

Secure Citrix remote access for Accord plc



ACCORD

Signify simplifies management of secure user authentication across distributed business units and mobile workforce

Based in Welwyn Garden City, and operating from 50 offices around the country, Accord plc employs over 3,000 employees, most of whom have transferred from the public sector. The company provides a diverse range of housing, highway, environmental and other public services, working on behalf

Key Benefits

- Secure:** authentication for Citrix
- Simple:** token & tokenless options
- Scalable:** grows with user demand
- Proven:** non-stop 24x7 service
- Easy management:** across multiple business units
- Excellent support:** for administrators & end users

"The entire solution was up and running very quickly and we have had no major issues whatsoever"



Act locally, manage centrally

Accord's business model has always valued "localism" and Dave Price, Accord's Director of IT Operations, explained that on winning any new partnership contract, Accord would form a local business unit and give the local management considerable autonomy to forge a strong partnership with the client, improve the service and grow the local business. Having grown to 17 business units each running autonomous IT systems there was a need to create a co-ordinated remote access strategy: *"We urgently needed to provide secure, remote access for staff and government clients."* explained Dave Price.

of public authorities and agencies such councils, government departments and housing associations. These clients require Accord to maintain confidentiality of information and to enable staff to access their sensitive data in a secure and reliable way.

Accord operates a relatively small IT department, which, although highly competent, lacked the necessary technical ability to implement the



required security systems. "We knew that we needed secure authentication if we were to provide our clients and employees with the levels of access and security that they needed," continued Dave Price. "However, we also recognised that if we were to implement our own system we would face extremely high investment costs in hardware, software and training. Combining this with the fact that we would then be very reliant on our own staff to deliver a 24x7 service, encouraged us to look at outsourcing the entire project."

Flexible working with Citrix

"We introduced a new philosophy within the IT department, which is to give people access to their information at any time, any place, and on any device."



explains Dave Price. "Citrix is central to this strategy." Through their Citrix infrastructure Accord has deployed a centralised Microsoft Exchange solution across the whole business. Despite being in separate locations, employees can use public folders, collaborate on bids and projects, and share crucial information electronically.

The Citrix solution is secure by design however it requires strong two-factor authentication to prove the identity of remote users. One of Accord's Citrix consultants strongly recommended Signify. "We already knew of Signify's expertise in this area and following discussions and evaluations, implemented their managed service about 3 years ago," added Dave Price. "The entire solution was up and running very quickly and over the past 3 years we have had no major issues whatsoever. We now support over 350 users and the entire solution has been extremely robust and reliable."

The secure Citrix system has met the demand from staff for home-based and mobile working. "By revolutionising the way our employees work, we have helped them balance their work and home lives," explained Dave Price. "People don't work late in the office anymore and this has improved conditions for our employees, so we've been able to retain highly skilled staff."

IMC eases management

According to Kate Holden, Signify's Customer Services Business Manager, Accord's implementation of Signify's IMC is very advanced. "Accord extensively uses the organisational modelling capabilities of IMC," Kate explained. "Their 17 business units are defined in the IMC and their users are managed by local administrators at each site."

"I have been particularly impressed with Signify, their personnel and solutions; they have helped us to provide our clients with the levels of service that are crucial to our business." concluded Dave Price. "We have an extremely good relationship with Signify: they have provided a superb service."

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