THE REMOTE LIFE

WHY BUSINESS IS CHANGING & HOW TO ADAPT QUICKLY

A Must Read for Every Business Leader

SUGARSHOT

TIPS AND TOOLS TO KEEP
YOUR EMPLOYEES PRODUCTIVE
AND HAPPY WHILE WORKING
FROM HOME...WITH A LITTLE
BIT OF SUGAR TO HELP
CONTENT GO DOWN EASIER.

CONTENTS

Why listen to us

Microsoft Partner | Silver Cloud Platform
Silver Cloud Productivity
Silver Small and Midmarket Cloud Solution

vmware

Clutch
TOP LA IT FIRMS

CISCO™

INFRAGARD
PARTNERSHIP FOR PROTECTION

Google
4.9/5 RATING

CLUTCH TOP 1000 COMPANIES
GLOBAL 2019

Inc.
5000

UNITED STATES

INTRODUCTION

**THE ABILITY TO TRANSITION
YOUR TEAM TO REMOTE WORK IS
INCREASINGLY VITAL FOR BUSINESSES.**

The global crisis surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic has made it clear that many companies are still not equipped to function remotely. While some may already allow remote work, 44% of companies don't allow remote work at all. Businesses are scrambling to set up remote employees and struggling to stay productive.

It is crucial to arm your employees for this transition with the right tools and procedures to work from home. Taking the time to establish security policies and provide your employees with the guidance they need to be successful will help ensure a successful changeover.

If the concept of a remote workforce makes your head spin, don't worry – you're not alone. And SugarShot is here to help.

In this guide, we'll share battle-tested strategies for moving to a remote workforce and share the best tools and technologies to keep your team productive and happy.

WHY SHOULD YOUR BUSINESS BE PREPARED TO GO REMOTE?

Beyond current concerns about COVID-19, many other scenarios may necessitate transitioning employees to a remote work environment:

and other entities now collaborate with cyber security specialists to better ensure their safety.

COST-SAVING MEASURES

SCHOOLS CLOSING DOWN

REDUCED OR PAUSED WORK TRAVEL

SUPPORTING CLIENTS OUT OF STATE

WORKER REQUESTS TO STAY HOME

INCREASED DIGITAL COMMUNICATION

RAPID WORKFORCE AUGMENTATION

You don't need to wait for some life-altering event to happen before setting up a remote workforce, either. There are plenty of benefits to being proactive about offering a work-from-home option to employees.

Companies that allow remote work have 25% lower employee turnover than those that don't. (Owl Labs)

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77% of remote employees say they're more productive when working from home. (CoSo Cloud)

CLICK FOR MORE

Organizations save on average $11,000 per year for every part-time telecommuter (or 21% profitability bump). (Forbes)

CLICK FOR MORE

HOW TO TRANSITION YOUR EMPLOYEES TO WORKING REMOTELY

6 STEPS

You'll need to do some upfront work before you can set your employees loose. You'll need to create structured training, policies and communication strategies to help housebound workers start on the right foot. **Here are six ways to prepare your business to work remote.**

1. Offer Guidance and Training to Employees

A flexible work policy won't always be an exciting notion for every employee. Older or less tech-savvy employees may have a hard time adapting to new technology, which can lead to frustration or confusion. Don't allow employees to feel like they're on their own when it comes to working remotely.

Dedicate time to train employees in advance of working from home, and follow up once they're in place to ensure they have everything they need. Schedule one-on-one meetings with each employee and a member of the IT department to review their work-from-home setup and show them how to log in to systems remotely.

Compile a few handbooks, tutorials, webinars or other educational tools on how to deal with time management, organization and communication while at home. Providing these resources to employees will demonstrate your company's desire to set them up for success.

2. Coordinate System Setups

If your employees are transitioning from desktop to laptop, will they need access to any specialized software? If you use industry-specific software, make sure your

IT department has a process in place to facilitate installation to accommodate users' needs efficiently.

3. Equipment Check-Outs

Not all of your employees may have laptops, desktop computers or printers at home. If necessary, prepare to check out the required equipment to employees and have a sign-out/sign-in log listing specific components, serial numbers, etc.

If employees take laptops home with them, another issue may arise – lost or stolen computers.

Audit your software and systems and document the immediate steps that you must take if a computer is lost or stolen to prevent sensitive information from getting into the wrong hands.

Bring-your-own-device (BYOD) policies are becoming more popular with the rise of employees using personal computers and smartphones for work. Many companies have trouble managing the ever-growing web of connected devices. Employees often end up accessing private company data on unsecured networks and downloading unauthorized applications.

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Security is an essential feature of a quality BYOD policy, and without it, you could risk a security breach.

4. Implement a Security Policy

A remote workforce means that team members will be able to access company systems from home as well as public WiFi networks. It's vital to have an established policy in place to clarify essential security measures.

