the U.S., average real estate occupancy cost per square feet of office space is \$23.27/sq ft multiplied by the average total square feet per person 327.55 is \$7,622.09.⁵ A typical organisation thus spends approximately \$7,600 per person per year

⁴ Turnover Cost Calculator, Corporate Leadership Council, November 2006

⁵ REEB Occupancy Expense and Space Utilization Benchmarking Survey, The Real Estate Executive Board, 2007



on facility costs. Therefore, if an organisation of 10,000 employees can implement a successful teleworking program for 20% of its employee population (establishing them in home offices), the cost savings opportunity is 2,000 employees x \$7,600/year and an overall facility cost savings of \$15.2M per year. Similarly, if a company of 5,000 employees mandated teleworking one day a week per employee and instituted a desk-sharing program, the facility cost saving opportunity is \$7.6M per year.

Drive growth and better serve customers

Organisations must find new ways to do more with less – cutting costs while, at the same time, better serving existing customers as well as expanding offerings, broadening the customer base and entering new markets. A virtual workforce solution allows an organisation to open (even in less than a day and even at the rate of more than one per day) and serve branch offices as quickly and cost effectively as business growth demands, easily incorporate mergers and acquisitions (provide all workers access to the same systems, applications and data within a day), and when necessary manage business contraction smoothly by providing the agility to quickly and easily move resources from less productive areas to new opportunities and initiatives. Especially in competitive markets, organisations in addition to providing consistent customer service and higher service levels, often must ‘move closer to the customer’ offering more choice, immediate or real-time accurate responses, and off-hour service(s) to both avoid lost sales and to build long-term relationships with customers. According to IDC, “Many enterprises see a strategic opportunity to provide value at the branch, as the branch is often the closest point of contact to the customer. IT organisations want to deliver resources to support branch office growth while keeping operational and management costs in check.”⁶ A virtual workforce is key to an organisation’s ability to cost-effectively take advantage of opportunity anywhere it exists.

Increase business productivity

Fueled by a move toward more mobility, the modern work force is being forced out of the traditional office model and stepping into a new paradigm – in the field, at home, on a factory floor, at a customer site, from a partner, abroad, wherever. In this paradigm, organisations must ensure real-time roll-up of accurate and reliable company information from these virtual workers to enable better decision making and to plan, monitor and track operations centrally. This includes, for example real-time inventory and production management, real-time resource and logistics management, real-time automated delivery of quality and competitive products and real-time informed, holistic, and highly proactive all driving improved business productivity with greater accuracy and at less cost.

In fact, studies have shown that employees who telecommute have an average of 10-20% increased productivity than their office-based colleagues. These teleworkers, chosen based on job role and individual merit/performance, have higher employee satisfaction because for them teleworking fosters a better work-life balance while at the same time often offers a distraction-free environment from where virtual workers can be more productive. According to WorldatWork, 85% of companies indicate that teleworking has a moderate to high favorable impact on employee retention.⁷

⁶ Worldwide Enterprise Remote Branch Network 2008-2012 Forecast IDC, IDC, June 2008

⁷ Attraction and Retention: The Impact and Prevalence of Work-Life and Benefits Programs, WorldatWork, October 2007

Attract top talent

As organisations aim to tap a broader labor pool – hiring skilled talent from anywhere when needed – they must meet workers growing technological expectations. Many of today’s virtual workers are from a generation that grew-up using technology and have integrated it into every aspect of their personal lives. These workers expect and demand technology – and to employ them an organisation must offer up-to-date IT solutions.

In addition, having the ability to support a virtual workforce enables organisations to attract, hire, and retain trained and skilled talent regardless of location. This also allows an organisation to apply the expertise of specialists in a particular field, be they individual contractors or entire outsourcing companies.

IT challenges and requirements related to a virtual workforce

While a virtual workforce brings the benefits detailed in this white paper, it can also pose challenges to an IT organisation accustomed to delivering IT services where most users are permanent employees located in a headquarter office; most existing IT infrastructures are hard-coded with this assumption. The various virtual workforce user scenarios – remote/branch offices, remote employees (mobile and teleworkers), and partners, independent workers and outsourced services – challenge these assumptions and add additional requirements to the IT infrastructure, for which it was not originally designed. Simply reengineering the existing infrastructure can result in unnecessary costs, degraded performance, and security risks, impacting an organisation’s traditional workforce without fully meeting the needs of their virtual workforce. By understanding these challenges in more detail, a comprehensive solution can be implemented, leveraging existing infrastructure investments.

Optimising performance and productivity

A virtual worker is required to be at least as productive as those workers located in the headquarters office. As such, they should benefit from identical IT service performance and availability levels. However, this is often not the case in many scenarios due to the degradation of performance over wide area, wireless, or residential grade networks. Degradation and outage of services is a common complaint of virtual workers who lose productivity as a result.

