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How to make the office more productive

Take a new way to work: part 3

What if we still need the office?

"Recent data has shown that more than 1/3 of UK workers hold some negative perception towards workers working flexibly."

Dr Chung, The Flexible Future of Work report.

In just a few months, remote working has become the new normal for many of us. For some, this has been a completely new and alien experience. For others, it's been the natural next step in what they are already pretty comfortable with.

While many workers have embraced working from home with gusto, there are those who are equally as eager to return to the familiarity of an office. When living in shared accommodation or dealing with the complexities of parenthood, the sanctuary of a collaborative office environment can often provide the focus needed to just get the work done – no matter how good your remote-working set up is.

30% admit that working from home can be lonely

Source: The Flexible Future of Work

26% miss socialising with colleagues

Source: The Flexible Future of Work

Research suggests that employees tend to get the most satisfaction when working remotely for approximately two days per week. Go beyond this, and the increased sense of isolation can start to outweigh the benefits of freedom and flexibility.

The solution required to appease both sides of the remote-worker coin needs to be a flexible one. And, if we still need the office to ensure productivity across the board, then employers need to up their game. In this guide we look at the three key areas that need to be considered as we move toward a new era in how we all work.

Re-design for optimised collaboration: create an office environment with flexibility, mobility and collaboration in mind

Embrace cloud applications: utilise technology that allows seamless and compliant access 24/7

Keep everyone connected: ensure that your digital infrastructure supports your entire team, wherever they are

Re-design for collaboration

The workplace should be the ideal place for producing great work. However, many offices aren't equipped to provide the space needed to increase productivity and satisfaction amongst their staff.

Despite their popularity in recent years, there's a growing body of evidence to suggest that open-plan offices can often be pretty bad at encouraging collaboration as they reduce face-to-face communication by as much as 70%.

It's clear that organisations need to design spaces around how people actually work. The key? Try balancing the desire for valuable team chit-chat against the need for areas where focus is required without distractions.

Huddle spots

A good place to start is by taking a closer look at your meeting rooms. Are they currently serving their purpose? Moving away from traditional layouts and outdated interiors allows for the introduction of huddle spots where teams can meet to bounce ideas around in an inclusive environment.

Get techy

Once you have the space right, filling it with devices that aid and improve collaboration is essential. Technology that connects mobile devices to display screens make meetings easier to manage – and ultimately, more enjoyable.

"You welcome them into a space that's on-brand and a little off-piste. Pop your details into a tablet to unlock the meeting room. The one you reserved on your phone before you left this morning. Take that phone out again and instantly project your slide deck onto the 4K screen. It's a knockout. Later you connect some remote working colleagues to add their expertise and thrash out the details. A good day in a great office."

Equip your staff with smartphones that have the power to replace laptops so they can move seamlessly between meetings with little loss of engagement. Devices such as Samsung's latest range incorporate Samsung Dex, which gives users an entire second computer to work with on a full-sized monitor. Meaning that all staff have to do is simply unplug and move to the next hangout space – virtual or physical.

The power of IoT

With more people working from home, space will need to be managed more efficiently, meaning that workable hot desking spaces are a must. With employees being able to move between the office and home with ease during the week it is important that they don't feel pushed or isolated into sticking to one set environment.

Organisations can avoid this anxiety by utilising IoT technology that automatically tracks capacity. This way, anyone working from home knows whether they'll be able to get a meeting room if they drop by the office on any given day.

Embrace cloud applications

It's hard to imagine how we would have coped without the cloud during lockdown. Of course, there were plenty of reasons to migrate before the global pandemic hit, but if 2020 has taught us anything it's that the ability to carry on working from where we left off, on any device, anywhere is essential for productivity.

By 2022, 55–60% of organisations will use an external service provider's cloud-managed service, up from 30% in 2018.

If your staff are splitting their time between home and being on-site,, they'll need all of their work available on the cloud so they can move easily between locations. Thanks to Google Docs and Microsoft 365, working and collaborating online has never been easier. Devices with pre-installed productivity apps are particularly helpful for this way of working. Samsung devices, for example, have Microsoft apps pre-installed. That's seamless, reliable productivity, right there in your pocket.

For ease and simplicity, some employees will suggest using their personal devices. Implement a Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) scheme to make it easy to access data securely from any device at home, in a coffee shop or in the office. Solutions like our Unified Endpoint Management can provide uncomplicated remote enrolment that allows updates to be pushed from the cloud. Most importantly, if the device is lost or stolen, you can automatically lock and wipe corporate data. Tools like advanced VPN ensure robust device compliance that doesn't compromise on your organisation's security, no matter the device or where your employees choose to work from.

By adding that extra layer of protection to your solution, employees' individual devices can now help contribute to the management and security process. Look for integrated solutions like Samsung's devices that effortlessly streamline, configure and deploy whilst installing security into the very core of the device.

Keep everyone connected

Remote working is a powerful tool in the race for optimum productivity that can often overtake conventional office-based working. Plus, there are the economic benefits to consider – a very appetising thought during these challenging times, especially when next year's budget is on the agenda.

In a 2020 Gartner survey of CFOs in the US, 13% of respondents noted they had already made cost reductions in real estate expenses.

Remote working is a clear-cut way to significantly reduce your overheads. So why have an office at all? The answer is that many people require a combination of home and office to consistently provide their best work. Being able to downsize while boosting productivity is a big win for businesses, but don't be too quick to assume that getting rid of the office entirely is the best option. Embracing remote working at the expense of the office could risk losing valuable input from talented individuals.

Adjust your budgets to develop digital and physical infrastructure in a way that reflects where your employees spend most of their time. Make sure meetings and social events involve everyone, whether they join in-person or remotely.

45%

45% of workers want flexibility for work-life balance

Source: The Flexible Future of Work – Employee connectivity research report

38%

38% want the flexibility to work at a time that suits them

Source: The Flexible Future of Work – Employee connectivity research report

Remember to judge all employees by the same standards, whether they're mostly office-based or working from home. It's productivity that counts, not whether you can physically see an individual face-to-face or not. Make an effort to recognise everyone's contribution, especially when weighing up the next round of benefits or promotions. Rewarding presence in the office over actual hard work is a recipe for a resentful workforce and will only encourage talented employees to look elsewhere at organisations that encourage them to work in the way that best suits them.

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So, what does the future hold?

The office isn't dead.
But it should live up to new expectations.

Now that we've seen the profitable benefits of remote working on our overheads and staff productivity, it's unlikely that we'll go back to the way things were. 2020 has merely put its foot on the gas pedal and accelerated workplace culture towards a cloud-enabled, employee-led experience, and it's one that we're proud to be a part of.

Whichever way you choose to move forward in this new age, our award-winning network and proven technology, combined with the rugged reliability of Samsung's devices, can give you the agility and governance you need to thrive. We believe in the value of enabling our customers to work in the best way that benefits them, and luckily, we have the tools, technology and support to back it up.

Remote working has a lot to commend it: higher productivity, lower costs, increased wellbeing. But it's never going to fully replace the reliability of a collaborative office. Fortunately, with your employees now free to work anytime and anywhere, the office can become anything you want it to be. Now is the perfect time to explore fresh designs and new technology to realise the potential of truly flexible working.

Ready to create the perfect blend of remote working and on-site collaboration? Get in touch to find out how we can help you make the flexible future of work seamless and secure. Call us on 0800 955 5590.

Contact us

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

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