

Connect your Deskless Workforce and Drive New Levels of Organizational Effectiveness

Executive Summary

Enterprises of all sizes invest hundreds of millions annually deploying and maintaining collaboration and data access tools to enhance their knowledge workers' productivity. The majority of all employees in the typical enterprise are "deskless workers" who largely remain disconnected from enterprise collaboration. Cost and complexity are frequently barriers to providing these employees with secure access stations for e-mail, calendaring and other collaborative applications, resulting in a disconnected workforce, or the deployment of frequently underutilized IT assets. DiscoverStation provides a secure and affordable information access and collaboration solution for these deskless workers. DiscoverStation enables an organization to maximize the collaborative opportunities available to employees without compromising on costs or productivity.

Modern communication technologies and the Internet are reducing the cost and complexity of providing secure workstations and collaboration and data access tools to deskless workers. Userful offers a secure, affordable and secure desktop platform to connect your deskless workers. Because of its scalability and ease of management, Userful's managed desktop platform offers organizations a low-cost, highly effective workstation environment for deskless workforce.

This white paper examines the importance of providing deskless workers with access to enterprise collaboration tools. It describes the requirements for a solution meeting the needs of enterprises with a large deskless workforce. In addition, it introduces Userful's managed desktop platform, DiscoverStation, and explains how this leading-edge solution can enable a broad range of industries to connect with their deskless employees.

Background

The digital divide isn't just a broad societal problem, indeed it also exists within most corporations. Corporate knowledge bases, search and collaboration tools are often only accessible to the corporation's knowledge workers. Factory workers, drivers, retail staff and others without a computer cannot contribute or tap into this electronic knowledge pool, and in fact actually drain efficiency from the corporation by relying on paperwork or trips to HR to retrieve the information they need.

Understanding the Un-tapped Value of Deskless Workers

Effective collaboration throughout the entire enterprise and secure access to mission-critical applications and data are key ingredients for success in today's business environment. Workgroup collaboration tools enable all workers to:

- Cooperate and share updated and consistent information
- Engage in detailed communications among team members and groups in the office, at home, or abroad
- Use their time effectively

Continued on page 2

Continued from page 1

As a result, collaboration tools and secure data application and data access have become mission-critical requirements in many enterprises. Such tools maximize employee productivity and organizational competitiveness. They also enhance an enterprise's responsiveness to customer demands for high-quality service and internal demands for information from disparate information sources by enabling a free flow of information throughout the organization. Providing deskless workers with a consistent and reliable set of collaboration tools and data access, no matter where they are, improves responsiveness and efficiency. Providing these important advantages with a managed desktop platform for collaboration and access enhance the bottom line.

Enterprises of every variety invest heavily to provide these tools for their knowledge workers--executives, managers, professional and specialty personnel, and administrative support staff. These people typically work from a desk using a dedicated desktop computer and perhaps a laptop computer as well. However, desk-bound knowledge workers represent just over 40 per cent of all employees in the knowledge economy. The remainder are deskless workers whose jobs are often mobile in nature, but whose collaborators and mission-critical data are fixed geographically. These workers don't have a desk at work and don't have convenient access to the enterprise network.

Deskless are integral to organizations of all sizes in almost every industry. The following list of deskless worker groups in several key industries as well as in the public sector demonstrates the potential need for collaboration and data access architectures:

Table 1. Example Deskless Workers by Sector/Industry

Industry	Deskless Workers
Manufacturing & Transportation	Factory and warehouse staff, delivery personnel
Healthcare	Nurses, some physicians, other medical personnel
Passenger Transportation	Pilots, flight attendants, ground crew, drivers.
Public Utilities & Telecom	Repair crews
Government	Police, firefighters, repair crews, inspectors
Retail	Store clerks, distribution staff
Construction	Construction workers
Entertainment	Theme park employees, movie theater staff

Deskless workers typically do not have access to their own dedicated computer at work. Most often, they share a computer with other employees in common spaces such as break rooms or reception desks, resulting in solutions to AAA challenges that frequently compromise efficiency and effectiveness. As a result, a large number of employees in many enterprises don't have convenient access to essential collaboration tools and critical applications and data.

