

Transforming the Service Desk and improving the meeting room experience

Thales UK, part of the Thales Group, serves a diverse set of industries with an expertise in delivering high-level security services and applications. The organization has grown and developed into a leader in Defense, Aerospace and Ground transportation systems. Their line of business is characterized by the intensity of security requirements, visible in the layout and design of their offices and services. The level of collaboration between sites and teams is high, and Thales is investing in new technology to enhance cross-functional and geographic interactions.



“ My goal was to transform the Service Desk.

– Danny Polaine, Technical Service Delivery Director

Since Danny Polaine, Technical Service Delivery Director, joined the company, he has been tasked with streamlining and optimizing the delivery of technical services and IT infrastructure across offices and employees.

The goal that Danny Polaine had in mind was a transformation of the Service Desk as a whole. His strategy to manage support cases effectively, is to provide self-help through IBM Watson, a vast knowledge database, that combines artificial intelligence (AI), sophisticated analytical software and information retrieval that incorporates natural language processing (NLP) and machine learning.

The meeting room challenge

The challenges with meeting rooms at Thales around the UK were many. Following multiple mergers and acquisitions and with dispersed office locations, there was little consistency or compliance to a corporate standard or consistent “ownership”. The systems were disparate across the nine main sites that Thales UK has, with varying systems and components in each meeting room. The majority of these rooms had little or no video conferencing capabilities. The meeting rooms were the source of many complaints coming into the Service Desk, and it wasn't just interoperability or software, but basic issues such as non-functional hardware and cables missing or disconnected.

It became apparent that a modernization of meetings and collaboration tools, video conferencing and UC applications, was desperately needed. The lack of viable video conferencing was a key driver and represented untapped potential.

The mission: to improve the meeting room experience for users, standardize on meeting room principles, components and VC and to deliver management and support remotely.

The Thales logo is displayed in a bold, blue, sans-serif font. The letter 'A' is stylized with a small blue dot above it.

About Thales Group

Thales UK has a team of over 6,500 experts, including 4,500 highly skilled engineers, mainly across nine key UK sites. They are a global technology business operating across aerospace, defence, digital security, transport and space.

With a heritage of over 130 years, operating across 68 countries, Thales Group helps make the world go round. With over 80,000 people across the globe to keep the public secure, guard vital infrastructure and protect national security.

Find out more on www.thalesgroup.com

The first step – equipping the Thales UK HQ with functional and standardized meeting rooms

The new Thales HQ offices in Green Park, Reading, was initiated in 2017 to unite multiple offices into one new site. The Facilities department went out to the market to review meeting room options available to them. Following a tender process, the Cyviz solution was deemed the best and most appropriate option from a technical perspective. The scope was to initially equip 20+ rooms, designing and installing brand new room to a new standard. The Thales CIO, Danny Green, was actively involved in the process and subsequently agreed to embark on an initiative to standardize meeting rooms design across the UK. With a portfolio of 75 rooms using video conferencing the timeline to accomplish the transition was approximately 2-3 years. The technology was the main driver, but the whole concept of meeting rooms was evaluated and scoped to look at furniture, cabling and everything in the room at the same time, to create the best possible user experience.

The initial task, of finalizing the project at Green Park, was handed to Danny Polaine, who assumed the responsibilities from the facilities team. The project was at this point, already well underway, and a technology partner had already specified the room solutions with Cyviz as the main platform. Initially going into the project, Polaine was skeptical. However, after extensive testing, working with the Cyviz teams and seeing the value of the solution, he became convinced that the Cyviz solution fulfilled the needs of modernizing, standardizing and optimizing the meeting rooms and the meeting experience within Thales UK.



Modernizing meetings as we know them

Altogether, Thales UK has a presence in over 50 locations across the UK, and the span of this initiative focused on the top 10-15 sites to be connected. Travel between offices was excessive, and several initiatives to reduce it had no underpinning technology enhancements. The target set for the initiative was to convert some 75 existing meeting rooms into modern and functional spaces that could be actively supported remotely. With a diverse set of components and outfits, just the mere task of getting all the components standardized would reduce vulnerability and improve functionality.

Larger worldwide initiatives were also in planning, to introduce client based Jabber VC capabilities. With Jabber to be implemented more possibilities for remote working, as well as virtual communication and collaboration between offices and teams, were on the horizon. Connecting the hubs with dedicated and modern meeting rooms with a standardized user experience was an obvious priority.