Sensitive information must be protected. Secure passwords, cloud storage, and virtual private networks (VPNs) are all crucial elements to consider when implementing your security policy.

Distribute your security policy to all employees, and send out important policy reminders regularly. Every team member should understand the role they play in maintaining data integrity – and the severity of what could happen if they don't follow the rules.

Read: 7 Critical Los Angeles Computer Security Tips to Protect Your Business

5. Set Expectations & Remote Work Policies

Transitioning to a temporary remote work situation can be challenging. Productivity may not be at its highest initially, especially if employees are also working with spouses and children at home. Setting some agreed-upon standards will help keep everyone's performance in check.

Making your expectations known helps create structure and accountability. Establishing policies on working hours and communication methods can avoid misunderstandings and streamline workflows.

6. Establish Regular, Structured Check-Ins

While some employees can work successfully with little to no supervision, you may want to consider establishing regular check-in times. Especially in times of stress, it's easy for people to feel distracted and get off-course with deadlines and assignment expectations. Maintaining regular check-ins provides a touch point that strengthens connection, camaraderie and trust while monitoring work progress.

THE MICROSOFT PRODUCT SUITE

For years, Microsoft have prepared their product suite to support the modern workplace. If you're not leveraging the power of the Microsoft product suite, you should consider whether it's the right fit for your business.
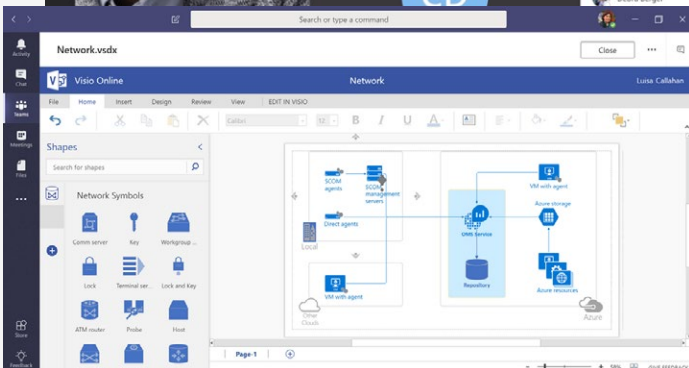
Microsoft Teams

Microsoft Teams is a hub for team work. It's a unified communication and collaboration platform that combines persistent workplace chat, video meetings, file storage, and application integration.
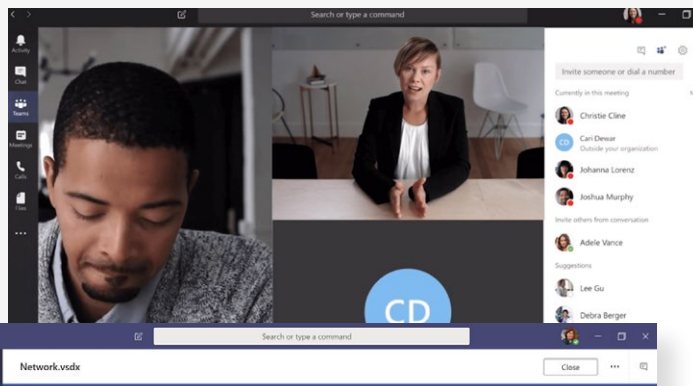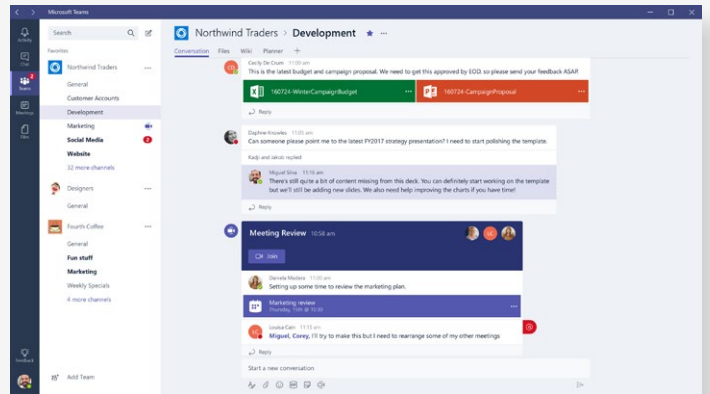
Video Chat

Microsoft Teams offers many impressive and valuable video conferencing features. Users can host 1080p calls with up to 250 members.

File Collaboration

Collaborate on files together for the first time, integrating Office 365's virtual sharing features within Teams itself.

FIND OUT MORE

14 MUST-HAVE REMOTE WORKING TOOLS

Ensuring that you have the right security, collaboration, conferencing, and project management tools to maintain remote productivity and efficiency will pay off now and in future scenarios.

SECURITY TOOLS

Using a private internet connection is a significant security vulnerability. A virtual private network (VPN) can help.

