

4 CONSIDERATIONS WHEN CHOOSING A DAAS PROVIDER

Partnering with a desktop-as-a-service provider lets your company quickly and easily implement and manage virtual desktops without intensive in-house resources, budget and expertise. But choosing the right DaaS provider for your needs is critical to a successful VDI initiative. When vetting DaaS providers, keep these four critical areas in mind.

4 CONSIDERATIONS WHEN CHOOSING A DAAS PROVIDER

Building and maintaining in-house VDI is complex and requires a lot of time, effort, resources, expertise and budget. Employing a Desktop-as-a-Service model shifts that burden off in-house teams and onto a provider, allowing internal resources to focus on more strategic projects.

When trying to decide which DaaS provider to choose, there are four major areas that need consideration:

1. Infrastructure
2. Features
3. Support
4. Cost

While it's easy to be swayed by an attractive price tag, choosing the cheapest DaaS provider could set your VDI initiative up for failure because of poor infrastructure, lacking features or missing support. Instead, take price as one factor while doing your due diligence and vetting these key DaaS components.

Infrastructure

One of the most important aspects of implementing a successful DaaS initiative is vetting the underlying infrastructure required to support a virtual desktop deployment. To end users, a virtual desktop should be just as simple and intuitive as logging into Office 365; but what goes on behind the scenes and on the back end is incredibly more complex.

Meeting the specialized infrastructure requirements to support virtual desktops is key to providing an optimal user experience, which will in turn impact adoption, scalability and ongoing management. When evaluating potential DaaS providers, it's vital that teams pay close attention to the solution's underlying infrastructure to ensure it is able to meet expectations.

A few key infrastructure areas that require particular attention are network architecture, storage performance and resource management.

Network Architecture

Network architecture plays a large part in how well a virtual desktop environment will perform. Look for an underlying network architecture that is structured to support an effective experience and protect performance at all levels.

4 CONSIDERATIONS WHEN CHOOSING A DAAS PROVIDER

For example, Dizzion's network is separated into three parts:

- User (internet)
- Backend communication
- Failover

With this setup, users cannot affect desktop performance and backend communications cannot impact user experience. Companies can also be certain that a large, dedicated failover pipe means any downtime will be minimized.

Storage Performance

Storage performance can directly impact user experience. Using spinning disks to run a virtual desktop infrastructure is like using a sedan to pull your fifth-wheel camper. Relying on spinning disks will result in sluggish virtual desktops that will frustrate end users and hamper user adoption and productivity.

To be sure that storage performance doesn't negatively impact user experience, opt for a DaaS provider that employs robust solid state storage.

Resource Management

Resource management refers to the assignment and utilization of resources for each virtual desktop. Some service providers offer a shared desktop model to reduce resources (and cost) required to run each virtual desktop. Unfortunately, with this model users are never guaranteed the amount of RAM, IOPS or CPUs they can utilize. As a result, user experience is often unreliable and single user issues (i.e. viruses) can compromise the entire environment.

If you're employing DaaS as a replacement for hardware provisioning or to enable secure work at home and BYOD programs, ensuring a consistent, reliable desktop experience is key. For this you'll need each virtual desktop to have dedicated (rather than shared) resources that meet your minimum computing needs.

Features

In evaluating DaaS providers, it becomes clear that some offer more features than others. Whether due to business practices or technical limitations, some providers are simply able to offer greater degrees of customization and more robust solutions.

Dizzion's proprietary solid state storage platform and orchestration provide roughly 500,000 IOPS per POD deployment, amounting to an industry leading 250-500 per desktop.

Dizzion provides dedicated resources for both persistent and non-persistent desktops so user experience is always consistent across the board.

4 CONSIDERATIONS WHEN CHOOSING A DAAS PROVIDER

Important features that you'll want to look for include:

- Availability of persistent and non-persistent desktops
- Single sign-on capabilities
- Multi-factor authentication
- Controls at the user and Group Policies Objects levels
- Included antivirus and antimalware

While evaluating features may seem like an obvious criteria when vetting any service provider, when considering DaaS there are some less-than-obvious features that are often key differentiators.

Endpoint Management

Any DaaS provider has the ability to remove significant IT overhead for its customers, but some remove more of the burden than others. Virtual desktops are immeasurably more secure than a physical PC, but they do require endpoint devices for access. Although the virtual desktops are completely isolated from the physical endpoints, intrusion software (e.g. key loggers) still pose a security risk to company data.