Leveraging the Value of Deskless Workers

Collaboration and access tools speed the dissemination of essential information, ensuring its timeliness and ready availability. Examples include job schedules (both new and revised), work orders, manufacturing specifications, and process formulas and recipes. However, deskless workers require access to that information for it to be

Continued on page 3



Continued from page 2

useful. By enabling deskless workers to rapidly and reliably access such information, delays and errors are minimized. Employees don't waste valuable time going to the wrong locations because they didn't receive job schedule changes in time. Manufacturing personnel receive updates to manufacturing schedules immediately, so they produce the right items at the right time. Rapid dissemination of information translates into higher employee productivity and higher profitability. It also increases job satisfaction and employee retention, which reduces costs substantially.

A collaboration and access platform provides a highly efficient means to distribute information and enhance efficiency. E-mail eliminates paperwork and speeds the dissemination of corporate announcements, policies, procedures and other vital information. Airline employees, for example, can access the latest security policies and procedures from a shared but secure environment, saving time and costs while ensuring that they have the latest essential information.

Enabling deskless workers to communicate status reports to each other and to access remotely backed information and applications provides timely and consistent information to all employees. Communication and access through workstations for deskless workers enables coordination, feedback, and enhances efficiency. It also eliminates delays and errors associated with manual coordination of efforts and synchronization of data using telephone and paper forms. Utility workers, for example, can have readily available desktops to input their field inspection notes at headquarters, without using a dedicated PC. This enables the utility to keep itself informed about the current status of its systems without dedicating desktop space and computers to workers who spend most of their time on the road.

Deskless Workers are the Engine of the Enterprise

Deskless workers are key to the success of the enterprise. Arming deskless workers with collaboration and access tools enables them to:

- Communicate knowledge, ideas and insights to colleagues
- Receive vital corporate information in a timely manner
- Report essential information such as project status and other data in an efficient, reliable manner

Organizations must find ways to empower and connect all employees, including deskless workers and empower them to tap into the power of the Web and enterprise search to do their jobs more effectively.

Roadblocks to Connecting the Deskless Workers

Large organizations can have a deskless workforce numbering in the tens of thousands of employees. The total cost of ownership--purchasing and maintaining a large number of computer terminals--to connect this workforce has been a substantial deterrent connecting deskless workers to each other and enterprise data. Dedicated, single-user desktop PCs are often expensive to deploy and manage for fixed function applications required by deskless workers. Enterprises should not need to deploy a dedicated computer for every deskless worker. With shared and non-dedicated workstations, IT departments would require fewer costly operating system and application licenses. Deskless workers primarily use PCs for work-related e-mail, calendaring and access to online

Continued on page 4



Continued from page 3

discussion groups, and the ability to open and print attachments in a variety of formats. As well, they require access to back-end applications and data. Providing access to deskless workers is technically complex because of the mobile nature of their jobs. Deskless workers need to be able to easily access communication tools and data before and after their workday in the field.

Implementation Challenges

Enterprises can ill-afford the expense of providing every deskless worker with a dedicated computer. Each worker only needs the PC for a few minutes each day hence it does not make sense to set them up with a dedicated costly device.

Mobile devices present a valid but costly way to keep this workforce connected. Extending enterprise networks to accommodate mobile access to traditional tools significantly increases network complexity cost and security issues. Usability, screen size and input device limitations also impose additional constraints on this approach. While laptops and Blackberrys may be appropriate for some areas, they are not for most:

DiscoverStation provides an affordable access solution to connect these deskless workers with corporate e-mail, intranet and calendaring capabilities, enabling organizations to speak to all employees at once ensuring a consistent message and voice.

Reduce Paperwork Through Employee Self-Service

These kiosks can provide access to the corporate intranet and messaging as well as employee self-service applications such as an HR Knowledge Base and all corporate communications. If you choose to you can lock the kiosks down with integrated Internet filtering to prevent access to personal email and web-surfing.

Examples of employee self-service tasks include allowing employees to view their pay stubs online (and print them, if necessary), view work history, compensation history, benefit elections, 401(k) balances and elections, dependent information, and stock options (if eligible). Employees can view/change emergency notification information, educational profile, professional affiliations, certifications, completed and future coursework, relocation preferences, languages spoken, and career objectives. These kiosks can be located in break rooms or in the HR department.

This concept is similar to bank ATMs or the machines used to purchase lottery tickets. Companies take two approaches: they set up a PC in a common area; or buy a free-standing information kiosk.

DiscoverStation includes security features to ensure that when one person signs off, the PC cache is wiped clean so that the next person is not able to click the Back button on the browser to see the previous user's information. An inactivity sensor wipes the data as soon as a person stops using the kiosk for a preset period of time.

Solution

Userful DiscoverStation offers organizations of all types and sizes an affordable, high-performance solution to
Continued on page 5

