

National Express Turns To Vodafone Business And IBM To Boost Digital Journey With Hybrid Cloud

LONDON, Aug. 28, 2019 /PRNewswire/ -- The Vodafone Business and IBM (NYSE: [IBM](#)) venture, which [launched](#) earlier this year, today announced it has signed an eight-year deal with National Express, a leading UK-based transport provider with services in eight countries. The agreement covers the provision of cloud and digital services that will underpin National Express' 'digital first' approach; to use the latest technologies to raise customer and safety standards, drive efficiencies and grow its business.

Vodafone Business and IBM announced their intent to join forces in January this year, bringing together their respective strengths in connectivity and hybrid cloud. Together, they offer customers straightforward access to the technologies needed to integrate multiple clouds and prepare for the next wave of transformation enabled by 5G, artificial intelligence (AI), edge computing and software defined networking (SDN).

Under the agreement, the Vodafone Business and IBM venture will first modernise National Express' IT estate by moving to IBM Cloud and implementing a hybrid cloud strategy, building on the existing connectivity services provided by Vodafone Business. This will enable National Express to effectively manage multiple clouds in different locations and from different vendors; and to seamlessly scale up and down to support usage spikes. Additional security and risk management will be added to protect the transport operator's technology infrastructure and provide greater resilience.

This activity will lay the foundation for future innovation and enable National Express to speed the development of new customer-focused innovations - such as personalised passenger experiences, flexible payment options and always-connected vehicles.

Looking ahead, the Vodafone Business and IBM venture will give National Express access to other cloud services and new technologies such as 5G, IoT, edge computing and analytics. Such technologies will enable the transport operator to adapt to today's digitally savvy consumers, create the best possible customer experience and drive operational excellence.

Debbie O'Shea, Group Chief Information Officer for National Express said, "Working with the new Vodafone Business and IBM venture forms part of our continued investment in technology to better support our strategic ambitions. This partnership enables us to move to a cloud environment giving us a future-proofed platform with increased flexibility that will better support our business. It also will provide access to emerging and innovative new technologies."

Greg Hyttenrauch, Cloud and Security Director, Vodafone Business commented, "This flagship win is a powerful demonstration of the value the Vodafone Business and IBM venture can bring to customers. As cloud services and connectivity become ever more inseparable, there is a clear need for the combined expertise we can deliver. We will provide National Express with the holistic solution it requires to drive digital innovation across its business - faster, simpler and at scale."

"Leading enterprises around the world are turning to IBM and its hybrid cloud capabilities to modernise their businesses and transform operations," said Michael Valocchi, IBM General Manager of the venture with Vodafone. "By moving to the IBM Cloud and implementing a hybrid cloud strategy, National Express can now tap the combined strengths of IBM and Vodafone and introduce new, innovative services faster and succeed in a digital world."

Vodafone has a long-standing relationship with National Express and already provides wide area network connectivity and a Secure Internet Gateway.

About National Express

National Express Group is a leading public transport operator with bus, coach and rail services in the UK, Continental Europe, North Africa, North America and the Middle East. Passengers made 898 million journeys on our services in 2018.

About Vodafone

Vodafone UK connects people, businesses and devices to help our customers benefit from digital innovation. Our services span mobile, fixed line, broadband and the Internet of Things (IoT). We employ around 11,000 people across the UK, and operate more than 400 retail stores nationwide.

Having made the UK's first mobile phone call and sent the first text, Vodafone has a history as a tech pioneer. In 2018 we made the UK's first live holographic call using 5G, and were first to start carrying live 5G traffic from a site in Salford, Greater Manchester. Today we serve over 18 million mobile and fixed line customers in the UK, with 4G network coverage at 99%. Our customers voted us the UK's Best Mobile Network at the 2018 Trusted Reviews Awards for the second year in a row. To help deliver Gigabit UK, we are rolling out full fibre broadband across 10 cities in partnership with CityFibre, reaching one million homes and business by 2021.

Our ReConnect programme is supporting women and men back into work after a career break, our IoT technology is working to create a low-carbon society and our free Digital Parenting magazine is helping families across the UK to navigate the online world safely. For two years running, we have been named a Top 100 Employer by Stonewall.

We are part of Vodafone Group, one of the world's largest telecommunications companies, with mobile operations in 25 countries, partnerships with mobile networks in 44 more, and fixed broadband operations in 19 markets.

For more information about Vodafone UK, please visit: www.vodafone.co.uk

About IBM

For more information about IBM, please visit www.ibm.com

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