In addition, business continuity disruptions can have a greater incidence with a virtual workforce, due to the number of additional infrastructure components between the worker and their applications and data that may fail during a planned or unplanned outage. As many virtual workers, particularly those in sales roles, perform mission-critical functions, their loss of productivity can have a great impact on an organisation’s profitability.

Maintaining communication and collaboration

The dispersion of virtual workers produces difficulties for IT departments in terms of providing communication and collaboration tools. Isolation and non-standard hardware affect the ability for virtual workers to productively collaborate with coworkers. Aside from suffering from being out of sight, out of mind, they can also have practical limitations to communication, such as being excluded from the corporate telephone network. The benefits of a virtual workforce can be once again diminished, without their transparent inclusion in an organisation's corporate communications infrastructure that supports online collaboration.

Providing ongoing training to the workforce enables productivity and agility, whether training for professional development or education about new organisational applications and processes. How do you ensure that workers have the right level of training for their roles when they are unable to attend training sessions in person?

Prevented from providing the desk-side support that can often speed resolution, Tech Support teams must rely on second-hand diagnosis through the supported virtual worker, which slows productivity for both parties. Another challenge is in providing support to non-employee desktops that are not part of the organisation's standard operating environment (SOE).

Maintaining security and compliance while managing risk

Organisations must ensure intellectual property is protected, network threats are avoided and compliance regulations and data privacy requirements are met as virtual workers continue to grow in number and increase in geographic distribution. While virtual workers rarely consider the exposure ramifications of local data storage, IT organisations must address concerns about who has access to corporate data, when, from where and from which device without stymieing virtual worker productivity. And while virtual workers may use a computer or device of their choice – including personal equipment – IT teams are left to protect the corporate network from malicious security threats. Enforcing security policies without limiting the productivity of virtual workers is a prerequisite to protect corporate data.

Most virtual workers connect to data and applications at least part of the time over public networks. How do organisations ensure the integrity and confidentiality of resources transmitted this way when they do not have complete end-to-end control over the transmission? As mobile and teleworkers, as well as partners, independent contractors and outsourced service providers often use their own devices to access company applications and information, how can organisations make sure their corporate resources are protected against viruses, worms, and other threats through devices not all of which are subject to corporate policies and control?

What happens to corporate data when virtual workers access it from virtual locations, complete their assignment, and are reassigned or leave the organisation? Similarly, if a laptop is lost or stolen and data is stored locally, there could be disastrous results, such as client confidentiality breaches, misuse of data, or even identity theft. In virtual workforce environments, intellectual property and client data are accessible by virtual workers and organisations must protect against data loss.

Another requirement is to ensure that compliance policy and regulation(s) can be met, especially when virtual workers are accessing corporate data. How does an organisation maintain the ability to audit and track all usage of applications and data? Maintaining a consolidated audit facility across users remains a requirement, even when the workforce is comprised of virtual workers.

Providing flexibility

The benefits of the rapid engagement and disengagement of many virtual workers can be reduced if IT infrastructure cannot be made available, or provisioned and de-provisioned at the same pace. New hire provisioning lead times are based on assumptions for permanent employees, such as a four week notice period from the time of offer plus a number of days for an initial indoctrination period. For remote offices, especially those overseas, there is the additional lead time for shipment. Even once the equipment arrives, a lack of trained or dedicated IT personnel can result in additional provisioning time. For new branch offices, even longer lead times are incurred, as the shipment of equipment needs to be coordinated with the availability of IT project implementation teams.

Lack of flexible provisioning has a cost factor, as the time between a virtual worker commencing work and the completion of their IT provisioning is generally less productive. At the end of an engagement, the de-provisioning of infrastructure creates a management overhead, plus redundant hardware left over after the virtual worker has left.

Keeping infrastructure costs low

The cost-effectiveness of a virtual workforce may be minimised if IT services are delivered using traditional methods and additional investment in IT infrastructure is required. A common mistake made by organisations faced with a new virtual workforce scenario is to duplicate backend infrastructure for this purpose. An example of this is installing applications and data at an outsourced and offshore service provider's facility to avoid security or latency issues. This increases the overall total cost of operations (TCO) of the outsourced service, as the initial capital investment is added onto by the need for ongoing maintenance and upgrades.

An additional overhead occurs with the need to ensure the level of security and compliance for a virtual workforce, as detailed earlier in this white paper. These additional costs can result from purchasing and maintaining infrastructure, such as firewalls and VPNs, as well as funding the manpower required for auditing and remediation.



