

Top 5 Reasons to Workshift

Freeing your employees and yourself from the workplace

Computing was designed to make new things possible—not impose constraints. Your business should have the flexibility to place personnel wherever they're needed, whenever the need arises, on any device and not be bound by rigid IT infrastructures. Information and IT resources should flow easily to the workers and locations that can get them done most efficiently, rather than being locked in place due to IT systems that hinder their mobility. People should be free to choose the ideal place, time and device to get their work done most effectively, instead of being forced to come to a specific location on a set schedule. Possibilities like these are the essence of “workshifting”—and they're changing the nature of how businesses of all sizes operate.

Business productivity unbound

Simply put, workshifting is a strategy based on getting work done in the right place by the right people at the right time. This can take many forms—and deliver a wide range of business benefits. Businesses or departments can be moved to new locations to tap into a broader labor pool, including employees, contractors and outsourcing, to improve productivity and customer service. Office expansion can be completed more quickly and seamlessly to support business growth. Operations can be moved from one location to another—or even to a different location for each worker—in the event of a disruption to ensure business continuity. Data and applications can be centralized and completely independent of an endpoint device to improve security and manageability. A more flexible work experience can help the businesses recruit and retain skilled employees, improve job satisfaction and reduce turnover costs.

Given benefits like these, the question becomes: why haven't we been workshifting all along? In the past, traditional IT solutions simply couldn't provide the flexibility, security or manageability workshifting required. Then virtual computing changed everything, letting people get at their business resources from anywhere, on any device – but only large enterprises could afford the infrastructure and expertise to take advantage of it. Now, “cloud service providers” have come along to offer all the enterprise-grade flexibility and power of virtual computing, but as affordable, pay-as-you-go services without the upfront capital investment.

What's a cloud service provider?

Cloud service providers enable workshifting by hosting a secure, reliable, high-performance desktop service in their datacenters. You and your workers can use practically any device – a PC, Mac®, iPad®, Android tablet, smartphone – to log in over the internet and get at your desktop, your applications, your data. The cloud service provider takes care of backups, anti-virus, software updates, disaster recovery, etc., so you can focus on your business. By freeing users from being constrained to specific times, places and devices, while providing the security, manageability and control IT requires, cloud service providers make the full benefits of workshifting available to businesses of all sizes.

Cloud hosted desktops not only enable workshifting, they also shift your IT spending from a capital expense (CAPEX) to an operating expense (OPEX). You only pay for the monthly IT services your employees use, rather than making expensive hardware and software purchases. This frees up capital that you can reinvest in your business or save for future projects.

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The Top 5 Reasons to Workshift

1. Achieve seamless business continuity

Workshifting provides a highly effective foundation for maintaining business continuity through disruptions of all kinds.

Business continuity depends in part on ensuring that workers have uninterrupted access to the data and applications their productivity depends on. The same cloud desktop that enables workshifting also provides a highly effective foundation for maintaining business continuity through disruptions of all kinds, planned and unplanned: routine system maintenance, power failures, broken water mains, seasonal flu outbreaks—as well as more serious situations such as natural disasters. Given the potential a disruption has to substantially impact a company's bottom line due to diminished productivity, lost revenue, missed opportunities, failure to meet service level agreements and customer defections it's no wonder that according to a September 2010 independent report by Forrester Research Inc. entitled "Business Continuity And Disaster Recovery Are The Top IT Priorities For 2010 And 2011", "...improving their business continuity and disaster recovery (BC/DR) capabilities is the second highest priority for enterprises for the next 12 months."¹ Cloud service providers can easily mirror desktops, apps and data to a disaster recovery site or maintained dual-datacenter infrastructures. If one location becomes unavailable or inoperative, they can instantly bring the other site online.

One Citrix customer gained dramatic proof of the effectiveness of this strategy. When a blizzard rendered streets impassible in its headquarters city, the organization simply had its employees work from home using their cloud desktops until the weather emergency had passed. Not only did this ensure their safety by eliminating the need to brave the elements—the salary costs for the employees who were able to work productively during the office closure exceeded the total cost of the organization's entire cloud desktop investment.

2. A better work-life balance with any device, anywhere access

Work, personal business and family life rarely remain within separate, clearly defined times of day, especially for SMB owners. Sometimes it's a matter of finishing a project from home in the evening, approving a document while on vacation, or checking in on the business from the road. Conversely, life circumstances can force you to wait at home for the cable guy, or a blizzard can strand you at the end of a vacation. If employees are unable to adapt to these scenarios and use whatever device they may have at hand to keep working, both their productivity and their job satisfaction suffer.

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Workshifting gives workers the flexibility to balance work and life because they can work from any device—a Mac at home, a tablet on a Wi-Fi enabled airplane, or even an outdated PC at a relative's house. Any web-enabled device can access a cloud desktop, giving you any device, anywhere access. An employee who needs to stay home to meet a service technician can simply work there for the day, just as productively as they would at the office—if not more so. An unexpected snow day or childhood illness doesn't mean the worker has to take the day off. At the same time, when work needs to be done after hours or on weekends, an employee can deal with it from the comfort of their own home, on their own device, then resume their personal time without the disruption of a trip back to the office.

The real difference in quality of life this makes possible can be seen in the experience of one cloud desktop user, an attorney at a leading international law firm. While at his son's soccer game, he received an urgent request for information from an important client. Instead of having to rush back to the office, he simply accessed his cloud desktop securely via his iPhone®, copied the information from his firm's document

¹ Business Continuity And Disaster Recovery Are The Top IT Priorities For 2010 And 2011, Forrester Research Inc., September 2010

management system into an email and sent it to the client in a matter of minutes—all right from the sideline.

