

AUTUMN 2022

THE BIG READ

UNITING THE WHOLE SMART/COMMUNITY



IN THIS ISSUE:

- **From green to gold...** Autumn's here, and so are the fruits of our summer
- **Tech talks:** Cloud-busting with Global Cloud Xchange
- **Working from home:** Managing expectations
- **Launchpad:** Smarttasking Inc. is on a roll!
- **All aboard!:** Thanks to everyone who joined our evening on the Thames
- **A day in the life of...** Amanda Bhogal
- **Welcome:** Meet our newest joiners
- **Get in touch:** Contact / follow us

Feedback and comments? [Let us know!](#)

Find us at www.smarttasking.com

Follow us on [LinkedIn](#) and on [Twitter](#)

It was long, it was hot (record-creakingly so), and it was memorable. We've all witnessed a lot of change in the last few months, and the unpredictable nature of the world doesn't seem to be slowing down.

We all know that business is about much more than internal operations: more often than not, it's also about taking external events into consideration, and figuring how best to respond to them. This issue, we're delighted to be showcasing one company that's doing just that. Read on to find out more about Global Cloud Xchange and the route they've taken over the last few months.

We've also got an insightful piece on working from home (now a fixture in the business world), and an update on our U.S. venture. There's more, besides: happy reading, and happy autumn!

TECH TALKS: CLOUD-BUSTING WITH GLOBAL CLOUD XCHANGE



By **Lorenzo Romano**
Managing Director,
Global Cloud Xchange



Data is quickly becoming the most valuable commodity on the planet: at every conceivable level, the returns it offers are unparalleled. When, 15 years ago, mathematician Clive Humby said: “Data is the new oil”, he showed remarkable foresight – and few today would disagree. With over 97 Zettabytes (the equivalent of a trillion gigabytes) of data generated annually (a figure which is predicted to double by 2025), we can see where he was coming from.

Push past the sheer scale, and the actual origin of the data becomes even more interesting. That 97 Zettabytes of data generated each year is mostly generated by us – in other words, your regular consumer. Whatever we buy, wherever and however we buy it from: it all contributes to this gargantuan data metaverse. Enter a company that has watched, analysed and re-analysed data for a long time: Global Cloud Xchange.

Active for over 30 years, GCX pioneers sophisticated data treatment for some of the biggest brands in the world, covering all aspects of Cloud-centric connectivity, from managed SD-WAN and hybrid networks through to direct Cloud connections and 100 Gbps+ waves. With 120 points of presence across the world, and a strong client base across the whole of Europe and Asia Pacific, GCX has become the go-to name for data collection, transportation, securing and storage.

We caught up with GCX Managing Director Lorenzo Romano, and quizzed him for his perspective on the growing importance of data – and some of the challenges it poses businesses today.

“Data creates innovation – it really is the key to improving consumer experiences and building better relationships between customers and businesses”, Lorenzo explained. “The simple reason is that data is truth. It is inarguable. No amount of customer focus groups will give you accurate, targeted insights quite like data.”

This makes perfect sense: after all, most of us operate on autopilot at least some of the time, and when it comes to our purchasing preferences, we tend to be creatures of habit. But we are also easily persuaded – which is why so many of us are loyal to a few key brands, yet make impulse purchases now and again, driven by extremely clever marketing that has performed a sort of digital psychoanalysis on us, ‘completely undercover’!



(Cont.)

"I've seen remarkable examples of how consumer behavior can be changed by a data-driven analysis of their movements, actions and reactions", Lorenzo continues. "One of my favourite examples is of a major sandwich retailer. They couldn't understand why, despite huge footfall, their sales were very low in one major store. They tried everything – but it was only when a digital study of in-store behaviour revealed numerous sticking points that were impeding sales. Data enabled the retailer to make specific changes that eliminated negative or ambivalent behaviours, instead empowering purchasers; putting them more in touch with their own personal 'reality' of the brand. Guess what? Sales went through the roof!"

