



Agero Modernizes Call Centers to Deliver Critical Services for 115 Million Drivers

[Agero](#) safeguards drivers through a unique combination of intelligence and human-powered roadside assistance solutions, serving more than 300,000 drivers and businesses globally.

Industry

Automotive

Partner

[Presidio](#) is a global digital solutions and services provider that delivers secure cloud environments.

VMware footprint

VMware Horizon® Cloud Service™

Every driver has been there—a flat tire, a fender bender, or worse, a medical emergency. According to research conducted by Agero, the typical driver in the United States experiences at least one roadside event every two years. For two out of three vehicles sold in the United States, Agero delivers digital roadside assistance that can make the difference between simply a bad day or a serious emergency. As of September 2022, Agero supports more than 7,000 users with virtual desktops using a combination of VMware Horizon Cloud Service on Microsoft Azure and Microsoft Azure Virtual Desktop, which its agents can use from almost anywhere to deliver call center services without sacrificing security.

Drivers depend on Agero

Drivers and passengers get a steady flow of information, expertise, and help-on-the-way reassurance from Agero via multiple digital channels. Twenty-four hours a day, 365 days a year, 115 million drivers rely on Agero for roadside assistance, and Agero helps them manage more than 12 million roadside events per year. Agero has offerings that work with an automaker's native hardware in both commercial and personal vehicles, and this makes requests for help as simple as the touch of a button on a dashboard.

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The company's innovative technology—from its connected vehicle capabilities to its mobile apps, all integrated with a powerful event dispatch platform—find quick resolutions for stressful situations. Its digital roadside assistance platform



delivers GPS-enabled service provider truck tracking, digital chat assistance, SMS-based communication, secure payment capabilities, and more.

“The first thing our agents ask is, ‘Are you in a safe location, or do you need emergency service?’” explains Billy Macdonald, senior director of DevOps at Agero. “When drivers need breakdown assistance, they can be in distress, on a busy freeway, or in another dangerous location. While they could also be in their driveway or work parking lot, they’re still frustrated and oftentimes worried. It’s our job to calm the customer down and make sure they get what they need.”

A modern, resilient virtual desktop infrastructure

Agero develops and provides a range of advanced products and services to diverse customers—vehicle manufacturers, fleet owners, insurance companies, rental car companies, and large ground shipping convoys—across a complex value chain with many different partners. To help it deliver timely, often critical, remote services to tens of thousands of drivers a day, wherever and whenever needed, Agero wanted to modernize its workplace and deploy a cloud-based, resilient virtual desktop infrastructure (VDI) for its call center agents.

According to Macdonald, the shift to Azure Virtual Desktop is part of the company’s larger digital transformation to promote cloud-first experiences. Its virtual desktop implementation has up to 6,000 simultaneous users each day. Agero had previously used VMware Horizon on-

premises solutions in its physical call centers and extended its call center workforce by providing virtual desktops to its partners. As the Agero environment grew and its needs evolved, the company wanted to build on its investment in Horizon by taking advantage of the flexibility, scalability and reliability of the Azure cloud platform.

This combination gives Agero the best of Azure Virtual Desktop along with the advanced management and user experience capabilities of Horizon in one cohesive solution.

A significant number of the company’s agents—employees and qualified partners alike—now serve drivers while working from home on their own devices, and the company can pursue a more efficient, highly secure business model. “By moving to VMware Horizon Cloud Service on Microsoft Azure and giving a very consistent experience to our agents, we’ve freed up our engineers,” says Macdonald. “It doesn’t take as much time and effort to manage the Azure Virtual Desktop devices, so the engineers can take on new roles and responsibilities, improving other critical solutions and support experiences.”

With Azure Virtual Desktop, Agero now has the flexibility to scale its operations up and down to accommodate spikes in demand related to seasonal but unpredictable weather events, high-volume holiday travel, and other causes. Rapid scalability, coupled with the management and user experience capabilities of Horizon Cloud, helps the company maintain service quality while holding down costs. Macdonald explains, “We’ve gained the amazing user experience of Horizon Cloud combined with the scale and capacity of Azure Virtual Desktop and the underlying Azure cloud platform. Azure Virtual Desktop and Horizon Cloud complement each other expertly and combine to form a powerful solution.”

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But given the critical circumstances facing many drivers when they contact an agent, Agero must make sure that agents who are working remotely don't get interrupted or hampered as they help customers. With the hybrid capabilities of Horizon Cloud and Azure Virtual Desktop, the company's agents use one consistent interface to sign in to one of three Azure data center regions. "If there are issues with our systems, our network or the cloud, we have the dials to redirect agents to different locations and give them an experience that feels the same, looks the same, and doesn't interrupt their productivity," says Macdonald.

A timely pivot

In a twist of luck, Agero started its transition to a cloud-based VDI right before the COVID-19 pandemic. That made the company better prepared for the global business disruption that followed.

"In early 2020, we started a pilot project to transition 400 to 800 of our call center agents from working strictly on-premises to working from home," says Macdonald. By February 2020, Agero was arranging security and performance aspects, as well as conducting testing. By the end of March 2020, Agero had quickly ramped up the project and put Azure Virtual Desktop into production. Agero reached out to partner Presidio for help with its initial move to Azure.

Macdonald says, "Prior to the pandemic, we didn't set out to shift all of our agents to permanently working from home, but we had to quickly make that happen. And we learned that it works really well with Azure Virtual Desktop and Horizon. It's more economical and has become our long-term plan."

Now that agents can work from anywhere, the company can recruit them from a larger geographic talent pool, and spend less time, money and effort equipping them with the tools and applications they need. "We've enabled the business to evaluate the best staffing opportunities," says Macdonald. "And they can execute their business plans with the freedom of knowing that they have the compute and virtual desktop solutions to support those plans without compromising security or reliability."

The changes have been a success for both the business and Agero agents. "Agents like the remote work model," says Macdonald. "More than 80 percent now work from home using Horizon and Azure Virtual Desktop, enjoying a better desktop experience and strong application performance. We're not losing anything from a performance or customer service perspective. In a lot of cases, it's better. Employee happiness has positive effects downstream."

Efficiency, scalability and better results on the road

The chief goal for Agero is to enable product development and technical engineering teams to deliver its software-as-a-service (SaaS) products and solutions at scale, in a cost-effective and highly secure manner. "Horizon Cloud and Azure Virtual Desktop play a crucial role in our call centers and DevOps practice, and we must ensure that we support and safeguard the diverse cloud and desktop landscapes that our engineers, agents and other employees want," says Macdonald. "We can do this efficiently with these capabilities."

With fewer potential technology challenges affecting their workflow, Agero call center agents can now focus more time than ever on drivers who need help. "Now when our agents start their day, wherever they are, they have the same tools, look and feel, and browser options and sessions. Everything's consistent, so they're not having to find things," says Macdonald. "We've made it easy for them to sign in, find and use the products they need, get the help to the customers, and make sure it's a seamless experience."

Agero provides a high-quality customer experience while it optimizes costs, modernizes its workplace, and unlocks value in its IT and development practices. Most importantly, the company delivers critical value when it counts—and peace of mind for millions of drivers.