HOW TO START A SUCCESSFUL REMOTE TEAM WITH V2 CLOUD

What's V2 Cloud? We're a cloud provider that deploys virtual desktops within 20 minutes. No technical expertise or long-term contracts required. Look what <u>our customers say about us.</u>

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ABOUT MIGRATING TO THE CLOUD

Moving your business to the cloud requires some preparation and may bring about questions or concerns. In this guide, we will cover the basics to get you started. This resource will direct you through all the steps required to launch a successful remote team with V2 Cloud. It will help you understand the different options, to find the best solution to suit your business needs. Also, it will provide insight into the features we support and a few applications we recommend.

Keep in mind, you are not limited to these applications. They are merely some of the popular applications many of our 25,000 existing customers enjoy.

GLOSSARY: SOME IMPORTANT TERMS

VM: Virtual Machine is a term used to describe your Cloud Computer and your Cloud Desktop.

Administrator (admin): Is someone who has full control over all the settings and configuration.

User: Is often referred to as an employee in this guide and is the person using the VM.

Privilege: Is the extent and reach a user has in the control of their settings and configuration.

Desktop: The interface your users will work from. V2 Cloud uses Windows based Desktops.

AD: Active Directory is a type of directory. The terminology is mostly used by Microsoft.

Directory: In this context, it is a digital way to manage your users.

Latency: Is the delay between an action on your device to the server: where the VM is hosted.

MS: Millisecond is a time measure used to calculate your latency.

Hosted (hosting): Where your VM is physically located.

RAM: Random Access Memory is a form of computer memory. It's what makes your VMs fluid.

CPU: Central Processing Unit is the brain of your VM and where all the instructions start.

Resources: Are the required hardware used to power your VM. Example: RAM or CPU.

SSO: Single Sign-on allows users to login to multiple applications with the same credentials.

See our full glossary.

INDIVIDUAL DESKTOP

V2 Cloud offers two types of Virtual Machines (VM). We will have a look at both to see which one is best suited for your business.

Individual cloud desktop is a cloud computer attributed to a single user. A single user VM provides each user dedicated CPU, RAM, and drive space. A group of individual desktop users can still set up shared folders and work together as a team. This is comparable to a normal office setup, where every employee has their office computer and shares files on their private network. With an individual cloud desktop, every individual desktop has one administrator and one user. Furthermore, some applications will only work on an individual desktop. Keep in mind, only one user to an individual desktop is permitted and a transfer to a team desktop later will not be possible.

Note: Microsoft 365 licenses (not to be confused with Office 365) and Azure AD can only be used within Individual desktops. On-prem or Cloud directory services (like JumpCloud) can be used in Individual and Team desktops.

In short, Individual Desktops are a good choice if your users are spread across multiple regions or they use different applications. Each user will have their private desktop (VM) and a set of applications in the region of their choice.

TEAM DESKTOPS

Team cloud desktop is a virtual machine with up to 250 users. Each user has their private desktop, private files/folders, and shared computing resources (RAM, CPU, and drive space). As an administrator, you can decide to have shared folders or not (by default, the users can't access the files from other users). The administrator of the multi-user VM can access the private desktops of their users; he manages their users' permission, privileges, and applications. Take into account, some software might not function in a multi-user environment, but compatibility is increasing and exceptions are rare. A single user can use a Team desktop.

Note: Office 365 licenses (E3, E5, Apps for Enterprise and Business Premium) will work in Team desktops. ALL OTHER OFFICE 365 LICENSES ARE NOT COMPATIBLE. Azure AD DS is also made specifically for multi users environments.On-prem or Cloud directory (like JumpCloud) can be used in Individual and Team desktops.

In short, Team Desktops are a good choice if: your users are in the same region, if they use many of the same applications, and/or if you're searching for a low-cost option.

Everyone on the same VM shares the same resources, but has their desktop session and private file folder. VMs resources are not shared across multiple customers.

Let's cover both scenarios point by point with some simple questions.

WILL I NEED INDIVIDUAL OR TEAM DESKTOPS?