How Citrix solutions address the needs of a virtual workforce

Faced with the multiple challenges posed by supporting a virtual workforce, many IT departments initially respond with unnecessary duplication of infrastructure or attempt to redesign their existing infrastructure. Using these methods can be time-consuming and cost-intensive, and it may not adequately address all of these challenges and requirements.

To fully address these challenges in a cost-effective way without duplication, Citrix provides an application delivery infrastructure system that transforms IT into an on-demand service by centralising the management and delivery of applications and desktops in the data centre and broadcasts them to virtual workers over any network as an on-demand service. The foundation of the Citrix virtual workforce solution, Citrix Delivery Center, is built on *virtualisation* technologies – separating virtual “images” of application, desktop and server components from the actual machine and storing them, and all associated data, back at the data centre under the control of the IT department. This enables any worker to interact with the updated data, applications and interfaces they need to do their job in any location, at any time and over any network or device. Log on once and corporate data is at the users fingertips, without the data ever really leaving the data centre. Citrix® GoToMeeting® and Citrix® GoToAssist® fill out the solution with products that empower simple online collaboration and allow for fast remote support to distributed employees.

Citrix Delivery Center simplifies desktop management by centrally managing a single copy of all applications and desktops in the data centre rather than on hundreds or thousands of user devices spread all over the enterprise. In the same way, it reduces server management complexity by managing a single instance of server workload images and delivering it to all servers – physical and virtual – throughout the data centre. This simplified desktop and server management can reduce IT operations costs up to 40 percent and cut storage costs up to 90 percent. The intelligent network optimisation technologies of Citrix Delivery Center improve application performance up to five times, reducing response times and providing a familiar, easy-to-use experience no matter where or how applications are used – in the office, at home or when travelling. For branch office users, Citrix Delivery Center ensures optimal user experience by dynamically caching and staging applications and desktops, which reduces bandwidth usage up to 75 percent and accelerates user performance up to 15 times. The centralised delivery infrastructure of Citrix Delivery Center enables IT to securely and cost effectively deliver applications and desktops to users virtually anywhere. IT can quickly mobilise for business-driven cost reduction programs, such as facility consolidation or leveraging lower cost labor pools or, just as quickly, shift gears to enable business growth programs, such as M&A, branch office expansion or the need to leverage scarce highly skilled and widely distributed talent. Business continuity, workforce continuity and compliance are also easier and less expensive to implement with the Citrix Delivery Center centralised delivery infrastructure. The Citrix Delivery Center and Citrix Online products enable organisations with a virtual workforce to save costs and increase productivity in the following ways.

Maintaining a high level of performance and productivity

The Citrix Delivery Center optimises delivery of applications and data through the use of highly tuned protocols and technologies that reduce the effects of network latency, bandwidth and LAN optimised protocols. With Citrix application delivery infrastructure, virtual workers experience performance similar to the performance within the headquarters or main office.

For example:

- Remote workers are able to use applications and data as if they were running locally, even those applications that are graphics-intensive, such as CAD and GIS.
- Mobile workers can use corporate applications and data both online and offline.
- Teleworkers can use a consistent desktop and applications, no matter where they are located.
- Branch office workers are able to work with data stored centrally in the data centre, without the commonly experienced problems caused by WAN latency and bandwidth limitations.
- End-to-end application performance monitoring assists IT support in identifying performance bottlenecks for faster remediation.

Enabling effective and efficient collaboration and communication

According to Gartner, “By 2011, Web conferencing will be available to 75% of corporate users as a standard facility, alongside e-mail, presence, calendaring, IM and collaborative deployments.”⁸ The Citrix Delivery Center and Citrix Online products enable more effective Web conferencing and support across virtual teams to increase productivity, communication and collaboration. For example:

- Productive meetings can be held across locations around the world with presentations, whiteboards, and voice over IP capabilities available from each attendee’s desktop.
- Virtual webinar tools enable training and other organisational communications to reach all workers globally.
- Effective training and support can be provided remotely through online support tools.
- Organisations can drastically reduce travel requirements, because these online collaboration and support tools make travel unnecessary in most cases.

Increasing security and control

With Citrix application delivery infrastructure, applications and data remain centralised, so they are easy to manage and secure. This enables organisations to deliver the same set of applications and data to virtual workers regardless of location, while maintaining security standards and regulatory compliance.