3. Drive business growth

The ability to open a new location or expand existing offices quickly and efficiently can be a powerful source of competitive advantage. But what if you need to give that new location and its employees PCs in order to be productive? How long would it take you to buy, set up and ship those computers? The traditional approach to computing can rob organizations of the agility they need to grow easily.

A cloud desktop enables the SMB to bring new locations online in a single day or less and provision desktops to new users in a matter of minutes. Any available desktop hardware can be used to access a virtual desktop on demand—including aging legacy equipment and users' own devices—while ensuring that every worker benefits from a high-definition user experience even for the most demanding line of business applications. Cloud service providers use centralized management and online support tools to eliminate the need for technology experts to be deployed to new locations, significantly reducing expenses. As a result, the organization can grow easily, rapidly and elastically while speeding business impact.

By enabling workers to be productive anywhere, anytime, strategies such as work from home, temporary and shared office spaces can even make it possible to eliminate some branch offices or work locations entirely. Workers can still access complete resources, including their desktop, apps and information at any time, while the company pays only for the space it needs to accommodate its required on-site presence.

4. Control data and ensure compliance

As user environments become more complex, with a greater variety of devices, access methods and user types (employee, partner, customer, consultant, contractor), concerns about security become paramount. While this complexity is often a necessary part of increasing the organization's flexibility, productivity and efficiency, it also poses new challenges for protecting intellectual property, maintaining data privacy and complying with IT security policies and government regulations.

Cloud service provider infrastructures are more inherently secure in several ways. With cloud desktops, all data and applications remain centralized and under control; instead of data traveling from place to place, it remains in the service providers datacenter, not on the user device. Service Providers can easily prevent data from ever being saved to removable media, printed, or shared. Even data delivered for offline use to the local desktop remains encrypted at all times. If a user device is lost—for example, a laptop left in a cab by a sales rep—no corporate assets are compromised; meanwhile, the worker can use any available device—smartphone, borrowed laptop, rented computer, or device from home—to access the same familiar cloud desktop, complete with the same data, apps and personalizations. Antivirus protection for the endpoint becomes as simple as logging out and logging in again to reset the desktop to its pristine state, while preserving all data and personalizations.

Automation and centralized management make every aspect of security more efficient, error-proof and effective. As a result, the organization can support a highly diverse environment of devices, access methods and user types—as well as allow workers to bring and use their own equipment for work—without sacrificing security.

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5. Recruit the best employees wherever they are

Organizations, particularly SMBs, face tough competition when it comes to finding and attracting the best talent—they simply can't afford to recruit or relocate. Workshifting expands recruitment beyond its traditional geographical constraints and helps companies compete more effectively for in-demand candidates, consultants and contractors by offering a more appealing work experience.

When work becomes fully mobile and location-independent, hiring need no longer depend on where a candidate, consultant or contractor currently lives, or on their willingness to relocate. If the best candidate lives in another state, overseas no problem; they can still be integrated easily into the company's operations and participate fully in its business. Another cloud service provider customer used workshifting to allow its customer service agents to work remotely to avoid losing them to call centers located closer to their homes.

Cloud service providers provide a complete framework for highly effective collaboration over distance. Centrally stored and managed data can be made available across the team, ensuring that each member is working from the same, consistent set of up-to-date information to make decisions, communicate with customers and develop projects. A cloud desktop ensures that each team member is using the same versions of software applications, even if their offices or organizations are on a different update schedule. Citrix® GoToMeeting® makes it simple to hold meetings online, providing an optimal experience that erases distance and fosters team cohesion. Beyond team meetings, companies can also conduct online training and support sessions, product demos, professional development courses, product design workshops—all without the travel time and expense of a typical business trip.

What's your top reason?

These are the top business benefits cloud service provider customers are already taking advantage of through workshifting. While each organization's workshifting strategy begins with its own specific business case and priorities, cloud hosted desktops make the full spectrum of benefits available—not only the ones on this list, but additional gains such as reduced capital and operating expenses, greener operations through reduced commuting and improved IT efficiency, or supporting diversity in hiring. On a fundamental level, workshifting and cloud desktops prepare the business to address a wide range of business requirements both now and in the future more quickly, easily and cost-effectively. What will workshifting and cloud desktops mean for your business?



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About Citrix

For Citrix, workshifting isn't just a benefit of our virtual computing solutions; it's a core part of our mission to create a world where people can work wherever, whenever on whatever device to drive productivity, innovation and business growth. Citrix Service Providers have already helped thousands of organizations worldwide transform their infrastructure and operations to optimize their business performance, deliver greater value to customers and seize new opportunities for growth and expansion. Citrix cloud desktops and online collaboration tools have freed workers from the constraints and frustrations of traditional office technologies and helped them achieve both higher productivity and a more satisfying work experience.

Citrix Systems, Inc. (NASDAQ:CTXS) is a leading provider of virtual computing solutions that help companies deliver IT as an on-demand service. Founded in 1989, Citrix combines virtualization, networking, and cloud computing technologies into a full portfolio of products that enable virtual workstyles for users and virtual datacenters for IT. More than 230,000 organizations worldwide rely on Citrix to help them build simpler and more cost-effective IT environments. Citrix partners with over 10,000 companies in more than 100 countries. Annual revenue in 2010 was \$1.87 billion.

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