

COMPUTACENTER INSIGHT

THE PURSUIT OF OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCY

BUILDING RESILIENCE, DRIVING CHANGE



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ON TARGET FOR FUTURE SUCCESS

If recent experiences have taught us anything, it's that strong foundations are key to surviving and thriving in today's uncertain world.

Digital transformation may be the goal, but organisations need a solid platform from which to start – to embed reliance and simplify core IT operations, and build on and modernise existing investments. Taking a pragmatic view of the challenging world IT finds itself in today, our experts offer their perspectives on how to realise new levels of operational efficiency, stay secure and build optimised, future-ready environments.



STRONG, RELIABLE AND DISRUPTION-READY

Businesses are being disrupted all the time. Building back stronger begins with the right foundations.

It's tempting to think about 2020 as an anomaly – a year of unparalleled disruption, unmatched in recent decades. No doubt for many organisations it was. But there have been shocks before.

The latest Gartner CIO survey¹ reports half of enterprises experienced major disruption in the past four years, adding weight to what business leaders already know – there's nothing so sure as change.

For some, that disruption has come in the form of new, born-in-the-cloud players challenging preconceived notions of operational best practice or superior customer experience. For others, the catalysts have been the ongoing digital revolution, new regulation or competition from high growth emerging economies.

The mark of any successful organisation lies in its ability to continually respond and adapt. Here, questions of mindset and culture are important – as is the ability to innovate. More often than not though, success comes down to getting the fundamentals right – delivering operational excellence across the whole organisation, its supply chains and customer channels.

This pragmatic approach is all about learning and improving, taking the quick wins, driving forward by increments and building in resilience. And it's the same with technology.



When it comes to managing your existing tech stack, there are few new problems – only the well-trodden paths of legacy complexity, poor visibility, supportability issues and so on.

Here too, success is driven by your response; the level to which you're able to simplify the environment, run your core IT platforms in the most robust and cost efficient ways, and to minimise wastage – of resource and budget. So you can save money and release funds to modernise or replace aging infrastructure unable to keep pace with current or future demands.

There are, of course, well-established [and repeatable] solutions that address these known problems – from best practice flexible procurement models, hardware and software lifecycle management, automation opportunities and a wide range of cost management and optimisation options.

But knowing what needs to be done isn't the same as being able to do it. Here, support from experienced partners is often essential in developing a strategic and risk free approach to improvement.

Get all this right and you build a solid foundation that's key to managing through, and unlocking the opportunities presented by, disruption. And that's a door worth opening.

“BY TAKING ADVANTAGE OF PARTNERSHIPS AND SUPPORT ECOSYSTEMS, YOU CAN DO THINGS BETTER – BENEFITING FROM EXPERIENCE AND EFFICIENCIES AT SCALE TO OPTIMISE YOUR IT INFRASTRUCTURE, AND FREEING YOURSELVES UP TO FOCUS ON THE BUSINESS PRIORITIES.”

PAUL BRAY
CTO - UK&I, COMPUTACENTER

Heathrow

HEATHROW: MAKING EVERY JOURNEY BETTER

Traveller numbers have fluctuated in recent months, but Heathrow Airport's commitment to providing the very best passenger experience hasn't wavered. As part of a multi-billion pound airport improvement programme, Computacenter installed more than 65 kilometres of fibre and 45 kilometres of copper cabling to ensure reliable connectivity for critical systems including check-in systems and access control to air-side technologies including runway lighting and radar. This was one of over 300 individual projects we have managed at Heathrow to optimise the IT environment and help deliver the airports commitment of 'making every journey better'.

A SMARTER WAY TO WORK



Creating a smarter and more sustainable business for everyone

For much of the past 12-18 months, the key to sustainable business practices, at least for knowledge-focused businesses, meant remote working. It put the fundamental role of technology, to empower users, to the test like never before. And it worked.

Certainly, millions of homeworkers benefitted. Nine out of ten employees who worked at home during Covid-19 lockdowns would like to continue doing so in some capacity². Business leaders agree. Many major firms are offering forever home working options, and even as people return to the office, many are looking to introduce more hybrid and flexible working².

Of course, creating embedding smarter ways of working is more than the provision of effective home working. And it goes well beyond the knowledge worker community.

From manufacturing through transport and logistics to retail and healthcare, organisations are being challenged to create more mobile and more performant working environments, and to find new ways to optimise existing investments in real estate, business processes, supply chains. And to do it all while driving efficiencies and cost savings.

There's a balance to strike, of course. While emotional health and wellbeing has been a focus for some time, the pandemic brought the issue into sharp reframe.

Home working blurs the lines between professional and private lives, while the pressures on front line staff working through the pandemic were considerable.

Action has been taken – and the UK is leading the way. 90% of CEOs are reported to have conducted wellbeing initiatives³ and, according to the Reward & Employee Benefits Association, wellbeing programmes are becoming a defining feature of business’ culture, and are helping to develop resilient, successful organisations.