- ## Where are your users/employees located?

Individual desktops: You don't have a group of users in the same region. For example, you have four employees; one in the US, one in Canada, one in Europe, and one in Asia, and you want them to work in the cloud without experiencing latency. Each VM is located in the closest data center from their location. You can share files and folders amongst employees; distance is not an issue.

Team desktops: Your users are located in the same region. For example: If you have fifteen employees in the US, three in Europe, and one in Asia; you could have one VM in the US with fifteen employees, one VM in Europe for three employees, and one employee on a Team desktop in Asia. Single users can use Team desktop without any issue. Your team can share files/folders within their shared VM or between your multiple teams; distance doesn't matter.

- ## How many users do you have or plan to have in the future?

Individual desktops: The number of users is not an issue; only the way you want to manage them. Each user is managed by an administrator. It can be more complex to manage a greater number of VMs, as it has to be done individually. The price per VM stays the same for each employee.

Team desktops: You have several employees in the same location. The cost per user goes down exponentially when you add users on a VM.

- **Does your user pool vary during a year (temporary workers for high season)?**

Individual desktops: You don't hire temporary employees and every employee has different setting configurations.

Team desktops: You have a significant increase of employees needing a cloud computer during high season. They are temporary staff but still need a complete cloud computer to work on. Adding and removing users to work with the same applications/settings only takes a few clicks. E.G. hiring an intern for tax season.

- **Do your teams work with Microsoft or Google Suite?**

Individual desktops: Microsoft Office or Google Suite will both work well. There is no restriction and you can use any Microsoft Office or Office 365 license you have. Microsoft Office 365 is pre-installed and you only have to enter your license. Google Suite is compatible with any Windows-based system.

Team desktops: You can ONLY use these versions of Microsoft Office 365 in a multi-user environment: E3, E5, Apps for Enterprise, and Business Premium. Other subscription licenses will not work. This is a licensing rule from Microsoft. Google Suite is again compatible with any Windows-based system.

OVERALL BEST CHOICE:

Cloud computers are not "one size fits all". Every business is unique and you should make your own choice according to your vision. We generally suggest Team desktops unless your apps cannot run on server OS. Team desktops are much easier to manage (one VM for multiple users) and the cost/user goes down as you scale your business upward.

HOW DO I CHOOSE WHERE I BUILD MY CLOUD DESKTOPS?

You should always choose the closest data center possible to your employees' location. You can select a data center in between your remote employee location in Team desktops.

For example, you could select a data center in the US if you have employees in Mexico and Canada and require your employee to work on a single Team desktop VM. Take into consideration that latency will be higher and can make work less fluid the farther you are from the data center. You can go as high as 100ms latency for normal office work.

We recommend a ping at 50ms for voice and video fluidity. Ask our sales team about ping tests to evaluate latency and have an expert opinion if you are not sure. You can reach them at sales@v2cloud.com.

How do I determine the technical specifications of my VM(s)?

Each type of users require different specifications
- see tech specs

Word processing: Normal office work like using Microsoft Office/Google suite and any web browser/email service doesn't require a lot of resources. We recommend an average of 4GB RAM/user. **We recommend an average of 2-4GB RAM/user. *Depending on usage.**

Developers/graphic designers: This type of user is more intensive and requires more processing power. We recommend an average of 8GB RAM/user minimum. These users are usually more tech-savvy and will know exactly what they need.

BLUEPRINTS FOR FIFTEEN EMPLOYEES (BUSINESS PLAN):

All VMs include one admin to manage their instances. The admin can also act as a user. For example, you could have one of your staff set up as an admin to manage the other employees (to save on one user). In this scenario, you have eight office workers, two graphic designers, four developers, and yourself.

Example 1:

One secretary, three customer service representatives, two accountants, two salespeople, and yourself will do normal office work and video conferencing. In this VM, you would have a total of nine users (including the admin), but only eight are billed since the admin is free. They are all in the same region.