To address this risk, some DaaS providers have added secure endpoints, such as [Dizzion's zLink solutions](#), to their service options. These devices are remotely updated, have added hardware and software controls, are less expensive than traditional endpoints, have no moving parts and provide a hardened OS to prevent any intentional or unintentional security risks. Secure endpoints mean the company needs less IT support while data ultimately becomes more secure.

Application Virtualization

Many organizations have business-critical applications that are posing more and more of an issue.

- Applications can become insecure and outdated over time – especially if it's up to the end users or an overworked IT team to install updates or if the company relies on an older version of an application.
- Applications can also be clunky, unreliable and offer poor remote connectivity.
- If you have a BYOD policy or allow employees to choose their preferred device, you may run into compatibility issues.

This is where a DaaS provider's expertise comes in. Providers like Dizzion offer services that can virtualize nearly any application and have it run on the virtual desktop. This secures legacy applications, keeps them compatible and removes any OS dependencies that the application may have. In addition to that, application control and management can easily be done quickly and from one central location.

4 CONSIDERATIONS WHEN CHOOSING A DAAS PROVIDER

Softphone Integration

For remote workers, being able to take and make calls is just as important as being able to connect to their desktop. However, softphone integration is not an included feature with all DaaS providers.

If video and call capabilities are key to your business function, softphone integration needs to be one of the top features you look for and vet while evaluating DaaS providers. In these cases, a proof of concept or trial is vital as it's important to experience this feature for yourself to ensure the quality is up to par for your needs.

Finding the right DaaS provider offering this feature means no more hard phones and no more VPNs, IP filtering, or port management/troubleshooting for each end user – even from work at home environments.

Compliance

Data protection continues to be a growing headache for IT teams and businesses. Not only are instances of data breaches increasing, but standards monitoring data protection – such as PCI and HIPAA – are becoming more stringent. Virtual desktops are inherently more secure than traditional PCs because no sensitive data is stored on the device and proper user controls limit actions like copying, printing and emailing via a personal account. However, to truly protect data you'll want to find a DaaS provider who is committed not just to security, but to compliance.

If your organization is subject to PCI or HIPAA compliance standards, look for a DaaS provider whose solution is purpose-built to abide by those standards. Ask to see a Report on Compliance or if the provider will sign a Business Associate Agreement (BAA). These actions demonstrate a deeper commitment to security and will turn your DaaS provider into a partner for achieving and maintaining compliance.

Support

Support is one of the key reasons a DaaS model can be attractive. If you don't have the right expertise or resources in-house to deploy VDI yourself, a DaaS approach can be a better fit – pending the amount of support from the provider. Evaluating support during the vetting and decision making process is important because some providers do not include any level of support in their offering unless you are willing to pay an additional fee.

When researching support, consider before, during and after the sale support services.

Dizzion was one of the first DaaS providers to feature softphone integration and our platform can support toll quality voice calls directly through our virtual desktops – no external VPN required. Dizzion's softphone integration is brand agnostic and works with any technology as well such as with Cisco, Avaya, Five9 or others. This is key as some DaaS providers only support specific communications platforms, such as Skype for Business. Dizzion's DaaS solution also supports WebEx calls at up to 720p.

Dizzion has been independently verified for both PCI compliance and HIPAA/HITECH compliance and will provide a delineated BAA.

[Learn More >>](#)

Pre-Sales Support

Finding a true business partner means building a relationship with the company you will be working with, and it starts with how they take care of you in the sales process. To get a feel for how much a DaaS company cares about your business, start with the business problem you're trying to solve. Does the DaaS provider take time to understand your business and future goals? Do they illustrate technical and business expertise in configuring a custom solution for you? If you conduct a trial or proof of concept, the support and responsiveness you get can be a leading indicator of the long-term support you can expect.

If you feel ignored, swept aside or unsupported during the vetting and proofing process, you can expect post-contract support to be minimal as well. Don't underestimate the value of good support when implementing and maintaining DaaS.

Project Implementation Support

Successful implementation can make or break a VDI deployment and your ability to manage it moving forward. Ask what level of support is provided during the project implementation as well as roles and responsibilities. This should encompass not only technical support requirements, but also address how any obstacles that come up during the setup process will be handled.

