



## Barrett Steel Reinforces Customer Service with Citrix Access Gateway

Operating through more than 40 subsidiaries, Barrett Steel is the largest independent general steel logistics company in the UK. Barrett has more than £36 million worth of steel in its warehouses, representing approximately 80,000 tonnes of general steel and special products. The company has sites across England and a large fleet of vehicles to distribute steel where needed. Barrett Steel has tripled in size over the last five years, and plans to continue growing by acquiring new sites.

### THE CHALLENGE: PROVIDING AFFORDABLE, CONTROLLED ACCESS TO USERS ON THE MOVE

In the fast-paced logistics business, responsiveness is crucial. As Barrett Steel continues to grow through acquisition, its centralised IT system, based on Citrix Presentation Server™, has been a key facilitator to the company's expansion strategy. By providing on-demand access to virtualised applications, Citrix Presentation Server enables the steel company to integrate new sites quickly and easily. The Citrix software also allows Barrett Steel to keep IT support costs to a minimum by utilising powerful centralised management and deployment capabilities.

To further improve responsiveness to customer needs, Barrett wanted to give its sales representatives access to real-time customer and stock information, such as the latest steel prices, while travelling or working from home. The goal was to enable them to interact with their office-based systems while at a customer site. Tony Smith, group IT director, explained: "We have a fleet of 50 representatives who spend most of their time on the road, visiting customers. They had a growing need to be able to access systems and push information back in a timely fashion, rather than waiting until they were back in the office a week or two later. Such delays could lead to outdated information in the system and the potential for lost sales or poor customer service."

### IMPLEMENTING CITRIX ACCESS GATEWAY ADVANCED EDITION

In 2005, **Cetus Solutions**, a Gold Citrix® Solution Advisor, demonstrated Citrix Access Gateway™ and the latest version of Citrix Presentation Server to Barrett Steel. This presentation inspired the company to upgrade its existing Presentation Server environment as well as to extend application access to external workers. Cetus, a Citrix development partner, is part of the Citrix "spearhead" programme that

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**TONY SMITH**

Group IT Director, Barrett Steel

### Key Benefits

- Flexible access to real-time data for field sales force to drive sales
- Centralised administration to lower IT costs and strengthen security
- Granular control of access rights and data encryption for improved security
- Faster response to customers

### Applications Deployed

- A custom-developed sales system, delivered via IBM Client Access
- Lotus Domino/Lotus Notes
- Microsoft® Office Suite
- Company intranet

gives early adopters advance access to and training for Access Gateway. Thanks to this, Barrett Steel was one of the first organisations in the UK to deploy a beta version of the product.

Citrix Presentation Server, running on top of Microsoft® Windows Server™ 2003, is deployed on 10 IBM Netfinity servers that are housed at Barrett Steel's head office in Bradford, West Yorkshire, UK. Citrix Access Gateway Advanced Edition was also deployed for secure access. More than 30 local offices and 300 users, including managers and salespeople across the UK, securely access applications running on Presentation Server via the Access Gateway SSL virtual private network (VPN) over 1Mbit ADSL connections.

Barrett employees, including approximately 60 sales representatives, access five applications such as an internally developed contact and sales management system, Microsoft® Office, the company intranet and the Lotus Domino/Notes email platform. Mobile employees on 50 Sony VAIO laptops connect to the Citrix environment via the Internet from any type of connection. Citrix Access Gateway provides SSL-encrypted access to the Presentation Server environment. Citrix® SmartAccess with action rights control enables administrators to establish a fine degree of control over applications, files, Web content, email attachments and printing. Citrix Access Gateway manages both what can be accessed and what actions are permitted, based on the user's role, location, type of device and configuration and connection.

#### FAST ACCESS TO INFORMATION ON DEMAND

Secure connectivity to centralised applications via Citrix Access Gateway enables representatives to enter customer data directly into Barrett Steel's contact management system at a customer location, which greatly improves the company's responsiveness to new data, such as fluctuations in steel prices.

"Our sales team can also check stock levels and place orders while visiting the customer's site,

thanks to Citrix Access Gateway," Smith said. "This makes us faster and more accurate, and therefore more responsive to the customer. It is a very successful solution."

He continued, "Although we don't have any financial metrics for this yet, everyone has noticed that with high-performance remote access, information is easier to obtain and update. Orders can be pinned down and entered for processing during the customer visit, so there is no chance of the sale being lost due to incorrect stock information, or the customer changing his mind after the meeting."

#### A SUPERIOR, SIMPLE-TO-DEPLOY ALTERNATIVE TO A TRADITIONAL VPN

Initially, Barrett Steel considered implementing an ADSL-based VPN for remote access. However, the company ruled this out, as it would have only allowed secure access for remote users working from fixed locations, such as their homes. As sales reps need to access information from any location, this was not ideal.

Cetus was able to implement Citrix Access Gateway at Barrett Steel in less than four weeks, compared with the several months it might have taken to roll out a traditional VPN solution. Access Gateway also proved a more cost-effective access solution than other VPNs, which would have provided a complex connectivity solution for the staff.

#### A SIMPLE, CENTRALISED SOLUTION WITH SOPHISTICATED, GRANULAR SECURITY

Citrix Access Gateway Advanced Edition provides a granular approach to security. Because action rights such as downloading or printing can be controlled by IT administrators according to the role and access scenario of the user, Barrett Steel can protect sensitive company and customer information more effectively. "We can specify that our field sales force will have a different level of access when on the road compared to their access in the office, for example," Smith said. "This is a very useful feature as it prevents information falling into the wrong hands."

### Networking Environment

- Citrix Presentation Server™ running on 10 IBM Netfinity servers
- Citrix Access Gateway™ Advanced Edition, two appliances
- Microsoft® Windows Server™ 2003
- 250 Boscom thin clients
- Inter-site links provided by 1Mbit ADSL connections

#### EASY-TO-ADMINISTER, COST-EFFECTIVE IT SUPPORTS GROWTH PLANS

Citrix Presentation Server technology makes administering IT systems very straightforward, particularly for new representatives joining the company, which is important given the rate at which Barrett Steel is expanding. It has avoided putting undue strain on the modest internal IT infrastructure team of four.

Smith noted: "The primary driver for us when it comes to IT is to provide maximum functionality for our users, while reducing the administrative burden associated with maintaining PCs located around the country. Citrix allows us to configure applications centrally and deploy to all remote sites and users. Now we can plug in new reps straight away. Over the next two years, Citrix will save us £50,000 on PC maintenance alone."

#### PERFECTING USERS' EXPERIENCE THROUGH ADDITIONAL CITRIX SOLUTIONS

Cetus is working with Barrett Steel to further simplify security management with Citrix Password Manager™, an enterprise single sign-on solution that enables users to access all of their password-protected applications, email and other centralised resources, by entering a single password. While data continues to be safeguarded, the process of gaining access to multiple systems through Citrix will be simplified and accelerated for users. Single sign-on access also reduces the burden on the internal help desk staff, who are often called upon when users forget a password.

**About Citrix Access Suite:** The Citrix Access Suite™ is the most powerful enterprise solution available for providing secure, on-demand access to any enterprise resource—from anywhere, with any device, over any network. The Access Suite bundles Citrix Presentation Server™, Citrix Access Gateway™, and Citrix Password Manager™ into an always-on connection to information—whether data, voice, or people. It is secure by design, centralises access, provides a robust and resilient foundation for business, and automatically adjusts to dynamic access scenarios.