The SMB plan (Team Desktops): $210
8 users @ $10/each: $80
Total: $290/month (for 9 working Cloud Desktops including the admin)

Example 2:

Two graphic designers will do more intensive work like video editing and Photoshop. You are still the main admin, but you assigned one of the designers as a secondary admin to save on cost. He uses the admin instance as you don't need to connect to this session. Simply add one user if you want to stay the sole administrator (you trust this employee as you gave him access to the V2 Cloud dashboard to help you manage it.). We selected Team Desktop as you want to add users to this team in the future in the same region.

The SMB plan (Team Desktops): $210
1 user @$10/each: $10
Total: $220/month (for 2 working Cloud Desktop as 1 designer is set up as the admin)

REAL-LIFE EXAMPLE FOR FIFTEEN EMPLOYEES (BUSINESS PLAN):

Example 3:

Three developers will do more intensive work. Just like the graphic designer, you set one of them as an admin to reduce cost. You trust this employee as they have access to the dashboard to help you manage it. Simply add one user if you want to stay the sole administrator. They are in the same region.

The SMB plan (Team Desktops): $210
2 users @$10/each: $20
Additional RAM @$30/2GB: $60
Total: $290/month (for 3 working Cloud Desktops as 1 developers is set up as an admin)

Example 4:

One developer will do intensive work as the other, but he is on a different continent. He will be using an Individual Desktop. **You don't plan on hiring more people in the same region.** You are the admin of the VM and he is the sole user.

The Doer plan (Individual Desktop): $105
Total: $105/month (for 1 working Cloud Desktop)
Monthly total for fifteen users (including you): $905

Notes: V2 Cloud doesn't lock you in a contract and you can upgrade/downgrade your VM(s) in just a few clicks. Our prices include unlimited bandwidth and there are no usage fees. Your monthly cost can vary greatly from this example depending on the resources you need. Please contact our sales team at sales@v2cloud.com for an accurate quote tailored to your business needs.

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HOW TO MANAGE SHARED FOLDERS WITHIN ONE OR MULTIPLE CLOUD DESKTOPS?

- **Group Policy**

Group Policy allows you to centralize the management of computers on your network without having to physically configure each computer individually. You can use Group Policy to create shared folders and manage permissions to access the files. It can be used in a multi-user environment to manage every user from the admin session. It can also be used to manage your network's permission/settings from your Active Directory.

If multiple VMs, you need an internal network between the VMs and set a network shared folder so that folder is shared across all the VMs. It requires a bit more knowledge but is easy to set up once you understand the basics. You can have a look at this tutorial for more information. This method will use your Cloud desktop disk space.

- **Google File Stream -** *V2 Cloud team first choice*

Google File Stream is an extension of your Google Drive. It's a file hosting service and you need a Google account to use it. It will appear as a Local Disk in your Cloud computer. You can manage the permissions from your Google Drive and share folders across your teams and multiple devices at the same time.

It's the tool we use internally at V2 Cloud to share folders with all employees. We find it reliable, powerful, and secure. Google File Stream follows HIPAA guidelines and encrypts your data at rest with 128-bit or 256-bit AES keys (depending on the device used). See how to configure your Google File Stream. Furthermore, Google File Stream does **NOT** use your Cloud Desktop disk space.

- **OneDrive**

OneDrive is a file hosting and synchronization service operated by Microsoft as part of its web version of Office. You can also map OneDrive to appear as a local Disk on your Cloud computer. You can use OneDrive to share files with your remote teams and manage permissions from your Microsoft account. OneDrive will give 1TB of storage when you combine it with a Microsoft 365 subscription. It follows HIPAA guidelines and encrypts data at rest. It can be used on multiple devices at the same time. OneDrive has a feature called Files on Demand that will **NOT** use your Cloud desktop disk space. You can follow this Microsoft tutorial to learn how to set it up.

- **DropBox**

DropBox is another file hosting service. You need to create a DropBox account, but it only requires an email address. It can be used on multiple devices like the other two and has a desktop and a web application. You can manage permissions from your DropBox account page. It also follows HIPAA guidelines and encrypts data at rest with the 256-bit Advanced Encryption Standard (AES). Dropbox uses Secure Sockets Layer (SSL)/Transport Layer Security (TLS) to protect data in transit between Dropbox apps and our servers. You can follow this tutorial found directly on the DropBox website to see how to configure DropBox to allow SmartSync. SmartSync will **NOT** use your Cloud desktop disk space.

