

How to Telecommute or Work Remotely

Working from home has become a common component of many professional careers, but having a productive work from home environment is an overlooked and often forgotten aspect.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The workplace has evolved considerably over the past decade. Workspaces need to keep up.

Today, more and more employees need to working remotely, giving rise to a pressing need to create more meaningful and deeper connections between colleagues via collaboration tools. At the same time, video solutions finally made significant inroads with the consumer market, resulting in a workforce that not only accepts video solutions, but has even come to expect them.

To enable effective collaboration, organizations must make strategic investments in a range of technologies — including video displays, software platforms, advanced cameras and audio solutions — and then connect these tools in ways that both ensure compatibility and lead to tangible business benefits.

Above all, video solutions need to provide end users with a simplified, seamless experience that helps to boost their productivity and easily connect with colleagues and clients.

What Do I Need to Work from Home or Remote?

Working from home or remotely requires more than a laptop. In order to set employees up for success, organizations need to provide them with the proper tools and resources. This equipment includes collaboration and communication software, authentication and VPNs, monitors and productivity tools.

Authentication and VPN Software

Keeping your network secure also means being able to access that network remotely when needed, and a work-from-home environment demands that access. Invest in authentication tools and VPN software to enable employees to access your office network and the digital applications required to keep your organization operating efficiently. These applications will need to be installed on each workstation, so work with your IT team or provider to ensure that every employee's work device is properly updated. Additionally, make sure you provide documentation about how to use the authentication and VPN tools for network access so employees can have that resource on hand for any questions that may come up.

Three Top Benefits of Modern Workspaces

When establishing goals for a video collaboration investment, organizations should start with these benefits.



Space: According to some estimates, the average cost per employee office seat is more than \$32,000 per year, giving companies a powerful financial incentive to encourage remote work. In addition to connecting remote users to the office, video solutions can generate analytics that help companies to right-size the amount and type of space needed for offices, resulting in further savings.

Time: When organizations employ older audio or videoconferencing equipment, meeting leaders frequently need to arrive to meetings 15 to 30 minutes early simply to ensure that the right equipment is in place (and in working order). Modern solutions are more reliable and can help cut down on this unproductive time.

Resources and productivity: Large organizations with many meeting rooms often employ IT or audiovisual staff whose sole job is to facilitate meetings — for example, helping to connect projectors with laptops and finding appropriate adapters for different displays. More seamless solutions eliminate these tasks, allowing staff to focus on higher-value projects.

Collaboration Tools

One of the difficult aspects of working remotely is the inability to physically collaborate on projects in a group setting. Collaboration tools can allow that teamwork to continue even when employees are working remotely. These tools include document access and editing from multiple people at once, shared digital workspaces to whiteboard ideas, and the ability to pass ideas and information back and forth as needed. Even if teams aren't all working at the same time, these tools ensure documents remain up to date and synced for everyone who needs to work on them, regardless of when they access the files.

Virtual Meeting Environments

Meetings can continue as scheduled even when the attendees are in different locations thanks to innovations in virtual meeting environments. Hardware, such as webcams and microphones, are connected with software that allows employees to meet virtually. That virtual meeting software includes tools for screen sharing, giving presentations, chat rooms and note taking. Thanks to this technology, every presentation, chart or video can be shared by all attendees to ensure consistent and more in-depth communication. Recording meetings is also a feature, so team members can refer back to these presentations later as needed.

Monitors

Monitors may be one of the most overlooked aspects of working in an office, but they make a significant difference in productivity. Being able to have multiple applications open on multiple screens ensures less switching back and forth and quicker access to information. However, many people might not have multiple monitors in their home, so when looking to create a work-from-home environment, make sure to evaluate the value of having additional monitors. It's an investment that allows employees to stay productive and can help prevent eye strain.

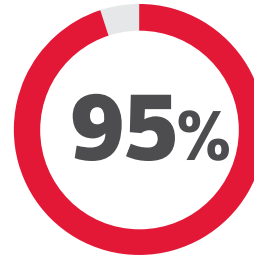
Docking Stations, Keyboards, and Mice

Similar to monitors, creating a home office environment will likely offer something you and your organization won't have at home: a setup that includes a docking station with a keyboard and mouse. A docking station is crucial for creating a successful homework environment if you have external monitors because it keeps all the cords organized while also dedicating some desk space to your laptop. A wireless keyboard and mouse can also allow for easier mobility and flexibility. Maybe most important of all, however, is how much more comfortable this makes you and your environment. Working from home can feel crowded and cramped if you don't organize your workspace well, potentially reducing your productivity.

Communication Tools

Once completing all these software installations and hardware setups, you must make sure you don't forget about actually being able to communicate with your co-workers as needed. Communication tools such as a messenger application or dedicated phone ensure that if you need to contact someone immediately but don't have the convenience of walking over to their desk to ask a question, you can still easily get the information you need.

Utilizing these tools and technologies will not only improve productivity but will allow employees to seamlessly work from any location and still feel connected as if they were physically in an office.



The portion of executives who believe their company could improve the effectiveness of teams by providing greater access to better-quality work from home facilities

CDW: A Collaboration Partner that Gets IT

The solution architects at CDW stand ready to help enterprises unlock business value through technology investments, with decades of experience assisting organizations of all sizes across the country. By partnering with CDW, business and IT leaders can be confident that their technology initiatives will run smoothly and achieve their objectives, from design and implementation to user adoption and ongoing management.

Expertise and experience: CDW's experts boast deep knowledge and years of experience in all aspects of collaboration, including hardware, software, integration and back-end support infrastructure. Through custom engagements, these experts can architect solutions that cater to each individual organization, ensuring long-term adoption and organizational integration.

Industry-leading partnerships: CDW has established partnerships with nearly every leading manufacturer in the IT space, including Cisco Systems, Samsung, APC and Lifesize. CDW's experienced professionals are certified and accredited through these partnerships to ensure the highest levels of expertise, and provide objective, vendor-agnostic advice.

End-to-end support: By assessing existing environments and then designing long-term strategies, CDW's solution architects help build out and implement solutions that focus on an organization's business goals — from beginning to end.

CDW's solutions and services can help you connect seamlessly for greater efficiency and productivity. To learn more, contact info@ae.cdw.com

The CDW Approach



ASSESS

Evaluate business objectives, technology environments, and processes; identify opportunities for performance improvements and cost savings.



DESIGN

Recommend relevant technologies and services, document technical architecture, deployment plans, "measures of success," budgets and timelines.



MANAGE

Proactively monitor systems to ensure technology is running as intended and provide support when and how you need it.



DEPLOY

Assist with product fulfillment, configuration, broad-scale implementation, integration and training.

Want to learn more about how advanced workplace technologies can modernize your meetings? Download "[The Modern Workforce Insight Report](#)" by CDW.

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