On one hand, the IT organisation can use their resources more efficiently by consolidating and realising software and service investments, embracing new and more flexible consumption models, and by implementing modern IT management and support services.

On the other, by examining the needs and wants of users, and delivering more personalised tools and services to make life easier, such as automating manual and resource intensive tasks, we can improve the everyday experiences of employees, support their wellbeing and drive efficiency and performance benefits too.

That way, we can embed smarter and more sustainable working practices across the organisation – to the benefit of all.

“LESSONS NEED TO BE LEARNED, AND TECHNOLOGY HAS A MASSIVE ROLE TO PLAY – NOT ONLY IN DRIVING EFFICIENCIES ACROSS THE BUSINESS, BUT TO EMPOWER USERS AND MAKE THE EXPERIENCE OF WORK LESS STRESSFUL AND MORE ENJOYABLE.”

ASHLEY RICHARDSON
CTO - WORKPLACE, COMPUTACENTER



Foreign &
Commonwealth
Office

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE: TRANSFORMING THE GLOBAL WORKPLACE

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office [FCO] needed to improve its processes, structures and systems in order to provide a world-class diplomatic service for years to come. Our extensive workplace and infrastructure transformation not only delivered new levels of mobility, flexibility and collaboration to thousands of staff across the globe, it did so while boosting security and driving down costs.

ENABLING A TRULY AGILE BUSINESS

With traditional approaches stopping businesses realising their ambitions, it's time to think big and start small.

The trouble with IT problems is that they are easy to identify but hard to fix. We all know too much time and money is spent keeping the lights on. We are familiar with the issues caused by inflexible systems, and fully aware of the impact that sub-optimal performance has on application availability – and by definition user experience.

If organisations had any lingering hopes that some of their older systems were fit for purpose today, the pressures of supporting colleagues and customers during the pandemic put pay to most of them. Looking ahead to the challenges (and opportunities) businesses are likely to face through 2021 and beyond, the need for an agile IT environment is crystal clear.

That's not to say that IT teams don't want to embark on, or accelerate, their modernisation journeys. IT leaders are the first to recognise the increasing pressures placed on them by the business, and have a clear view of the outcomes they would be able to deliver were they to transform into fleet-of-foot, cloud-first businesses. They know they need to do more with less and embracing automation and modern operating models is a priority.

For many the answer lies in the journey to the cloud – it has a lot to offer and provides an agile alternative to traditional platforms. Significant opportunities also lie in reinvesting in the modern data center as part of a hybrid outcome; driving operational efficiencies wherever workloads reside.

The trouble is, somewhere between the growing technical debt, resource challenges and the complex realities of managing mission critical infrastructure and applications, ambition gets stifled by immediate operational requirements.

While it is easy to paint that big picture and model the future state, what CIOs really need is someone to get down in the trenches with them, and help them deliver. Not only can it be a complex journey, being able to effectively leverage hyperconverged infrastructure and software defined approaches requires new skills sets that may not be present in the business.

Modernisation is a business imperative. And, with new and more flexible OpEx models, is more financially viable in the longer term. Plus, by enabling your core IT infrastructure to operate as software, you'll have an opportunity to drive new levels of agility, responsiveness and self-healing capabilities to support your key business services.

This is not something you need to complete in one massive deployment. Our advice would be to think big picture, start small and find a partner that'll get things done.

“MODERNISATION IS A COMPLEX JOURNEY. THE ONLY RIGHT APPROACH IS THE ONE THAT SUITS YOUR EXISTING IT ENVIRONMENT, USER COMMUNITIES AND, ULTIMATELY, THE BUSINESS OUTCOMES YOU ARE LOOKING TO ACHIEVE.”

PAUL CASEY
CTO - PLATFORMS & HYBRID IT,
COMPUTACENTER



LIBERTY GLOBAL®

LIBERTY GLOBAL: REDUCING SERVICE TIME TO MARKET

Computacenter worked with Liberty Global to design and build a new private cloud environment based on VMware technology – designing and implementing the container-based platform to configuring the network and providing strategic advice. Following deployment, this European quad play leader now has the agility and scalability it needs to bring new products to market faster and more easily – and at lower cost.

EVERYTHING CONNECTED, EVERYTHING PROTECTED

Over the past 12 months, security was potentially sacrificed to enable remote working. Now, with more time to plan, it's time to make a paradigm shift.

As we move out of the shadow of the pandemic and into a world of uber mobility, it's time to completely rethink our approach to security. The perimeter has vanished and the internet is becoming the default, borderless network. Because of this, threats to the organisation have radically increased.

With today's data driven organisations increasingly reliant on smart algorithms to automate and manage business processes, it's become ever more important to protect this vital resource through the pipeline – from its genesis in developer environments and right through to production. This DevSecOps approach is critical.

And, of course, providence is key. We need to know where the data has come from and whether it's accurate if we're using it to power business decision-making. One small, malicious injection of false data can have a major impact on the operations of your organisation.