OVERALL BEST CHOICE:

V2 Cloud teams use Google File Stream but every method should be considered. All of the previously mentioned tools have been tested and work perfectly fine in our VMs. If your services are mostly in the Microsoft family, we recommend using OneDrive.

DO I NEED A USER DIRECTORY?

There are multiple types of directories. The most well-known are Local Directory, Active Directory, and Cloud directories. Each has its advantages and you should familiarize yourself with those to decide which you want to use. Directories are a centralized management tool for your users.

Local Directory *(in V2 Cloud)*

What acts as a directory in V2 Cloud is your Dashboard. You use it to create and manage users directly in your V2 Cloud environment without any external software/configuration. It's the most simple tool to use V2 Cloud and allows you to manage permissions and security settings like 2 step authentication and password reset. Learn how to create a user profile easily.

Azure Active Directory (Azure AD) and Windows Active Directory (AD)

Azure Active Directory (Azure AD) is Microsoft's cloud-based identity and access management service, which helps your employees sign in and access internal resources, such as apps on your corporate and cloud network, along with any cloud apps (full definition). Windows AD is the on-premise version and must be hosted on a server inside your network. It has the same role but can't authenticate with cloud apps and serves only as identity and user management.

Both manage permissions and user accesses as well as security settings. Learn how to join Azure AD to Windows 10 and how to join a Windows Server to AzureAD with our simple tutorials. If you want to join Windows AD to a VM, it requires a bit more IT knowledge, but the tutorials will guide you step by step through the process.
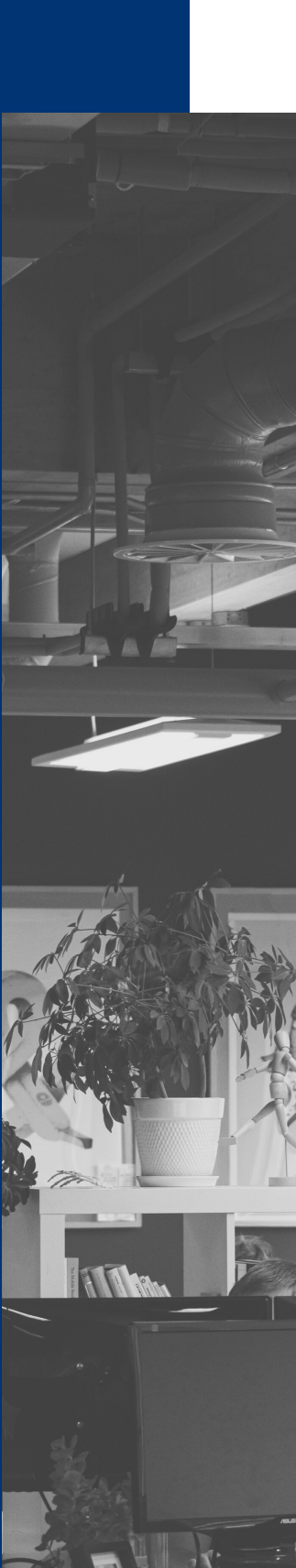
DO I NEED A USER DIRECTORY (SUITE)?

Cloud directory

To make it simple, a cloud directory is simply a cloud version of a directory, just like AD. It simplifies user management and access through a centralized platform. It allows you to access multiple providers/applications from the same console (dashboard). Some cloud directories like <u>JumpCloud</u> doubles up as a Single Sign-On (SSO) for extra security. See how to <u>use JumpCloud SSO combined with their Cloud directory</u>.