VPNs encrypt your web traffic to a server, which the VPN company operates. This way, trackers see the VPN's IP address, not yours. VPNs can also hide your location to protect you or other employees when working abroad.

If you are in an industry that uses specific applications requiring secure access protocols and storage, you may need an NGFW and remote access security software.

Cisco, Fortinet, HP and Dell/Sonicwall are all providers of technologies that give secure access to centralized systems. Which remote access software is suitable for you depends entirely on your business use case. If you're unsure which technology you need, SugarShot can assess your infrastructure and help you choose a cost-effective security solution.

CLOUD PRODUCTIVITY SUITES

Office 365

Microsoft Office 365 brings together best-in-class productivity apps, intelligent cloud services and advanced security. Office 365 Business is an integrated bundle of business apps, including Word, Excel, and Outlook and productivity tools like OneDrive and Teams. All tools are updated monthly with the latest features and security updates.

Cost: Starting at $8.25 per month, per user

G Suite

G Suite is an integrated suite of secure cloud collaboration and productivity apps powered by Google Cloud. G Suite comprises of Gmail, Hangouts, Calendar, and Currents for communication; Drive for storage; Docs, Sheets, Slides, Keep, Forms, and Sites for productivity and collaboration; and, depending on the plan, an Admin panel and Vault for managing users and services.

Cost: The Basic plan is $6 per month, per user for up to 30GB of cloud storage. Business and Enterprise plans are available for a slightly higher cost with unlimited cloud storage.

COLLABORATION TOOLS

Office 365

Microsoft Teams is a chat-based workspace in Office 365. Teams are groups of people brought together for work or shared interests in one central hub. Teams consist of channels, and each channel is built around a topic, like projects, events or a department name. Channels are where you hold meetings, have conversations, and work on files together.

Cost: Starting at $5.00 per month, per user

Slack

Slack is essentially a chat room for your whole company, designed to replace email as your primary method of communication and sharing. Its workspaces allow you to organize communications for group discussions and allows for private messages to share information and files in one place.

Cost: Slack offers a free plan for small teams that allows you to access 10,000 recent messages. Paid plans start at $6.67 per person and go up from there.

VIDEO CONFERENCE SOLUTIONS

Skype & Microsoft Teams

Microsoft's Skype is a VoIP service that provides video chat and voice calls between computers, tablets and mobile devices over the Internet. Skype also offers instant messaging services, screen recording and desktop/browser sharing. Users may transmit text, video, audio and images. Teams has built in video capabilities from Microsoft using Skype's underlying infrastructure.

Cost: Starting at $5.00 per month, per user

Zoom

Zoom is an easy, reliable cloud platform for video and audio conferencing, collaboration, chat and webinars across mobile devices, desktops and telephones. Zoom allows users to join virtual meetings from anywhere on any device. It supports up to 1,000 video participants and 49 videos on-screen.

Cost: Starting at $14.99 per month for one host and up to 100 participants. Enterprise plans are available starting at $19.99 per month per host and allow up to 1,000 participants.

Google Hangouts

Google Hangouts is a communications platform that enables voice, text and video chats. Hangouts is built into Google+, Gmail, YouTube and Google Voice, plus there are Hangouts apps for iOS, Android and the web.

Cost: Free. You'll just need a Gmail account to set up a Hangouts meeting.

Trello

Trello is a Kanban-style collaboration tool that organizes your projects into boards. Trello allows you to organize tasks, assign project owners, and keep updated on task progress – all in one glance.

Cost: $9.99 per month, per user

Basecamp

Basecamp is a project management tool that breaks up your work into separate projects. Each project contains everything related to the work at hand; all the people involved, every discussion, every document, file, task, and relevant date.

Cost: Starting at $99 per month

Asana

Asana simplifies team-based work management, enabling your team to stay focused on their goals. Asana's cloud-based software can integrate with existing tools to build project plans, coordinate tasks and hit deadlines.

Cost: A free plan is available for small teams with limited needs. Paid plans start at $10.99 per month, per user. Asana also offers custom enterprise plans for larger requirements.

Are you concerned about the productivity levels of your remote workforce? While most employers assess remote teams on a task-related vs. time-related basis, it can be challenging to keep goals on track when working remotely.