Solution: Standardized room design with remote management and support

To accommodate the needs of Thales UK, Cyviz created standardized room designs with component options that were fit for purpose for specific room requirements. The idea was to adopt and embrace a standardized concept that would reduce support efforts from the End User Support team (local support technicians). With the Service Desk resolving 99% of support cases remotely using the Cyviz Easy Server application, the onsite teams could now spend their valuable time on other, more complex issues.

The creation of these central and standardized room solutions is paramount to guarantee uptime and reliable support for the different business units, which range from Defence and Aerospace to Transport systems supporting London Underground. Altogether, it gives the Service Desk the best possible starting point when investigating issues and resolving problems faster. The business units are experiencing a much higher level of service and availability of their rooms, which represents a tangible benefit and value to their operations and customer engagements. In turn, the users find a consistent interface through which to operate, which is both reliable and available.

Thales – a top-level security company

The nature of the business means security requirements at Thales are paramount and extensive. There are separate secure networks to manage different levels of security, in addition to physical barriers to protect and restrict access to areas. In these 'red-zones', video conferencing is becoming a larger part of those networks and environments too, with similar needs to bring in remote experts or resources into a meeting and reduce travel. The Cyviz infrastructure and architecture has been assessed and accepted to be installed in those high-level security zones, which is again deemed an important factor in the ability to support the users effectively. Again, providing the same consistent experience present in the business areas.

Usage Analytics to better understand utilization patterns

To better understand the usage of rooms across the board, Thales UK has deployed a Cyviz Easy Server module called Usage Analytics. The goal is to actively monitor the usage of rooms and resources, to relocate, upscale or downscale as required. Installed activity sensors in the rooms help them gauge activity levels and automate rooms to power up and down, saving time and energy.

To date, with the deployment of almost 70 rooms across the UK, there have been enthusiastic reviews, fantastic user feedback and significant uptake in utilization, whilst importantly, support cases to the Service Desk are down.

Business benefits:

Fast and effective support

- Remote support and management capabilities
- Standardized room design principles

Reduced travel between sites through virtual meetings

- UC and VC to connect resources between sites and teams

Start meetings without delay

- Room automation to power up systems through activity sensors

Upgrades are now rolled out centrally and remotely

- Thales UK use the Cyviz Easy Server to upgrade all Cyviz rooms seamlessly and centrally

Consistent user experience across rooms

- Easy to use interface across all rooms
- Standardized room design

Why Cyviz?

Following the installation in Reading, after further extensive evaluation, Cyviz was selected to provide the meeting room solutions across Thales in the UK. Cyviz created a standardized room design template, which was reviewed and approved with the Thales Information Services team, inclusive of design, room layouts, cameras, AV screens and various other components.

Since Cyviz obtained an approved supplier status the relationship between Cyviz and Thales has expanded, meaning that Thales could get access to technical resources when needed, and further develop the systems and platform in order to meet future requirements. As Danny Polaine adds his final comments, he emphasizes that the user experience is the ultimate goal, and what really makes the difference. With happier users who can easily operate the rooms, and experience fewer disruptions and outages these will ensure a more efficient and productive workforce. The centralized Service Desk will also be able to gauge the level of success based on user feedback and the number of support cases it manages.



Image: A Cyviz render of Thales Carlton Gardens executive meeting room, an office that acts as a London HQ for their top executives.

The Future: a world of extensive collaboration

The modernization and forward-looking initiatives related to meetings and collaboration at Thales UK will continue on multiple levels.

Next on the agenda, is to actively look at the utilization of office space to reduce permanent desks, in favour of hot desks and more dynamic collaboration spaces in central locations. The use of video conferencing and unified communications will continue to expand, and the opportunities connected to new technology such as AI and digital whiteboarding are already being explored. Automation is another topic that Polaine mentions, whereas sensors can be used further to integrate building systems with the room systems.

System specifications:

Cyviz Easy Server

- Remote support and management
- Centralized distribution of upgrades
- Usage Analytics module

Cyviz room kits

- M displays
- With or without video conferencing
- M5 controller and software

About Cyviz

Cyviz is a global technology provider for visual collaboration, meeting rooms, visualization, and operations centers. Since 1998, Cyviz empowers the digital workforce, organizations and employees to connect, visualize, and collaborate on their critical data. Cyviz provides turnkey solutions that are easy to deploy, easy to operate, and easy to support. Today, Cyviz serves the Fortune 500, global enterprise and government customers that demand seamless integration of leading-edge technologies that engage people, encourage greater collaboration, and accelerate decision-making.

Find out more on www.cyziv.com or visit one of our Cyviz Experience Centers in Atlanta, Dubai, Jakarta, Houston, London, Oslo, Riyadh, Singapore, Stavanger, or Washington DC.