Notes: JumpCloud is the only cloud directory that can automatically create a user in V2 Cloud that we have tested up to now.
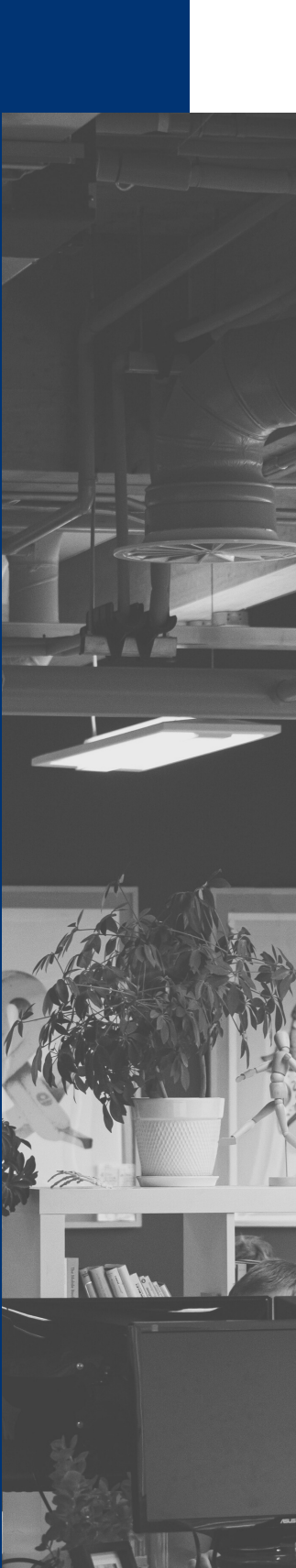
WHAT TO CHOOSE:

V2 Cloud local directory: It is the most simple option. You can manage everything from our dashboard and don't need any IT expertise. A maximum of 250 users per VM can fit in our local directory. And you can't export your settings/configuration to another Directory type. A local directory is a good choice for small teams and it's the most cost-efficient solution. You don't need to hire any external help to manage this directory.

Windows AD: You want to keep your existing Windows AD on-prem (or host it on our servers) to import all your current users and settings. You want to create an Active Directory that you can manage from your VM because you are familiar with the Microsoft product family. Windows AD on-premise will require a VPN connection and you need some basic IT knowledge to manage it. Windows AD is your best solution if you have your on-premise AD and you want to keep your costs low. See the full description on the Microsoft website.

Azure AD: You want to manage your user identity 100% from the cloud. It comes with mobile device management that will provide identification to user accounts and multiple applications like Microsoft 365 or other SaaS (Software as a Service). It's only compatible with Individual Desktop and is the best choice to combine with your Microsoft 365 license. You keep your traditional infrastructure, but all in the cloud. It has a built-in SSO (Single Sign-on) to help increase security. It's mostly used by IT managers and developers. See the full description by Microsoft.

WHAT TO CHOOSE (SUITE):

Azure AD DS: Same settings and configurations (and more) as Azure AD but you are not limited to Individual Desktop and can manage all your Group Policies and domains from the same interface. There is also mobile device management and built-in SSO to help you authenticate with third-party applications. It requires some basic IT knowledge and is a more expensive option. Choose this directory to modernize your Windows AD environment by moving your AD 100% in the cloud. It gives extra features over Windows AD-like self-managed user password reset and better control over your user's access privileges. It works on a stand-alone domain and doesn't require any on-premise integration in a cloud environment. It's mostly used by IT managers to take care of a large fleet of users from a single interface. Learn more directly on the Microsoft website.

Various Cloud Directories: There are so many we can't list all their advantages and disadvantages. They are a good fit for your business if you want to combine them with an SSO (Single Sign-On) and keep your user management 100% in the cloud. We have a tutorial showing how JumpCloud directory and SSO can be used with V2 Cloud. Be sure to read the documentation and the related costs.

Talk with our support if you have any questions.

OVERALL BEST CHOICE:

There is no best choice when choosing which directory to use. Each is unique and offers a different approach to your user management.Talk with our sales teams if you have any questions. You can reach them at sales@v2cloud.com. We're happy to help!

HOW DO I PROPERLY SET UP MY REMOTE TEAMS TO START ON THE RIGHT FOOT? OR LEFT FOOT, WE DON'T JUDGE...