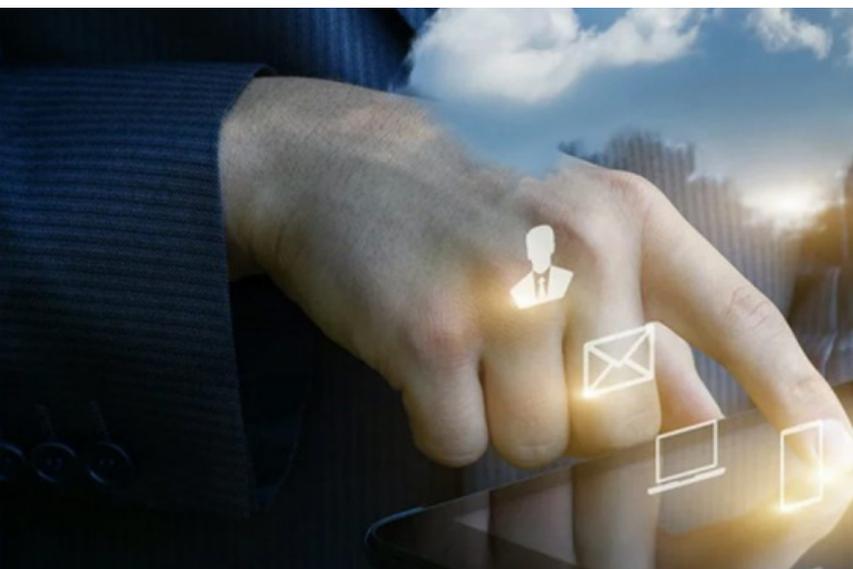
If this all feels a bit 'big brother is watching', relax: data extraction is all around us. Every time you pick up your phone, ask 'Alexa' to play your favourite playlist, do your online shop... even walking your [microchipped] dog transmits data you're not even aware of! The difference with a company like GCX is that data is now being used to actually improve life for consumers. Needless to say, happy consumers stay with the brands that give them greatest satisfaction. In other words, it's a win-win situation.

Lorenzo pointed us towards one of GCX's foremost clients, a leading global hospitality provider, for a good example of how they are actively transforming customers' experiences every day.

With more than 5,200 locations across 105 countries and territories, this client is easily the most recognised name in the hospitality industry. It has embraced emerging technologies for years, and now offers customers a range of digital options designed to make the away-from-home experience even more convenient and personal: from selecting and booking the perfect room and any 'extras', through to check-in, room access and service ordering, then through to final check-outs.

Seamless service performance right across their residency portfolio, therefore, could not be more vital. This is where GCX comes in: providing the group with a fully managed Cloud service, from wide network connectivity through to security, customer activity per touchpoint, and of course collecting, transporting, securing and storing that vital customer feedback.

Data extraction is everywhere. The difference is that it's now being used to enhance our lives, as well as create profits.



(Cont.)

All in all, GCX's service provision to this hospitality provider has been completely transformative, providing them with maximum insight into customers' behaviours and preferences, then co-developing and managing a seamless, reliable service provision that brings those behaviours to life – cementing loyalty, creating a fabulous customer experience, and ensuring ongoing success for the group.

Is GCX the only company at the cutting edge of data insight? Back to Lorenzo, whose passion about data and the ability of the Cloud is unquestionable.

"In a word – no. Data is such hot property, many of the well-known large Telcos are seeking to take their bite of the Data-Cloud meal. But many are relying on the might of their brand presence. That doesn't mean they have the capability, the network or even the imagination to provide clients with what they need. Telecommunications and data are connected, but the two remain quite different. A generic Telco cannot provide the level of detail, storage, security and interpretation that a dedicated Cloud consultancy can. I hope – in fact, I'm confident – that this is precisely GCX's sweet spot."



ABOUT GLOBAL CLOUD XCHANGE

Global Cloud Xchange offers network services which power digital transformation for enterprises, new media providers and telecoms carriers. They cover all aspects of cloud-centric connectivity from managed SD-WAN and hybrid networks, to direct Cloud connections and 100 Gbps+ waves.

With a pedigree going back 30+ years, GCX are experts in providing connectivity throughout the Emerging Markets Corridor into Asia via the vast GCX subsea network (the world's largest private submarine cable network), with extensions available into more than 200 countries worldwide.

Visit Global Cloud Xchange at www.globalcloudxchange.com



THE 'WORKING FROM HOME CONUNDRUM'



By **Gary Gamp**
Founding Partner,
smart/tasking, & owner of
The Company Doctor

Like it or not, working from home is here to stay. Whether you do it all of the time, some of the time, or none of the time, it's a good bet that at least some of your colleagues will have the option to work away from the office.