VDI is complicated and requires a specialized skill set. It is important that your DaaS partner provides you with the expertise to overcome these obstacles instead of leaving your company holding the bag.

Post-Implementation & Ongoing Support

What level of ongoing support will your DaaS partner provide after deployment? Your organization's time is important and if your desktop environment goes dark, business comes to a stop. Will your DaaS provider bring expert resources to bear 24x7x365 or will you have to rely on self-serve help documentation?

Additionally, it is important to understand the responsiveness associated with ongoing support. For instance, if you submit a help ticket will it be resolved quickly by someone who knows and understands your account or will it end up in a black hole with a revolving cast of anonymous support staff?

Dizzion has evolved past what most DaaS providers offer in their base desktop solutions. A dedicated sales and support team works with every customer to make sure they are buying a holistic solution, rather than a single piece of the puzzle. Not only does this remove any sort of hidden costs that customers may face down the road, but it also helps them utilize Dizzion's expertise to ensure a secure and high performing desktop experience.

Once you sign with Dizzion, you're not left to go it alone. Dizzion assigns each customer a dedicated support team to oversee the implementation process. When you're up and running, our 24x7x365 support is always available to help troubleshoot or address issues.

Cost

One of the key benefits of “as-a-service” consumption models is to shift capital expenses (CapEx) to operating expenses (OpEx) in order to decrease and plan for overall cost. DaaS is no different. The challenge, however, can come when comparing providers and the price vs. service they offer.

Often times, decision makers end up with an apples-to-oranges scenario based on various pricing models and the level of service that is provided – not all DaaS is created equal. This makes it particularly important to carefully compare cost to value when evaluating DaaS providers.

Price vs. Value

DaaS solutions are more than just login credentials and an operating system running on a provider’s server. Much more must be considered, including:

- Features
- Bandwidth
- Desktop setup and tuning
- Updates
- Patching
- Monitoring
- Support

A low price on a provider’s website certainly seems attractive, but it could be missing some essential components at the base price or leave you responsible for some key elements (such as antivirus, tuning and patching). Don’t be swayed by a low price tag without doing your due diligence regarding included features and support.

It’s not uncommon for some DaaS providers to only offer desirable features or better support with higher priced packages. Similarly, you may be able to “get” all the features you want at a lower price, but the quality of the service and end user experience could be worse than if you went with a different provider.

Cost Structure

Some providers price based on utilization for certain components, such as bandwidth. While not necessarily an undesirable cost structure, this model can negate the benefit of consistent, predictable operating costs and can quickly get out of hand.

Dizzion’s cloud delivered desktops include things like antivirus, tuning, platform updates, security stack management and monitoring, backups and 24x7x365 support so our customers remain secure and experience exceptional performance out of the gate.

4 CONSIDERATIONS WHEN CHOOSING A DAAS PROVIDER

Attractive low prices may also be tied to a large “minimum desktops” caveat such as 200+. Smaller implementations could see the price per desktop drastically increase without receiving any additional features.

Pay close attention to what you’re charged for and how you’re charged to ensure you fully understand the potential cost of your new DaaS solution.

Making the Final Decision

It’s important to remember, while vetting and on-paper comparisons can help you narrow down your choices, you’re ultimately buying a service, not a list of features on a piece of paper.

Use these considerations and our related asset, *The DaaS Provider Evaluation Checklist*, to assess your VDI needs and evaluate potential providers. Once you’ve identified your top choices based on their infrastructure, features, support and cost, consider doing a trial or proof of concept to experience the virtual desktops and support in real life. This step will help you make the final decision of which DaaS provider will become your VDI partner.

RELATED RESOURCES



Learn more about Dizzion’s
Cloud Delivered Desktops

LEARN MORE →



Download the
DaaS Provider Evaluation Checklist

DOWNLOAD →

ABOUT DIZZION

Established in 2011, Dizzion, Inc. is a global provider of end-user computing services, including cloud-delivered Desktops as a Service (DaaS), paired with complementary offerings like secure endpoints, application delivery and storage. The company is delivering the next generation of virtual desktop solutions to meet the demands of a remote global workforce in industries with stringent security and compliance needs, including business process outsourcing, financial services, healthcare and insurance. Dizzion's mission is to enable users to securely access applications and data from any device, anywhere increasing mobility and productivity. To learn more about Dizzion, visit www.dizzion.com.



Learn more about Dizzion's desktop-as-a-service solutions.

LEARN MORE →