



# Regional Foodservice Vendor Simplifies & Streamlines Remote Access

RDP Foodservice Transitions from Complex VPN to Cloud-hosted Zentry Trusted Access



“

For me, the IT guy experience – knowing that users are restricted to the room I opened and not the whole castle – that has been a life changer.”

**Omar Lieves**

Director of IT, RDP Foodservice

## Challenges

Shifting an office-based workforce to remote overnight is no easy task. “When Covid hit, we scrambled for a couple of days to get everybody capable of working remotely,” said Omar Lieves, Director of IT for RDP Foodservice. “Back then, we didn’t have a very robust way of providing remote workers with reliable access.”

To solve this, RDP deployed two different VPNs successively. The first was too complex and time-consuming, requiring 10-15 minutes per laptop to configure. The second required less configuration, but Lieves knows that, with VPNs “once you are inside the network, it’s like opening the front door and I still had some security concerns.”

## The Solution

Zentry Trusted Access alleviated RDP’s issues in a matter of hours. “With VPNs, it’s like lowering the gate to the castle. With Zentry, I’m just showing you to your room. And I don’t have to deploy anything. All I have to tell people is ‘open your browser and type in this URL and login with your AD credentials and you’re in,’” said Lieves.

## Benefits

Zentry Trusted Access enabled RDP Foodservice to increase productivity and collaboration. Employees are no longer required to use corporate-issued devices with complex VPN clients. Instead, they can use any device, including phones and tablets, and work from anywhere. They are more productive and don’t require extensive IT support. “I’ve been receiving feedback that when they’re using Zentry instead of the VPN, the response time is faster,” Lieves added.

## Background and Challenges

RDP Foodservice, based in Columbus, Ohio is a regional food distributor and consulting company for restaurants and catering establishments throughout the midwestern United States. RDP leverages both on-premises and cloud resources to power their business but rely most on enterprise resource planning (ERP) and warehouse management system (WMS) applications. "Pretty much everyone uses IT infrastructure to some extent," Omar Lieves, Director of IT said.

When the COVID-19 pandemic required employees to work remotely, RDP Foodservice had to transition almost overnight. "Pre-pandemic, we didn't have the concept of working remotely. Anybody and everybody associated with RDP needed to come into the office to do their work," Lieves said. To quickly enable remote work, Lieves spun up a traditional VPN. "But, when we did that, the setup was cumbersome, like 12 different steps, workers got confused, so for a while I was getting calls every day about how to connect to the VPN," he continued.

Moreover, because that VPN had issues connecting to their ERP vendor, Lieves decided to switch to another VPN after about six months. It required less up-front configuration but users were only slightly happier. "That doesn't mean I was not concerned about security, because once you are on the VPN, you are inside the network. It's like opening the front door. That's when I started to look at Zentry because I was really curious about what it could do," he added.

## The Solution

"I have to confess, at the beginning I didn't really understand the difference between Zentry and VPN," Lieves admitted. Zentry Trusted Access is a cloud-hosted, secure, browser-based, zero trust solution that restricts access to individual applications. "With VPNs, I was basically lowering the gate to the castle. Now (with Zentry) I'm just showing you to your room. And you're not going to leave there until I let you go to a different room."

Moreover, Lieves was impressed with Zentry's ease of deployment. "It was heaven on earth – with a VPN, I had to remote in to each user's computer, download a client, and have them work after that. Now, they can open up a browser, login with AD credentials, and they're in. Whatever you see in there, in your dashboard or in your landing page, is what you have access to – end of discussion," said Lieves.

## Streamlined Remote Work

Prior to the pandemic, RDP's workforce was entirely onsite. Virtually every day, including weekends, workers came to the office to perform inventory, sales, purchasing, or finance transactions on the ERP system. But during the transition to remote work, some struggled accessing applications remotely with the VPN. A few workers even asked to connect from relatives' houses on unsanctioned computers. "I said absolutely not. I don't know that computer, you don't even have the client to run the VPN connection. If you really need to do something, run back home and grab your corporate laptop."

But, after implementing Zentry Trusted Access, "that doesn't have to be a problem anymore," Lieves said. "Workers can be anywhere in the world, and as long as they have a browser and an internet connection, they can access the application that they need and I don't have to be concerned about it."

As time has passed, RDP Foodservice workers have become more confident in accessing applications anywhere, anytime. Lieves noted further that, as pandemic restrictions ease, "workers who need to stay home or work late now have the confidence and the access to come in remotely and do what they need to do. And now I have the confidence that my network is more secure that it was before."



“I went from 10-15 minutes (configuring a VPN) to no minutes at all.”

**Omar Lieves**  
Director of IT, RDP Foodservice

## Rapid Deployment & Faster Access

Lieves was also impressed by how quickly Zentry Trusted Access could be deployed. “The setup was really, really simple. It probably took about an hour or an hour and a half,” he noted. “Probably within two hours I was in the system accessing different resources with Zentry.” Since it is cloud-hosted, as soon as Zentry’s resource connectors call home, your organization is up and running.

Lieves also noted that response times have improved with Zentry over traditional VPNs. “I have been receiving feedback that when they’re using Zentry instead of the VPN, the response time is faster,” he noted.

## Tighter Security than a VPN

Aside from faster access and simplicity of use, Lieves deployed Zentry to increase RDP Foodservice’s security profile. “The biggest concern was possible bad actors who, if they could have gained access to my VPN and, if they had known how to exploit that access, I would have been in a not-very-nice situation.”

Since traditional VPNs allow users on to the network and they can potentially browse to applications and resources they are not entitled to, migrating to a zero trust solution like Zentry tightens an organization’s network security. Unlike VPNs, Zentry Trusted Access is a cloud-delivered secure remote access service that only allows access to specific applications defined by the IT administrator.

## Moving Forward

Enabling remote work has been a struggle for more than a few organizations. VPNs were originally designed for a few, trusted employees to access applications in a corporate-owned, on-premises data center. Since then, both the security and user landscape have changed dramatically.

RDP Foodservice’s experience is not unique – deploying, managing, and maintaining VPNs can be difficult. Now that he’s been using Zentry Trusted Access, Lieves said workers can seamlessly access applications from anywhere and that access is faster. “If I were to move to a different company, definitely Zentry is something I would bring with me,” he concluded.



“It’s a huge difference between connecting to resources with a VPN and connecting to your allowed resources through something like Zentry.”

**Omar Lieves**  
Director of IT, RDP Foodservice

Zentry Security enables small- to medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to realize the benefits of zero trust security in a simple and cost-effective way, by securing remote access to any application, anywhere—in the cloud or on-prem. By combining best-in-class remote network access with enterprise-class security capabilities in one easy-to-use solution, Zentry Security improves end-user productivity and collaboration while eliminating the threat of a data breach, but without the excess complexity and configuration typical of VPNs. Learn more at [www.zentrysecurity.com](http://www.zentrysecurity.com)

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