



CASE STUDY

CREDIT PROTECTION ASSOCIATION



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COLLECTIONS FIRM IMPROVES CUSTOMER SERVICE WITH CLEARCUBE

Credit Protection Association (CPA), a pioneer in the collections industry, was the first firm to specialize in low-balance, high-volume collections in the cable and home video markets. The company's diverse suite of business solutions and commitment to customer care has established it as an industry leader. CPA's loyal client base includes the telecommunications, utilities and retail markets.

One of the key factors in CPA's success has been its responsiveness to customer needs. "Our clients require diverse and flexible technical solutions to service their own customers, so we continuously implement new applications and improve upon existing ones,"

says Jerome Quiroga, manager of networking technology of CPA. "Our challenge has been to effectively integrate these new programs into the call center system while limiting the amount of time customer service agents are off-line."



**THE
CHALLENGE**

Support a call center, client services department and network of remote programmers with a computing system that will enable faster application roll outs, higher uptime, simplified deployment management and hardened security



**THE
BENEFIT**

Swifter application deployment, 99.9% user uptime, remote management capabilities, hardened physical and data security, significant support cost savings and improved user ergonomics



**THE
SOLUTION**

Replace existing box PCs with a centralized computing solution that leverages ClearCube blades, access devices and management software

One of the key factors in CPA's success has been its responsiveness to customer needs. "Our clients require diverse and flexible technical solutions to service their own customers, so we continuously implement new applications and improve upon existing ones," says Jerome Quiroga, manager of networking technology of CPA. "Our challenge has been to effectively integrate these new programs into the call center system while limiting the amount of time customer service agents are off-line."

After supporting the company's ever-growing call center operations for several years, the existing PC structure was in need of an upgrade. "We wanted to decrease the time required for managing the deployment without compromising the integrity of our services," says Quiroga. "Providing top level results to our clients is our chief priority, and our IT efforts needed to complement that commitment."

Due to the call center's increased volume, managing and maintaining a distributed PC environment had become cost-prohibitive. Individual PCs needed to be repaired directly at the desktop, and a system failure could equal 30 to 60 minutes of downtime for the affected user. "Every minute that a customer service agent's computer was unavailable, they were unable to



take payments,” says Quiroga. “The calls would then become queued, operations would back up, and our clients’ customers waited longer to complete their calls.”

THE SOLUTION

In an effort to improve deployment efficiency and increase uptime, CPA made the decision to migrate from a box PC environment to a more centralized system. CPA chose ClearCube at the suggestion of an IT vendor who had seen the solution successfully used in a medical setting.

“We liked the idea of using a healthcare-proven system because hospital environments have very similar needs to ours: 99.9% availability, rapid application deployment and strict regulation and security requirements. With the amount of financial and personal information extracted in the collections process, we must be able to guarantee our clients and our clients’ customers the highest levels of security,” says Quiroga.

The ClearCube solution condenses the PC into an Intel®-based blade form-factor and rack-mounts it in a central location. A small, user-facing access device (user port) connects the peripherals (monitor, keyboard, mouse) to the blade over a wired or wireless network. Utilizing the ClearCube management software, IT personnel can manage the users and deployments from anywhere in the world.

CPA deployed the solution to support its call center, client services department and a team of application developers and programmers working from remote locations. Client services representatives and call center agents connect to their blades through cable user ports while the remote programmers and application developers utilize Ethernet user ports.

“Previously, the programmers and developers would VPN into the network us-

“We’re always looking for a better way to serve our clients. The ClearCube solution has provided us this opportunity through its speed, security and reliability.”

Jerome Quiroga
Manager of Networking Technology
Credit Protection Association

ing their own computers,” says Quiroga. “Now they simply RDP into our blades through the user port, which is a much faster process.”

THE BENEFIT

With all its computing resources centralized in a secure data center, CPA’s IT personnel can perform repairs, maintenance and application roll outs much more efficiently. “It’s much easier to add an application to a blade that’s located in the data center than going to each and every computer in the call center,” says Quiroga.

The ClearCube solution has also enabled CPA to deliver nearly 100 percent uptime to its end users. In the event of a system failure, IT administrators can use the ClearCube management software to reallo-



cate the affected user to a spare blade. The agent is immediately up- and-running after the switch, and the administrator no longer has to go into “fire drill” mode or move heavy equipment to set up a spare computer for the affected user.

“With this system, we have virtually eliminated agent downtime and enjoyed huge operational savings,” said Quiroga. “Our after-hours maintenance is often executed remotely, so we don’t have to go to the office at night. Now we RDP into the system and fix everything from our living rooms.”

CPA also uses the ClearCube solution on a one-to-one basis to ensure that system failures are isolated. “With our previous server-based system, the entire call center could be affected if a cluster of servers

went down,” said Quiroga. “With ClearCube, if one blade goes down, our overall business is not impacted at all. Only one agent is affected, and we can quickly swap them over to a spare blade.”

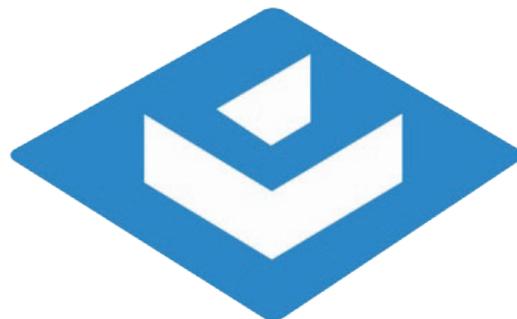
In addition to delivering improved uptime and cost savings, the ClearCube solution has provided CPA agents with more work space. “Since the PC boxes are no longer at the user’s desk and the user ports are attached to the back of the monitors, there is more workspace available and less noise and heat,” says Quiroga.

Removing the computing assets from the work area has also enhanced CPA’s internal security measures. All data and applications are now stored and processed directly on the blades, which are housed in a limited-access data center. IT administrators can “lock out” users from attaching mass storage devices such as USB flash drives to their user ports, meaning unauthorized personnel cannot download sensitive data onto removable devices or upload unwanted software onto the system.

By utilizing the ClearCube solution, CPA has improved its user uptime, deployment management, physical and data security, operating costs and user ergonomics. These factors all translate into customer benefits, which CPA considers its number one priority.

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