You should follow these steps to experience a smooth transition to the cloud. These are not requirements but suggestions on how to proceed. We built those steps from our own experience building V2 Cloud remote teams and applied those principles to our 25 000 users. You are free to do as you wish, but we have 25 000 proofs they work perfectly fine.

1 - CREATE TEMPLATES/VM

Templates allow you to onboard new employees in under 20 minutes. See it as a base picture for future staff. You must first learn to create your first VM with the information you learned in this guide. Once you completed all the steps below, you can learn how to create a template from your VM and keep your base image configured exactly the way you want. You don't have to create templates, but it's a great tool to set up multiple teams. You can skip this step and go directly to step 3 and then come back to step 2 right after.

We recommend having one template ready for each employee's group as they don't have the same needs and don't require the same configurations. A normal structure would be to have one template ready for accounting, one for your administration staff, and one for your development team/product team, etc...This will also help you visualize how your business is structured; how many resources you need and predict future changes in your organization.

Notes: When using a Team desktop, you will only use templates to create a new user group in a new location. You can simply add users to an existing VM when you have a new employee. It takes about 10 mouse clicks.

Install necessary applications according to their template group.

Each template should be complete with all the tools necessary, so your new employee will not need to install any applications when they start their VM. Below you will find a list of some applications we either use internally or have feedback from customers using them. Keep in mind, there are several others but we can't list them all. Please contact us if you think an incredibly useful tool is missing in this guide.

- *Office apps*: Office apps are your normal office work application. Microsoft Office 365 suite is the most well-known and it's a comprehensive suite of applications that your employees will use every day like Excel, Word, and Outlook.

  Google Suite is the alternative from Microsoft and is the one V2 Cloud uses internally. It's web-based and will work in your web-browser inside your VM. Foxit PDF is a complementary tool used by V2 Cloud to edit PDF: it's powerful, yet simple

- *Chat/Productivity apps:* Maintaining communication in a remote team is just as important as in an office. V2 Cloud uses Slack internally to act as our remote office. You can call your co-worker, send messages, share files and even do some watercooler small talk.

  Microsoft Teams is also a great alternative. You can also call, chat and share files and it integrates with your Microsoft account. We recommend you try both and see for yourself. If your business is already Microsoft-oriented, you should go with MS Teams to be able to manage everything from your Microsoft account.

- ***Teleconference apps:*** Teleconferences or video calls are an important part of remote teams' day-to-day businesses. It's important to familiarize yourself with this tool and understand what it can and can't do. We use Zoom internally for our customer's meetings. It's a simple tool that allows you to talk and see each other. You can share your screen and even give control of your mouse to allow better collaboration. It can work directly from your browser or by downloading the Zoom app.

  MS Teams can also do the same thing and it also works as a chat/productivity app as stated above. We recommend using Microsoft teams if you are already using most of their other services.

  Cisco developed their tool called Webex. It can do the same as the other two: share files, share your screen, and videoconference. In Cisco's own words: "The Webex single-platform allows you to connect your workspace, workflow, and work style to enhance employee and customer experiences."

- ***IP phone system:*** Having your team working remotely also means they might be in different locations. A good IP phone system will save your business a lot of money on long-distance calls. V2 Cloud uses Skype internally. It covers all our needs and the price/minute is more than reasonable. You can manage all your users, phone numbers, and subscriptions from their portal <u>Skype manager</u>.

  Other IP phone systems include DialPad, Phone9, Dixa, Avoxi and many others.

2 - CONNECT TO DIRECTORY

The second step is to connect to the directory of your choice. This is how you will manage your users and different settings/configurations related to identity management.

V2 Cloud local directory: This doesn't apply as it is already connected by default.

Windows AD: You can follow this <u>tutorial</u>.

Azure AD: See <u>here for Windows 10</u>. Azure AD can't be joined to a Windows Server VM. You need to create your on-premise directory and link it with a VPN to your Azure network.

Azure AD DS: You can follow this <u>tutorial for Windows 10</u> and this <u>one for Windows Server</u>.

