



Parsing the Future of Work

HOW TECHNOLOGY WILL ENABLE REMOTE EMPLOYEES

BY EDWARD ROWAN, SENIOR DIRECTOR, PRODUCT SALES SUPPORT
& ANALYSIS, COMCAST BUSINESS

»» For a modern organization to be successful, it must transform into a digital workplace, with the ability to conduct business from anywhere, anytime, with anyone.

That means businesses must provide employees with technologies that allow them to stay connected to colleagues and customers while being productive, even while working remotely.

Businesses of all sizes can help ensure employees can work remotely without skipping a beat by augmenting these four common workplace technologies.

The Internet

This is the big one, because just as an office needs strong internet service to support in-house employees, remote employees will need excellent service as

well, with enough bandwidth to handle streaming connections for tasks like video conferencing.

- Consider supplying or supplementing remote employees' home or office internet to ensure they have top speeds and can stay connected.



- Add in reliable mobile service so employees can connect via their devices.

- Identify safe and secure Wi-Fi hotspot options for on-the-go employees. Using hotspots is a great way for a business to cut down on data costs and save on overage charges. Businesses also can set up a virtual private network (VPN) that allows for a stable and secure connection.

- Make sure employees understand how to keep their devices (and, by extension, the company's network) safe by avoiding unsecured websites, using virus protection and refraining from downloading unapproved apps and software on company devices. All employees – remote workers especially – must follow key cybersecurity guidelines. Tactics include:

- Securing their work phone and computer
- Installing a firewall
- Downloading anti-virus and anti-malware software that is set to update automatically
- Regularly backing up information

The Cloud

Employees need virtual access to the same information and tools they'd be able to access in a physical office. The solution here is the cloud, which hosts files, data and applications within a centralized server and makes them accessible from any device with connectivity. This means employees can work from anywhere on company-issued mobile devices, or their own devices.

Remember: Remote employees need virtual access to everything – not just a few applications or files. Businesses deploying a cloud strategy

must provide employees with ways to share information, sync schedules, process important documents and back everything up in real time – securely.

Comcast Business and many other technology providers offer cloud solutions apps and Software-as-a-Service (in which software lives in the cloud, not on an individual's computer). To be successful with both cloud and remote work, determine what tools and applications employees need to do their jobs and ensure that a cloud environment mimics the in-office experience.

The Phone

It's easy to forget about the humble telephone, but it's still a key business tool, both inside and outside an office.

Look for a flexible phone system in which employees can use one phone number that switches seamlessly from a desk phone to a mobile device, allowing them to stay connected from wherever they are. One option for a company with remote employees is a VoIP (Voice over Internet Protocol) solution, such as Comcast Business VoiceEdge, which offers benefits traditional wired systems don't, like:

- The ability to forward a number to multiple phones and reach employees whether they're on their cell phone, a home landline, or an office phone.
- Call management and routing, which acts as a virtual receptionist to answer calls and help callers connect to the right person. This includes the option to ring multiple employees in a department, one by one, until someone answers.
- The ability for employees to check voicemail remotely; receive notifications

on a mobile phone when their office line receives a call or voicemail; and use voicemail transcription, which lets employees read voice messages on a mobile phone.

Collaboration Tools

When all employees are in the same office, it's easy to get together in a conference room or someone's office to exchange ideas and present information. But, when one employee, or everyone, is remote, getting together is not as simple. Collaboration platforms and unified communications systems are key for future workplaces.

For example, in addition to allowing participants to see each other as they speak, web conferencing systems offer tools to share slideshow presentations and documents, easily schedule or change meeting times, and record meetings and presentations for future viewing.

Another tool – group chat software – can make it seem like everyone is in the same room. They also can serve as a productivity tracker. Google or Microsoft Office both offer collaboration apps for chatting remotely and trading files.

As remote work becomes more common, it can introduce challenges when it comes to keeping employees connected, productive and engaged. But, the right technologies make it a snap. Comcast Business is here to help. For more information, visit <http://business.comcast.com>, call 866-429-3085 or follow us on Twitter @Comcast Business and on other social media platforms at <http://business.comcast.com/social>.