

STANDARD LIFE ASSURANCE

IGEL helps 4,500 staff from Standard Life Assurance, part of Phoenix Group, to work from home. The 'Office in a Box' project completed in weeks, in light of COVID-19, ensuring customer service responsiveness



Standard Life Assurance, part of the Phoenix Group, has empowered 4,500 staff in Scotland to efficiently work from home (WFH) due to the Coronavirus pandemic, by providing them with a complete desktop system – a project called 'Office in a Box.'



” The bottom line is we delivered a two-year project in weeks. That’s because of IGEL OS, the ease of management of the whole environment, plus the hard work of our IT department and logistics teams. People have been able to work pretty much as normal offering the kind of customer service that our clients expect. It’s been fabulous.”

~ John Kerr
Senior Delivery Manager, IT Service Operations,
Phoenix Group

THE CUSTOMER

- Part of the Phoenix Group, Standard Life Assurance customers include individual savers, large UK employers, and independent financial advisors
- With its operational headquarters in Edinburgh, Phoenix Group, is a member of the FTSE100 Index and has 13.8 million policies and £323 billion of assets under administration

THE CHALLENGE

- Deliver a Work from Home (WFH) solution quickly for the entire business in light of the Coronavirus pandemic
- How to manage the build, security and application delivery while deploying a standard endpoint for 4,500 staff
- Ensure the solution was easy for staff to set up and use

THE SOLUTION

- IGEL OS – used to convert and repurpose Dell PCs and laptops which were sitting idle in the office
- IGEL Cloud Gateway
- IGEL Universal Management Suite (UMS)
- IGEL UD Pocket
- Citrix Workspace

THE BENEFITS

- Cost effective and fast to deploy. No new laptop or PC hardware purchased to deliver WFH
- Low OPEX cost to deliver the project – just 5 minutes to reflash each desktop
- Management of the entire WFH estate easy via IGEL UMS and IGEL Cloud Gateway
- Collaboration tools like Skype for Business offered because IGEL OS has built-in support for Citrix HDX
- A two-year project delivered in weeks such that customer service excellence has been maintained
- Simple for staff to access corporate applications, with hardware remaining at employees' homes to provide a long-lasting WFH solution

Taking just weeks to roll out in full – an amazing achievement given the scale – the IT team has implemented an easy to use, secure and centrally managed solution utilising IGEL's comprehensive suite of EUC technology. Staff then access their normal CRM applications to support customers.

With an operational headquarters in Edinburgh, Phoenix Group, is a member of the FTSE100 index and has 13.8 million policies and £323 billion of assets under administration.

Standard Life Assurance customers include individual savers, some of the largest employers in the UK as well as independent financial advisors. Most of its customer-facing operations teams are office-based and use desktop PCs with dual monitors to deal with everything from pension and investment queries to account administration. In response to the pandemic, it was vital to get the Edinburgh teams quickly set up to work effectively from home.

Kevin McVitie, Technician, IT Service Operations, Phoenix Group, explains, *"When we started looking at how to deliver WFH, we considered purchasing more laptops. The business had about 1,200 but we struggled to buy more – to cater for 4,500 employees – given the increase demand for laptops from organisations globally. And as many staff didn't have appropriate endpoints at home, this drove us to look at how we could repurpose our existing estate of PCs which were now sitting idle in the office."*

IGEL OS has been used to convert these PCs into 'locked down' endpoints which then connect to Citrix Workspace. Everyone has been provided – literally in a box – an IGEL OS-powered desktop, two monitors, keyboard, mouse, Ethernet cable and headset. IGEL multimedia UD3 endpoints with built in Wi-Fi have also been sent to some employees.

John Kerr, Senior Delivery Manager, IT Service Operations, Phoenix Group says, *"Our customers are at the heart of everything we do. It was vital to us that we ensured continuity of service for our customers and ensured that all our teams were set up for success, to work from home. With normal large scale IT projects, we may take several months to agree requirements, review the market, build a solution and undertake operational and end-user testing. Responding to Coronavirus, we knew we had just weeks to be ready to 'go live' which is why we came up with the 'Office in a Box' idea."*

McVitie adds, *"To facilitate our WFH deployment, IGEL Cloud Gateway is used, to connect and manage all the home-based devices not on our corporate network. We've used Cloud Gateway before so we knew the platform worked well and, in conjunction with IGEL OS, that's why we were confident we could implement 'Office in a Box' so fast and reliably for the business."*

Delivering WFH also highlighted that some colleagues didn't have fast enough broadband to underpin a stable service. For those needing it, a dongle providing 4G mobile broadband was also provided.

IGEL OS HAS DELIVERED IMMEDIATE BENEFITS

- This was a cost effective and fast solution. It avoided buying new laptop or PC hardware to deliver WFH, meaning the solution could be put in place quickly. IGEL OS has been an inexpensive way to repurpose existing PCs – equipment which employees are familiar with and comfortable using, too. They were able to just plug in and turn their PC on at home, login and can get on and work as normal, without requiring extensive training and support.
- The OPEX cost to deliver the project was also low. Many man hours have been saved as it takes just five minutes to reflash each desktop and configure the security settings. It meant equipment could be delivered to staff really quickly.
- IGEL Universal Management Suite (UMS) is used to manage everything, providing visibility about who's logged in and, if there are subsequent system changes, this is done easily via IGEL UMS and IGEL Cloud Gateway.
- Collaboration tools like Skype for Business are also offered, because IGEL OS has built-in support for Citrix HDX – the display protocol required to stream HD film and audio over a network.

McVitie adds, *"IGEL is also assisting us from an ongoing business resilience perspective. We work with a third-party workspace supplier who provide physical desktops, chairs, phones and shared PCs for business continuity purposes. IGEL's UD Pocket is a simple solution – which comes on a thumb size USB drive – to get around the security issues of using shared equipment. In the event of an outage, we provide colleagues with a UD Pocket each which they insert into a PC, IGEL OS boots up directly, with a network connection then established to our datacenter, so Citrix can be accessed."*

Moving forward, 'Office in a Box' hardware will remain with employees, irrespective of whether they work at home in the future or come into the office, they'll have access to the same applications.

Kerr says, *"The bottom line is we delivered a two-year project in weeks. That's because of IGEL OS, the ease of management of the whole environment, plus the hard work of our IT department and logistics teams. People have been able to work pretty much as normal offering the kind of customer service that our clients expect. It's been fabulous."*

Ken Dougan, IGEL's Regional Sales Manager for Scotland, says, *"The whole idea behind delivering an IGEL OS-powered PC was simplicity – the user can't get anything wrong. They don't have to worry about installing Citrix, thinking about what version they have and there's nothing to break either because all the endpoint does is present them with a familiar login screen."*



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