Cloud Directory: We have a tutorial for <u>JumpCloud</u>. There are several others and they are all unique. Let us know if you need help with their documentation.

3 - BUILD YOUR VMS BASED ON CHOSEN TEMPLATE AND ADD USERS

From the VMs you previously created and converted to templates. You can <u>create your new cloud computers</u> for all your users/employees and then <u>add users</u> if you choose Team desktops. You can also <u>add your users in bulk with a CSV file</u>. All your settings are then pre-configured and applications pre-installed just like your templates previously created. You don't need to add users here if you are using a different directory than V2 Cloud local directory.

4 - ENFORCE SECURITY

We recommend you <u>enforce 2 step authentication</u> to all your users for extra security. You can also use any SAML 2.0 SSO if you are familiar with it for your user's identity management. We have some tutorials with <u>V-Key</u>, <u>Okta</u>, <u>OneLogin</u>, <u>JumpCloud</u>, and <u>Azure AD SSO</u>.

Let us know if you think we need to add a tutorial for a different one.

5 - SET UP SHARED FOLDERS

The next step is to set up your working environment with all your teams. You can build a classic infrastructure with Group Policy by allowing users to access only specific files and folders (according to their level of privileges and company roles). You can also use OneDrive, DropBox, Google File Stream, and many other cloud storage systems to set up a shared folder structure. Our support staff is available to assist you through the best method for your current infrastructure.

6 - ADMIN OR NOT?

You can choose to give a user administrator privilege, to allow him to install applications directly in his instance without your permission. This option is available when you create a new user. You simply have to check the Administrator box. You can also remove/add it later with the option "Edit User" from your V2 Cloud dashboard. This option is only available if you chose to use the V2 Cloud local directory. These administrators will not have access to the V2 Cloud dashboard. For more directories, please refer to the adequate documentation.

You can also add a secondary administrator to help manage your V2 Cloud dashboard. They **DON'T** have their desktop like normal users but instead, share the administrator session with you. You can both log in at the same time in the dashboard but not on the V2 Cloud desktop. These users are not billed and you can add as many as you want.

CONGRATULATIONS!

Your remote team is all set to go!

Our support team is available for any questions via the online chat in your dashboard or at support@v2cloud.com. Their operational hours are from 5 am to 9 pm EST during the week and 9 am-5 pm during weekends. You can also reach our sales teams at sales@v2cloud.com.

We are always happy to help.

> **"** I've been using V2 Cloud for over 2 years now, and it has been fantastic. Our productivity has increased as we can all work off the same server. I recommend V2 Cloud to any business in search of a secure, reliable and cost-effective cloud desktop solution… **"**
>
> *Perm Persaud*
> *Owner of Ark Accounting & Tax PC*

BONUS

You can access all our <u>tutorials</u> and our <u>help center</u> to help guide you through your first steps.

We also have a <u>monthly newsletter</u> with curated content about tech, cybersecurity and straight-forward IT tips.

Don't forget to read <u>our blog</u>. Make sure you follow us on our socials so you don't miss one of our article!

Apps used by V2 Cloud

Grasshopper: Used to redirect our 1-866-807-7155 calls to our agent's personal phones. It also comes with a useful voicemail option that you can listen to directly from your computer/phone.

CloudApp: Used to take screenshots or record small GIFs. Everything is stored in the cloud and can be shared with a URL link. You can also download the content easily.

InVisionApp: Used to make the wireframes of the articles we write. It's a powerful tool that is easy to learn. It makes cooperation with your writers and web designers very easy.

Intercom: It's the skeleton of our online chat you use to speak with our support staff. It has many functionalities that make supporting your customers as easy as if they were in the same room. It can record, send automated messages and store all your users' conversations for easy follow-up and training.

CONTACT

BOOK A DEMO: SALES@V2CLOUD.COM

BECOME A PARTNER: PARTNERS@V2CLOUD.COM

BECOME AN AFFILIATE: AFFILIATE@V2CLOUD.COM

PRESS INQUIRIES: MARKETING@V2CLOUD.COM

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