Time-tracking tools can help monitor projects and establish realistic timelines. Applications such as Hubstaff and TSheets can be incorporated to assess workflows and adjust deadlines if necessary.
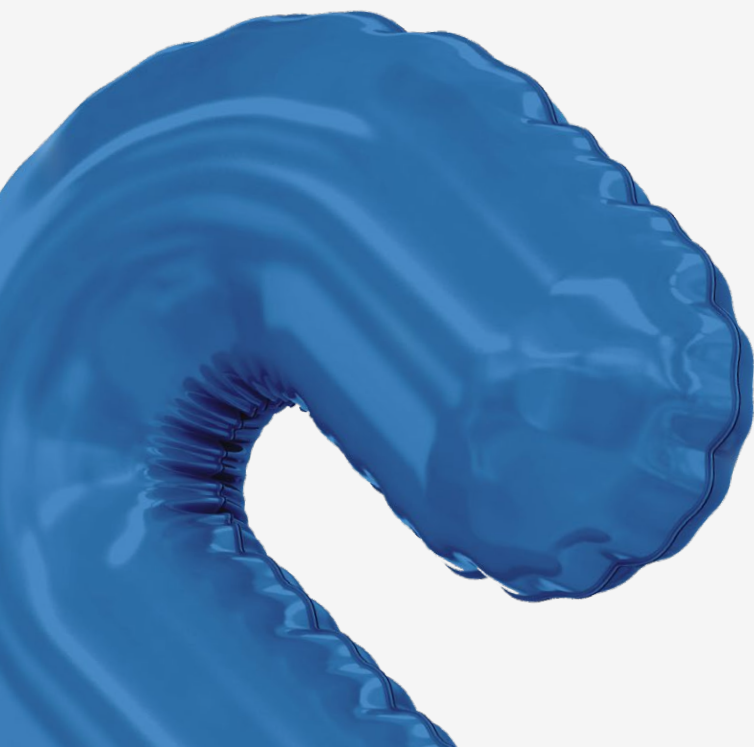
PREPARE FOR THE REMOTE WORK TRANSITION

Unexpected circumstances are challenging for everyone. If you're struggling to transition your team to a remote working environment right now, we wanted to share the process that we walk through at SugarShot. Our Continuity Planning Process for COVID-19 consists of the following steps:

STEP 1 - RISK ASSESSMENT

STEP 2 - CONTINUITY STRATEGY

STEP 3 - SOLUTION RECOMMENDATION

STEP 4 - SOLUTION DEPLOYMENT

STEP 5 - ONGOING MONITORING

STEP 6 - TRAINING

STEP X - EMERGENCY READINESS

You can follow this steps outlined above, using the process on the following pages. SugarShot can also deploy rapid strategic assessments to help you spend dollars efficiently and economically across a bespoke solution mix for your business. if you need...just sayin'.

STEP 1 - RISK ASSESSMENT

Get clear on where your current gaps are, and prioritize them in terms of urgency and consequence of failure.

- Workflow assessment
- Business risk assessment
- Network assessment
- Needs analysis workshop
- Virtual workforce modelling

STEP 2 - CONTINUITY STRATEGY

The right strategy produces the right outcomes. Consider what continuity looks like for you and how to maximize security in every scenario.

- Gap analysis report & risks
- Governance strategy
- Business continuity workflow
- Documentation recommendations
- Dashboards

STEP 3 - SOLUTION RECOMMENDATION

With the right strategy documented and clear, it becomes easier to prescribe the right solutions to assist. Consider:

- Collaboration & Work
- Conferencing
- Security
- Stability & backup
- Governance & compliance
- Security recommendations
- Solution deployment schedule

STEP 4 - SOLUTION DEPLOYMENT

Instead of a haphazard approach to deployent, make it cohesive, aggregated into a project and streamlined.

- Physical vs. cloud / platform
- Remote infrastructure configuration
- Dashboards / monitoring
- Document licensing / renewals
- Hardware purchases
- Virtual hardware
- Who owns what

STEP 5 - ONGOING MONITORING

Setup isn't enough. You need to make sure there's protocols and mehanics in place to monitor the performance and security of your solutions.

- Dashboard reports
- Emergency alerts
- Ongoing check ins with owners
- Having an external support company

STEP 6 - TRAINING & COMMUNITY

Your team needs training. A program facilitated by a platform can be really helpful but it's not a once off. Ongoing reminders, especially when virtual are essential.

Also, setting up processes to foster community when distance is a factor retains culture but also increases productivity when done well.

STEP X - EMERGENCY READINESS

The current crisis is one scenario but it's important to be ready for others. Throw around the most common scnearios and make sure the business is ready and agile to react to those situations if and when they arise.

- Scenario planning
- Platform readiness
- Event triggers
- Hardware stockpiling
- Contingency planning

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WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?
THE FUTURE OF WORK

The question that businesses and organizations will soon need to face is, "What's Next?" It's an interesting converstaion that we believe different brands will approach in different ways.

What is clear at least, is that it won't be the same. We will enter a 'new normal' and be forced to navigate business, technology and work setups. Once you move from survival to future oriented conversations, you should consider what role technology can and should play in helping you look ahead and facilitate a powerful and enabled work environment.

TECHNOLOGY.
DIFFERENTLY.

SUGARSHOT

WE CAN

HELP.

FIND OUT

HOW.