The pandemic showed us that productivity and collaboration needn't be impeded by a remote or partially-remote workforce. Overarchingly, firms reported little or no dent in productivity levels due to the imposed working arrangements (economic factors notwithstanding). But that was in the short term: now that the pandemic has been officially declared 'over', is it possible to maintain the same degree of flexibility over working arrangements? How should employees' and managers' expectations on working from home be addressed?

1. Set expectations

The most important guideline, surely, has to be one of expectation-setting. This will be completely unique to each company, depending on factors including size and scale, structure and sector, business ambitions, and of course the demographics of the workforce. But establishing and communicating a baseline set of expectations is crucial. For instance, do you want to mandate a core working hours rule, with flexibility either side of that time?

Do you want to introduce official team away-days, when everyone gets together in one space? This is about establishing boundaries and finding the right balance of focus and flexibility.

2. Communicate - and listen

Establishing these ground-rules is great, but of course they have to be communicated effectively and consistently. We repeat - effectively and consistently! This could mean having a simple set of bullet-point guidelines - no more than 5 - which are easy to repeat and even easier to remember.



Establishing ground-rules is great, but they have to be communicated effectively and consistently.

(Cont.)

Or it could be having a powerful acronym, with each letter representing a behaviour. It could be a single sentence that absolutely sums up your WFH approach. Importantly, you'll also need to listen to what employees are saying.

Some may be over the moon about flexible hybrid working. Others may find it difficult, or even harbour resentment. So listen compassionately, and always address the elephant in the room if there is one.

3. Lead by example

It's no good outlining a set of rules only to bend them whenever it suits. And that goes for managers and leaders as much as it does for employees! You've communicated the groundrules – now it's up to leaders to role-model them.

This doesn't mean being a martyr, it just means applying good common sense, and asking the question "how could other people interpret my actions"? Holding a mirror up to ourselves in this sense can be extremely useful.

"Working from home means setting some reasonable, achievable, fair rules and expectations. Avoid bending your rules - for yourself or for colleagues. Compassion and empathy can exist very effectively within parameters."



LAUNCHPAD: SMARTTASKING INC. IS FIVE MONTHS OLD!

It's incredible to think that only five months ago, Smarttasking Inc. officially launched in the U.S. The venture had been carefully considered and planned by our Founding Partners, and the signs were all promising: a favourable market, an existing European client base with operations in the States, and – in Franck Cormier and Danny Lacey – two highly experienced and well-connected leaders who will be leading our U.S. operations.

Since launching, Smarttasking Inc. has brought its IP, cross-sector expertise, and practical, outcomes-led approach to numerous firms who were seeking a more streamlined, proactive approach to their operations.

Delivery has been the operative word here: Franck, Danny and our growing team of U.S. Optimisers have nailed the ability to get to the nub of clients' issues quickly, identify practical solutions, and implement these successfully for a lasting legacy of business improvements.

We're happy to report that feedback on our U.S. projects has been very favourable, and as a result we are in the strong position of being able to grow our foothold in the companies to whom we are providing services.

Crucially, we are now building on our propositions – with a large emphasis on Program Management Office – underpinning the execution of our clients' change and transformation programs, delivered by our multi-disciplinary experts.

One of the most important aspects of launching in the U.S. has been to understand the subtle differences in clients' requirements – and then adjusting our offering in line with these.

Whilst transparent reporting, proactive data management and live project dashboards are undoubtedly beneficial to all projects, we have made some U.S.-specific adjustments to ensure our offering is uniquely tailored to the American market.



(Cont.)

New releases of our popular TaskGenie® product have also been made available to clients, with even more enhancements in the pipeline.

To celebrate the impending six-month anniversary of Smarttasking Inc., Founding Partners Niall Anderson and Gary Gamp flew to New York at the end of October to host a drinks reception at the stunning 230 Fifth (www.230-fifth.com).

With a guest list of dynamic and influential business leaders, the conversation flowed, new contacts were made, and budding friendships were firmly cemented.

It was fabulous to host such a lively and engaging group of people, and the overall atmosphere was enthusiastic for more of the same. No better way to celebrate a fantastic first few months in the States – with future successes on the horizon!

