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O2 business

How to make flexible working more effective

Take a new way to work: part 1

What if we could work when we wanted?

The experience of lockdown will have posed plenty of questions about the value of flexible working to your organisation.

If about half of your workforce want more flexibility, that still leaves plenty who want to be in the office, meaning employees need the ability to work anytime, and anywhere. So your infrastructure needs to be as flexible as your people.

This guide looks at four key areas affected by the adapted ways in which we now work in light of a global pandemic.

Devices: they need to be smart enough and tough enough

Management: it needs to work everywhere on every device

Collaboration: 5G and tools such as Microsoft Teams can help people and customers stay connected

Security: you need a Zero Trust approach, for endpoints and networks

45%

45% of people agree they want flexible working for better work-life balance

38%

38% of people want the freedom to work at a time that suits them

Whether your people are night owls or they're up with the lark, a more flexible approach to work gives them more chance to perform at their best, wherever it is they want to work. All they need is the right tools.

Devices: tough and smart

These days, rugged devices can provide high functionality too. Your users won't feel they have to compromise on tech innovation or usability in order to use a robust device.

The office and the home environment can be pretty hazardous places, from hot drinks to flagstoned kitchen floors, so a tough device that users are also happy to be seen with is an extra plus.

For example, the Samsung Galaxy XCover Pro has all the style of a consumer device while still meeting military standards (MIL-STD-810G) for drop tests and submersion in water.

Devices like this are also backed by a complete ecosystem of rugged accessories including cases, docks, mounts, chargers and keyboards.

57%

Men are 57% more likely to damage their phone in water, though 40% of women admit that they've damaged their phone in some way while using it in the bathroom

Source: PC Magazine*

Two computers in one

Today's smartphones are becoming true replacements for laptops, with mobile-ready versions of Microsoft Office 365 and 5G connectivity.

The latest Samsung devices also incorporate Samsung DeX, which effectively gives users a second computer to work with on a full-sized monitor.

Office 365 and most standard Android apps work within DeX, so with a bluetooth keyboard and mouse, your team gets a true desktop experience, right there at their fingertips. Then, when they have to move, they simply unplug and take everything they've done with them – no need for a laptop.

Think about:

- Rugged devices in the home or the office, reducing the need for remote support
- Phones that replace laptops as the primary productivity tool
- Great user experiences, with familiar Android interfaces and mobile-ready apps and cloud services

Management: everything under control

The point is that flexible working can't work unless IT teams have the visibility and control of devices and networks that they need.

Which means that a focus on connectivity needs a focus on device management and security.

The hallmarks of a great management approach include:

- An invisible experience for the user, so they can get on with being productive
- Simple to roll out – giving you a single view of everything
- Easy provisioning and enrolment
- Secure and scalable

Our Endpoint Management solutions are designed to provide this kind of simplicity and visibility.

They include options for a variety of Gartner-approved vendors, incorporating device, application and identity management. And, with O_2 Managed Services you have the option of handing the management and heavy lifting over to us – giving your team the flexibility they need to work wherever they choose to.

58%

58% of workers think it is important for their employers to focus on connectivity

The extra layer

It helps when the devices themselves contribute to the management and security process. For example, Samsung Enterprise Edition combines devices, services and the Knox Security Suite, which simplifies configuration and deployment, as well as building security into the core of the device.

This approach adds another layer of protection while taking away more of the complexities of remote management. It includes four years of firmware updates, next-day doorstep replacement for failed devices and three years of enhanced service support.

Easier for everyone

All of this makes life easier for administrators. But the real value is in the experience of the people who have to use them – your team.

With this kind of seamless protection and support, your people can be creative and productive everywhere, without worrying about the tools they are using.

Think about:

- Security that doesn't get in the way
- End-to-end visibility and devices with protection built-in
- Simplified deployment and management
- Flexible, scalable security and control

Apart together

Lockdown has been a proof of concept on a huge scale for flexible working. The economic benefits for organisations and individuals are still emerging, but the real test has been of productivity and collaboration.

Can people working from home really work together as easily as they can in an office?

> We use Microsoft Teams… it works beautifully… I like to contact people but not with all the gubbins around it.
>
> **PA at a large insurance company**

Conferencing and collaboration solutions like Microsoft Teams have come of age during 2020. And with the arrival of 5G, even some of the challenges around home wifi can be overcome.