⁸ Magic Quadrant for Web Conferencing, Gartner, July 2008



The Citrix Delivery Center enables an organisation to maintain high levels of security and compliance, while expanding service to the new user scenarios brought by a virtual workforce. This is accomplished through the centralisation of applications and data, as well as the use of monitoring and management tools. For example:

- Centralising all applications and data ensures that full control remains in the hands of the organisation, while remaining accessible to all required users, despite having a user base that transcends location, device and organisation.
- Through centralisation, security and malware protection can be applied and patched across the entire organisation using a single process.
- Having a granular approach to providing the appropriate levels of access based on each virtual user's profile enables unique access scenarios based on individual role, device and location.
- Monitoring and tracking features and policies that are provided can enable organisations to meet complete compliance regulations, by protecting intellectual property and ensuring data privacy. Policies can be created to encrypt information during delivery, prohibit data from being saved locally, and even control when printing is allowed or disallowed.

Providing and maintaining a flexible, low-cost IT infrastructure

The infrastructure agility provided by the Citrix Delivery Center enables flexibility for the virtual workforce, enabling IT support for all virtual worker scenarios, such as remote office workers, mobile workers, outsourced workers, offshore workers, contractors, and temporary staff. The Citrix Delivery Center and Citrix Online products enable organisations to reduce the costs involved with replicating infrastructure when supporting new remote workers, building out new parts of the business, or integrating or combining business systems during initiatives such as outsourcing and offshoring. In addition, Citrix enables organisations to easily and quickly handle mergers and acquisitions, so that all workers from both organisations can be using the same sets of systems, applications, and data within twenty-four hours. In addition, Citrix enables IT teams to:

- Centralise and optimise existing data centre infrastructure to reduce overall hardware, real estate, power, and cooling requirements, providing green IT and cost benefits.
- Easily provision (and even self-provision) applications and desktops, enabling the rapid expansion of remote and branch offices.
- Deliver a standard desktop environment from images in the data centre to new users in any location. No install time means that new users can be fully provisioned within minutes, and safely de-provisioned even faster.
- Provide a single, standard desktop to all devices, whether they are corporate standard hardware, or belong to a third party organisation such as an outsourcer, a contractor-owned laptop, or a home worker's personal computer.
- Lower desktop TCO by allowing organisations to use existing desktop hardware, as well as personal laptops and PCs for teleworkers, contractors, and other virtual workers.

- Pool applications for use for all workers, whether they are employees or non-employees.
- Provision entire virtual offices without requiring IT staff to be available on site, providing flexibility and travel cost benefits.
- Lower infrastructure replication and support costs by centralising desktop lifecycle management and extending the life of PCs.
- Perform and apply company-wide updates and patches to applications and desktops from a central location, so there is no need for support staff to visit each office to maintain each individual device. In addition, support staff can roll out or roll back these updates efficiently, and as quickly and frequently as the business requires.
- Reuse existing infrastructure for new ventures or outsourcing arrangements, removing the need, cost, and complexity of managing duplicate infrastructure.
- Use an optimised delivery protocol to reduce network costs and complexity.

Providing business continuity

The combination of centralised applications and data, and optimised delivery provides a solid foundation for virtual workforce business continuity, in combination with regular backup schedules and a disaster recovery plan. Because secure applications and data, and virtual collaboration and support tools are available from any location, normal business operations can be maintained in the event that a virtual office or even the main office is unavailable for any length of time. For example:

- In the event of a natural disaster or other event that prevents workers from reaching their office, applications, data, and desktops can still be accessed remotely through any device.
- Business continuity plans that include the provisioning of temporary working facilities can be accelerated, as desktop computers do not require any installation apart from a small footprint Citrix Receiver client installation.
- Collaboration tools allow workers to remain in touch with managers and coworkers during disruptions, and technical support can still be provided as necessary.

Summary

Organisations that leverage and adequately support a virtual workforce experience a variety of benefits that can help them grow, prosper, and at the same time lower costs across labor, travel, and facilities. Supporting a virtual workforce means having a comprehensive IT solution in place to meet the application and data delivery needs of virtual workers across the organisation.

The Citrix Delivery Center and Citrix Online products work together to provide organisations with the tools and services they need to successfully support a virtual workforce and meet all of the IT requirements and challenges that these workers bring to the organisation. When an organisation leverages this comprehensive IT solution, they can reap all of the benefits that a virtual workforce provides, giving them a competitive advance and putting them ahead of their most strategic competitors.

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About Citrix

Citrix Systems, Inc. (NASDAQ:CTXS) is the leading provider of virtualisation, networking and software as a service technologies for more than 230,000 organisations worldwide. Its Citrix Delivery Center, Citrix Cloud Center (C3) and Citrix Online Services product families radically simplify computing for millions of users, delivering applications as an on-demand service to any user, in any location on any device. Citrix customers include the world's largest Internet companies, 99 percent of Fortune Global 500 enterprises, and hundreds of thousands of small businesses and prosumers worldwide. Citrix partners with over 10,000 companies worldwide in more than 100 countries. Founded in 1989, annual revenue in 2008 was \$1.6 billion.

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WP-UK 0000 05/09