For more information on Smarttasking Inc., or for details of our extensive PMO service offering, contact:

FRANCK CORMIER
(franckcormier@smarttasking.com)

OR

DANNY LACEY
(dannylacey@smarttasking.com)



A NIGHT ON THE RIVER THAMES!

Following the success of our 2021 Night On The River, smart/tasking again took to the water on 6th October for our 2022 event. This time we invited even more guests, meaning more connections were made, and more great memories were created.

For this year's event, we extended the invitations to our clients, and to new connections for whom we hope to be providing some of our services in the future. This added to the dynamic of the evening, placing more emphasis on 'joining the business dots'.

Just like last year, our venue was The Pier at Bateaux London, a sparkling social spot right on the River Thames. The music, the food and the drinks were plentiful, and we were blessed with a warm(-ish!), dry night. With the lights sparkling on the river, and the conversation sparkling inside the venue, we couldn't have hoped for a more successful evening.

Thanks as always goes to Sarah Callaby and Katie Rolf for organising the event, and to our Founding Partners Niall Anderson, Paul Bibby and Gary Gamp for hosting. Feedback from guests has been very positive, so we'd also like to thank everyone who joined us on the night!



A DAY IN THE LIFE OF... AMANDA BHOGAL!

Project Support Analyst, smart/tasking



BEFORE WORK

Let's start the day off right: one hour on the Peloton with my favourite Peloton instructor Christine D'Ercole. Here is a throwback of when I met her in the Covent Garden studio in 2019.



MY HOME OFFICE

My home office: I spend the first part of my morning clearing my inbox and prepping for meetings.



MORNING



My view, where it's easy to get distracted looking at the abundance of wildlife. I love watching the ducks and occasionally swans swim down the river. I often see heron in and around the willow trees. I have spotted a couple of kingfishers too, and just last week there were cows in the field. When I get a moment away from my desk, I feed the many species in the river including trout, roach and crayfish.

I have my weekly 1:1 with Smart/tasking Founder Gary Gamp. We discuss upcoming projects, support requirements, and enjoy an all-round general catch up, ensuring we maintain effective communication and engagement.



(Cont.)

LUNCH...

...involves me caring for my dear doggies Lollipop and Hercules. They are 15 and 13 respectively, so mostly sleep a lot these days.



AFTERNOON

The service I have been delivering for a client for the past 12 months has recently come to an end, so I am keeping myself busy prepping for a course I am undertaking in a few weeks.

Final meeting of the day: my weekly catch-up with Danny Lacey, one of the Founders of Smarttasking Inc. (our U.S. operations). Here we collaborate on our PMO offering to our clients. We are very excited to be launching this product both State-side and in the UK.



AFTER WORK

Ballet class. My favourite social time of the week. Having not danced since my teenage years, I returned to ballet 2 years ago. It's a great outlet and I have made some wonderful new friends.



WELCOME TO THE TEAM!

Meet our two newest members - welcome to the smart/tasking family!



David Jenkins

'The Explorer'

Associate Director David - aka 'The Explorer' - has worked within professional staffing for 17 years, across a wide range of industries including financial services, public sector, retail and energy. Some of his recent clients include Goldman Sachs, Deutsche Bank, Department of Health, NHS Information Centre and Primark. In true 'explorer' style, David is naturally curious about everything, and is passionate about building strong relationships. Outside of work, you can find him hunting for the best spot for a hike, watching Crystal Palace in the hope they stay in the Premier League, or experimenting with new food recipes.



Bradley Parry

'The Synthesiser'

'Synthesiser' Bradley is our Head of Data, Systems & Insights. He designs and builds data models and automation solutions to drive more efficient business processes, supported by business intelligence dashboards for deep analysis and insights. He has extensive experience optimising processes and enabling data-driven decisions, notably on large datasets in the public sector. When not working, Bradley can be found spending time with his young daughter. If she's asleep, he might pop to his home gym for a workout, catch up on some reading, or mess around with technical solutions for his own life obstacles!



CONTACT

We're always keen to hear comments, observations and questions - so please get in touch if you would like to share your thoughts.

info@smarttasking.com

www.smarttasking.com



smart/tasking

