



Essentials for Empowering Remote Work

COVID-19 is forcing many businesses to embrace remote work. The technology needed to enable people to work from home has existed for years, but working from home may be new for you and your employees. Here are some essentials you need to address to empower your remote workers.

What technology do you have or need? Your people may have business laptops and phones, or perhaps you already allowed employees to bring their own devices (BYOD) to work. So, remote work is not going to be as much of a change. Your people already have the tools they need.

However, a business that was not doing any of this before might need new hardware. You cannot expect your employees to lug heavy desktop computers home.

You may need to ask employees to use their own personal computers and phones. That is going to require some ground rules. For one, no Windows 7: that operating system is out of date and no longer supported by Microsoft, which means employees could be putting corporate data at risk of cyberattack.

You can also take the following precautions to secure off-site online activity:

- Establish strict policies for securing devices accessing business networks.
- Communicate reporting procedures for the loss/theft of a device.
- Enable mobile monitoring management of all devices that give IT access.
- Encourage regular backup of mobile devices.
- Educate employees to regularly update firewall and anti-virus software.
- Prohibit third-party apps.
- Set devices to make users aware that they may be connecting to unsafe networks.

Challenges of the Remote Work Environment

In the office environment, there is business technology consistency. Now, you are supporting various hardware and networking solutions of different quality. This can be a headache to get up and running, yet you need to support your remote employees. What kind of IT desk help will you offer? People are now working wherever they are, whenever they want.

The “wherever they are” part can raise some issues. Employees could log in from public parks, coffee shops (if any are open), or while at home with the kids. This means fresh threats. Laptops can get stolen. People out in the world could look over your employee’s shoulder and read what is on the screen. Kids can spill juice in a split second! Install remote management software to enable a complete wipe of lost or stolen laptops. Also, implement encryption, data backup, and screen-locking features to help keep data secure.

Saying people can work “whenever they want” also has its challenges. With everyone stuck at home, a 9–5 schedule for office productivity may be impossible. Toddlers do not really understand that “Mommy’s working,” do they?

It is a good idea to establish clear expectations from the outset:

- How will progress be demonstrated?
- How can employees check-in with managers?
- What are the expectations for team collaboration?
- What software will be used for group chat, video, or conference calling?
- What is acceptable business-hour flexibility?

If you are going to allow people to set their own hours, IT support needs to be flexible, too.

Supporting Remote Work

The good news is that remote work can be productive, too. In fact, a Stanford University study found remote employees did an extra day’s work per person per week.

We can help you set up your technology to support your remote staff. We will make sure your hardware is up to scratch, secure those mobile devices, and be your remote IT help desk at odd hours. Contact us today at 253-881-5055!