Because data is everywhere – not just in your data center, but in your SaaS platform, in public cloud environments and across multiple locations – it's so much more difficult to manage. Plus, of course, we have a more distributed workforce, and more 'things' to protect than ever, such as smart IoT endpoints.



Added to which, today's modern enterprises comprise incredibly integrated ecosystems of multiple divisions, people, external partners and supply chains. And while this drives growth and innovation, it too presents new risks.

This requires a paradigm shift to zero trust principles that require all users and systems to be authenticated, authorised, and continuously validated before they're given access to apps and data. All of it based on a range of contexts including device, location, purpose and so on.

But it has to happen fast, invisibly and without impacting the user. That way, security can evolve from being a blocker of operational efficiency to become an enabler of innovation and growth.

“MODERN, ZERO TRUST APPROACHES TO MANAGING SECURITY ARE CRITICAL – TO REDUCE RISK AND DELIVER RELIABLE PERFORMANCE AND AVAILABILITY. BUT IT HAS TO HAPPEN INVISIBLY AND WITHOUT IMPACTING THE USER.”

COLIN WILLIAMS
CTO - NETWORKING, SECURITY &
COMMUNICATIONS, COMPUTACENTER



NHS: SECURING DATA TO ENHANCE PATIENT CARE

When it comes to personal data, it rarely gets any more sensitive than patient records. The Digital Health and Social Care Network (HSCN) aims to help organisations make better use of health and care information, while ensuring that everyone's data is protected. Working with Cisco, Computacenter deployed an advanced network analytics solution providing NHS Digital's security analysts with full visibility of traffic patterns and potential threats – speeding detection and ensuring a robust network capable of driving productivity and improving care.

OPTIMISE, MODERNISE AND PREPARE FOR WHAT'S NEXT TOGETHER

With a resilient and optimised IT infrastructure critical to success, Computacenter is committed to helping you deliver the technical foundations to keep your business and its people future ready – for whatever comes next and wherever you want to go.

We can help you...



DELIVER RELIABLE IT AND STREAMLINED BUSINESS OPERATIONS

With demonstrable experience in large scale projects and with extensive procurement, implementation and managed service capabilities, we give clients the confidence of knowing their IT infrastructure is fully managed and optimised – so they can focus on what really matters: growing their businesses.

BRING ENHANCED AGILITY AND FLEXIBILITY TO YOUR IT INFRASTRUCTURE

Recognised as a proven 'Leader' by analysts, and offering end-to-end support across data center, networking and cloud, we transform our clients' IT infrastructure to operate as software; embedding agility, responsiveness and self-healing capabilities to drive key business services.

OPTIMISE IT ASSET USAGE AND MAKE PEOPLE AND PROCESSES MORE EFFECTIVE

Recognised for our extensive workplace capabilities, experienced in delivering complex solutions, both technically and commercially through a comprehensive portfolio of technology solutions, we ensure our clients' people are as productive as possible.

CREATE AN INHERENTLY SECURE AND CONNECTED TECHNOLOGY PLATFORM

As one of Europe's largest multi-vendor security engineering and consultancy resource pools, and offering a comprehensive portfolio of networking and security services, we perfectly balance the needs of users with the highest levels of secure access to corporate resources.

YOUR GUIDE TO TURNING AGILITY INTO GROWTH

If you found this Insight Guide useful, you might enjoy *Winning in the Age of Disruption*. Intended as a companion piece to this paper, the guide looks at how you can step into the future to transform and innovate at a pace and scale to suit your agile business.

Download **Winning in the Age of Disruption** now to read more on:

- Why it's time to think less about the tech, and more about the experiences of colleagues, customers and stakeholders across the business
- How to succeed through disruption by embracing new and flexible models of delivery and transforming your IT organisation in the cloud
- Why an innovation mindset is critical to building on the fast fixes and at-pace deployments of last year to deliver on your ongoing growth objectives
- How, in today's uncharted territory, data is the best map we have to drive intelligent decision making, better outcomes, and a richer understanding of customer needs

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SOURCES

1. <https://emtemp.gcom.cloud/ngw/globalassets/en/publications/documents/top-priorities-for-it-leadership-vision-for-2021-cio-ebook.pdf>
2. <https://www.cardiff.ac.uk/news/view/2432442-uk-productivity-could-be-improved-by-a-permanent-shift-towards-remote-working,-research-shows>
3. <https://www.pwc.co.uk/ceo-survey/ceo-panel-survey.html#key-findings>

GET IN TOUCH

To find out how Computacenter can help you build the IT foundations for business success, please contact your Computacenter account manager, call **01707 631000** or email **enquiries@computacenter.com**

www.computacenter.com

About Computacenter

Computacenter is a leading independent technology partner, trusted by large corporate and public sector organisations. We help our customers to source, transform and manage their IT infrastructure to deliver digital transformation, enabling people and their business. Computacenter is a public company quoted on the London FTSE 250 (CCC.L) and employs over 16,000 people worldwide.