

TalkTalk
For Everyone

Sycurio.Digital



Case study: TalkTalk.



Innovating at lightning speed to deliver a free digital connectivity service for UK job seekers.

The background.

The UK's leading value for money connectivity provider, TalkTalk is on a mission to bring simple, reliable and fair connectivity to everyone. Serving both consumers and businesses across the UK, today the firm provides fiber, broadband, landline, TV and mobile services to over 4 million customers.

Never afraid to challenge or innovate, TalkTalk believes that being a responsible business means going beyond just making money – it's also about having the courage to stand up for what's right for people and local communities.

The challenge.

When businesses began re-opening following the lifting of lockdowns in 2021, TalkTalk realized there was a pressing need to help people get back into work.

While measures like the UK government's furlough scheme protected more than 11 million jobs during the pandemic – the number of people looking for work was growing. With the furlough support scheme ending September 2021, the Bank of England projected unemployment rates would steadily increase.

Determined to make a difference, TalkTalk realized that the 2.6 million people now on Jobseeker's Allowance or Universal Credit – because they were searching for work – would need practical, real-world help that would enable them to get back to work faster.

The big idea

"Having already created 50 new opportunities for young people in the Northwest as part of the government's Kickstart scheme, we approached our contacts at the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) with an idea – giving job seekers free internet connectivity via the DWP so they can search and apply for jobs online," explains Harpreet Dhaliwal, Operations Change & CI Manager at TalkTalk.

Since the pandemic, being unconnected and out of work has become a growing issue. Lockdown meant job centers were closed and the shift to digital channels triggered by the recent crisis meant employers are increasingly using online job portals to advertise and fill vacancies.



The challenge. continued

This is a challenge for people on benefits, who struggle to afford the broadband and internet services needed to access the online job market.

“The digital divide between those who have internet and those who don’t and are out of work is a growing problem,” said Harpreet. “We wanted to help the DWP eliminate this barrier for job seekers by creating a streamlined solution that made it easy for them to ‘sign-up’ job seekers who would then receive TalkTalk landlines and broadband connectivity for a 6 or 12 month period for free.”

Surmounting operational issues

The scheme needed to be simple to administrate, monitor, manage and report on – giving both TalkTalk and the DWP full visibility of everyone taking advantage of the initiative. The challenge was, TalkTalk needed to find a way to execute service delivery to jobseekers

– and that meant bypassing its normal operational customer, bill payment and collection systems.

“We wanted to ensure this cohort of subscribers got exactly the same level of service as paying customers – but our normal onboarding journey involves people providing some form of payment and being subject to our monthly billing process,” explains Harpreet.

“To implement our plan sooner rather than later, we needed to create an entirely different back-end platform for handling what would effectively be DWP ‘customers’ – and we needed to do it fast. That’s when we approached Sycurio to help us create a solution,” he continues.





“Sycurio.Digital handles everything relating to the onboarding of DWP users, including the DWP authorization. It also automatically generates their unique account number, which enables us to manage them in much the same way as our regular customers.”

Harpreet Dhaliwal
Operations Change & CI Manager
TalkTalk

The solution.

TalkTalk had already defined a process that would enable the DWP to effectively sponsor any qualifying user to access its services and get set up with the connectivity they needed.


“We wanted to act as a wholesale provider to DWP, who could issue vouchers that qualify individuals for our service. The next part was the challenging bit – we needed to find a way of processing these vouchers and generate a unique account number for every individual. This would enable us to undertake reporting and reconciliation for the DWP, trigger the issue of a router and our connection services for each individual, and monitor due dates for service termination,” says Harpreet.

“We knew that Sycurio.Digital could be used to send out a secure payment link via SMS or email. Our hope was that Sycurio could evolve their solution to capture vouchers as unique tokens that would trigger all the backend onboarding processes off.”

A fast and effective collaboration

The development teams at Sycurio sprang into action to find a resolution to the problem. “This was not a typical use case, and Sycurio worked alongside our teams to get to grips with all the back-end integrations and challenges that needed to be overcome. Within three weeks they conceived a workable end-to-end solution that meant we could kick off the DWP scheme in under a month,” confirms Harpreet.

The bespoke solution Sycurio created means that DWP Job Coaches who work with job seekers can now trigger a request to TalkTalk and instantly receive a secure ‘payment’ link via text or email that captures the name, address and contact details of the job seeker, and the agreed duration they will receive TalkTalk services for free. To verify the request, the Job Coach simply enters a unique voucher number that acts as a token to authorize and pay for the user’s account set up.



“Thanks to Sycurio, we’ve been able to ringfence these subscribers from our regular customer base in a totally separate system – there was no need to undertake a major infrastructure implementation which would have taken months or years to complete.”

Harpreet Dhaliwal
Operations Change & CI Manager
TalkTalk

The results.

Sycurio's bespoke solution has enabled TalkTalk to contribute in a fast and effective way to help people across the UK get back to work. In partnership with the DWP it is providing life-changing practical support to people impacted by the lasting effect of coronavirus on the jobs market.

Just four weeks after the scheme went live, over half a million people have been signed up as TalkTalk 'subscribers' and numbers continue to grow rapidly.

"We saw a problem – and wanted to help solve it, fast. To do so meant innovating at speed to make a difference to people when they need it the most – today, and over the following months," says Harpreet.

"We had to think outside the box to make it happen– and Sycurio played a key role in solving a piece of the operational puzzle. Giving us the agility to leapfrog barriers and get a solution up and running that works," he continues.

Nimble thinking: from innovation to execution

As well as resolving the onboarding authorization challenge, Sycurio.Digital delivers all the backend reporting and tracking, and recording the processes TalkTalk and DWP need for governance purposes.

Just 22 days after its initial 'big idea' conversation with DWP, TalkTalk was able to present and launch a fully rounded and operationally viable solution to help solve the challenge of addressing the digital divide issues that so often exclude people from finding a job.



"Sycurio's commitment to our vision was truly impressive. Together they helped us overcome the operational barriers that stood in the way of innovation – with dedicated problem solving and a can-do attitude that made them a true process collaboration partner."

Harpreet Dhaliwal
Operations Change & CI Manager
TalkTalk

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