Video and voice conferences have a number of advantages over face-to-face meetings:

- You don't need to book a room
- They can be spontaneous and quick – if everyone has five minutes to spare right now, you can make the call
- There is no need to travel anywhere – this has been one of the biggest savings already achieved by many organisations
- It's easy to share files and work on them together, either during a call or on Teams
- Users can blur their surroundings on video calls, so it doesn't matter where they are
- 41% of people want to take fewer business trips for a better work-life balance
- 39% want to take fewer business trips to protect the environment

74%

74% of companies are planning to shift permanently to more remote working

Ultimately, remote collaboration is a question of personality and culture. Some people prefer having others around – they enjoy the buzz of office life.

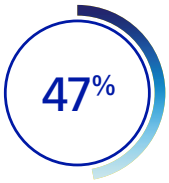
> If you want a really good way not to do anything on your to-do list, go to the office...
>
> **IT director for a local authority**

The key is to offer the choice, so that people can work and collaborate in the way that is most useful for the task in hand.

We may be moving to a world where offices are meeting places with hot desks, rather than fixed places of work. And as more and more Millennials enter the workforce, a culture of flexibility and environmental responsibility will become a decisive factor in the hunt to find and keep the best talent. The onus will also be on organisations to make sure that they can facilitate talent that wants to work when and how they want to.

Think about:

- Home networks that are up to the job – 5G can help
- Individual needs – how many people would rather be in the office than at home?
- Using collaborative tools like Teams to replace email and phones calls for routine communication
- The value of a large office with fixed workspaces – do you need more flexible accommodation?



47% of Millennials would leave their current organisation to work a full-time remote job

Connect everything

Working anywhere begins with a reliable network connection.

We're the biggest mobile network in the UK with over 32.6 million connections. We're also proud winners of Uswitch's Best Network for Coverage award for three years running – voted for by the people who matter most, our customers.

We're also at the forefront of the 5G revolution, providing the expertise and support you need to drive the change it makes possible for your organisation.

You get simple, transparent tariffs that flex to meet your needs, along with individual, shared or aggregated data plans. We also offer handy Bolt Ons, like Teams calling and email, and we can provide flexible financing for hardware, software and services.

We offer more than just mobile, we can support your entire communications and security requirements. Plus, we like to offer that little bit more with O_2 Recycle, O_2 Wifi hotspots, Priority and O_2 Open.

Zero Trust

Solutions like Samsung Knox Suite and O_2 Unified Endpoint Management provide some of the core elements of a Zero Trust approach to security.

For a true Zero Trust deployment, your policy needs to encompass the whole infrastructure, including the mobile network.

It's all about visibility and the assumption that trust is a critical vulnerability, even once people are inside the firewall.

The right users need access to the right data and applications, no matter where they are. But that's all they need; Zero Trust means limiting access and having constant visibility of everything that is happening, from the core to the endpoint.

This is where solutions like Samsung Knox, Samsung Enterprise Edition and O_2 Unified Endpoint management come into play. They have the Zero Trust principle of "never trust, always verify" built in and they allow it to be applied without imposing too many procedures on your users.

We provide protection across your business, whether that's in the office, at home or on the move.

- **Vulnerability Management** identifies assets that are exposed, so you can close the door on potential weaknesses
- **Cyber Threats Surveillance** reveals your true digital footprint and deals with any threats, including fraudulent sites and fake content
- **Identity Verification** protects your customers and your business from identity fraud by making interactions safe, simple and secure

So many threats now can find their way past even the most digitally-savvy users. Zero Trust recognises this and helps to reduce the risk of user error, without getting in the way of the productivity and collaboration, two key benefits of flexible working.

Think about:

- Your 'protect surface' – where is the risk greatest among users, devices, applications and the network?
- Identification and verification – how do you enforce it and keep it enforced without compromising the user experience?
- How your management and security solutions work together to provide the control and protection you need
- Endpoints that make Zero Trust easy to apply

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So, what does it all mean?

People keep saying that things will never be the same again. But they haven't been for a long time.

It's almost ten years since we closed our UK headquarters in one of the first large-scale experiments in flexible and remote working. It worked for us then, and it's working for many more organisations now.

This is an amazing opportunity to move to a more human and environmentally-responsible way of working – one that actually improves productivity and employee motivation.

As this report shows, it can only be done if IT teams have the visibility and control they need. The technology is already there, in the shape of 5G, collaboration tools like Teams and the protection and management of Samsung Enterprise Edition and our security solutions. And now, the cultural shift needed is beginning to happen too.

To see how truly flexible working that's the secure and productive way forward for your organisation should be, read The Flexible Future of Work report or call us on 0800 955 5590.

Download the report

For full details of all data sources, see "The Flexible Future of Work" report published by O_2, based on research by ICM Unlimited.

* https://uk.pcmag.com/smartphones/15997/infographic-smartphone-damage-101

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