

Lessons Learned: Working Remotely



Penny Belluz,
Director of Operations/Partner
TELECO Integrated Technologies

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit, it was shocking how rapidly and quickly it affected all businesses. It brought new challenges and obstacles that had never presented themselves before. There was no roadmap to follow or previous pandemic help guides to reference. Suddenly, business owners and leaders had to pivot, adapt and, in some cases, re-invent themselves. Now almost 6-months into the "new normal," a new appreciation of the workforce has been created, as well as a great opportunity. An opportunity to reflect on lessons learned. A chance to evaluate and improve working remote strategies to become a superior, stronger, and more resilient business than ever before.

Productivity and Communication

When a quick deployment to working remotely happens with no IT planning, productivity and communication will suffer. Technology is key to making employees and customers communicate quickly and effectively. Cloud voice technology allows users to seamlessly move between their office desk phone, mobile phone, home office phone, or tablet while offering advanced security and telephony features such as mobility;

presence management, instant messaging, video calling and unified communication. Customer satisfaction increases when they can call one number and simultaneously ring all devices simultaneously, reducing wait time. Information and data also need to be retrieved quickly and efficiently. Additional time and effort should not be required to locate shared documents and resources. Cloud storage with synchronization keeps the most up-to-date version of a file available on all devices to all team members regardless of location. Seamless and effective voice and data communication are pivotal to increasing productivity because it provides your team with the correct people and information they need at the right moment.

Collaboration

With the right leadership and practices in place, remote workers can feel like part of a team, all working towards a common goal. Keep teams connected, no matter where they are, by integrating all forms of collaboration into one user interface: chat, instant messaging, document synchronization, shared files, cloud storage, meetings, project and task management, video conferencing, and team messaging are critical to a successful remote work collaboration strategy. Leveraging Microsoft collaboration tools like Teams has enabled all businesses, healthcare institutions, school districts, and other organizations as a way to interact with employees, customers, patients, and students as if they were in the same room.

Cybersecurity

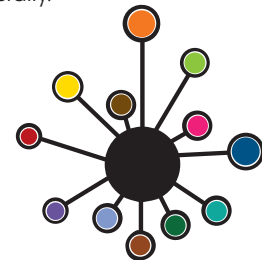
Working from home introduces additional security risks. According to a BitSight report, "Identifying Unique Risks of Work From Home Remote Office Networks," the findings revealed that "45% of companies had malware on their corporate-associated home networks." This is an alarming statistic. As you would expect, the majority of cybersecurity breaches are due to human error, and during this time, employees are feeling

vulnerable. Cybercriminals will feed off people's fears of COVID-19, making your remote workers prime targets. Now more than ever cybersecurity awareness training for employees is a necessity. It is not just technology that can protect you.

Employee

For first-time work at home employees, it can be challenging to differentiate between work life and home life. It's essential to help employees create a safe, healthy workspace that embraces wellness principles and practices. Employers have an obligation to protect employee's health and safety regardless of location, including physical and mental health. Employees may feel disconnected or overwhelmed by other in-house responsibilities like sharing space with a spouse or caring for children or elderly parents. All these additional stresses can affect mental health. Suddenly working remotely away from the office and the team's camaraderie can also make employees feel isolated and lonely. Stay connected! Have regular video check-in calls, team meetings and even team lunches. These video check-ins will continue to create an employee culture that is strong and vibrant.

In setting your remote workers up for success, be flexible and don't be afraid to try new things. Some of the best business lessons come from past experiences, good and bad. We are in unprecedented times, but this doesn't mean business can't continue to thrive. Engage with your technology partner and review your lessons learned and create a new technology plan. With a shift in approach and proper technology, you will see an immediate improvement in your remote workforce strategy that will help you navigate these challenging times successfully.



TELECO
Integrating Technologies

**For more information on remote work strategies
for your business, contact a TELECO sales representative
at 345-2900 or email sales@teleco.ca**