

A man with short hair and glasses, wearing a denim shirt, is sitting at a desk. He is holding a mobile phone to his ear with his right hand and looking towards the left. On the desk in front of him is a laptop and a white mug. The background is slightly blurred, showing what appears to be a home office or a modern workspace. The entire image has a dark purple overlay.

Key Digital

Work Together, Anywhere

Insights into agile and
remote working

Introduction

Agile and remote working can ensure business continuity in the short term - and provide an opportunity in the long run.

It might feel like there's a lot of uncertainty around. But one thing you can be sure of is the need for us all to adapt and push forwards. Because if you don't you could fall behind.

That's why the growth in agile and remote working is accelerating. And it's expected to continue over the coming months and years. Right now, businesses are learning of the exceptional benefits there for the taking.

This ebook provides some insights into some of the things to consider in today's agile and remote working environment.



How industry leaders can support their remote workers

In the current economic climate, remote working is turning from an occasional stint to a long-term necessity. This creates organisational, administrative and individual challenges - but there are solutions out there to help you meet them. Across the globe, businesses are responding to the current climate by switching to remote working at scale - but this is a major challenge, not just for business leaders, but for individuals across the network.

Your employees may find it disruptive, unsettling and stressful. You need to do all you can to help them adjust, establish normality and feel confident and happy.



Reassure and motivate employees who are remote working

You need to ensure that you're providing the support needed to give the most help to your remote workers. These key areas are a good place to start:

Social interaction

Communication is king. You need to make your presence felt across the network with regular interactions.

Encourage frequent dialogue between line managers and their teams to assess satisfaction and happiness in their working lives. Create forums and community groups to provide a platform for sharing ideas and providing feedback as well as enjoy some fun with work colleagues as they would in a normal office environment. Have your HR teams provide guidance and advice on good working behaviours whilst at home.

Overall, it's vital to promote a message of support for health and wellbeing as providing this for the whole organisation is your number one priority. This will show to your people that despite the circumstances, they are most certainly not alone.

Setting collaborative goals

You as a business leader need to outline a clear vision for the organisation, share it with your teams and show them what their individual role within it is.

Group objectives and targets have always been a key motivator for employees. If they feel like they're part of a team working towards something, they'll be more productive - especially if they can see their own contribution to the collective effort.

And not only will they be more productive, but they'll also feel less isolated through the additional contact with their colleagues - a vital factor in maintaining health and wellbeing.

Supporting a good work/life balance

Supporting a good work/life balance. One benefit to remote working is the greater flexibility it offers your people. Make sure they don't think that, just because they're not in the office, they have to sit at their laptop all day in case they're needed.

There are many added pressures created by the current climate. Not only are they working in unfamiliar environments, they may have to look after their children or loved ones. You must assure them that they have absolute freedom and total support to fit their work around these needs.

And by allowing your employees a degree of autonomy over what they do, when they do it and who they do it with, you'll motivate and empower them to work with their teams.

So, encourage them to find a work/life balance that works for them, trust them to meet their responsibilities and try to support and understand their needs and initiatives.

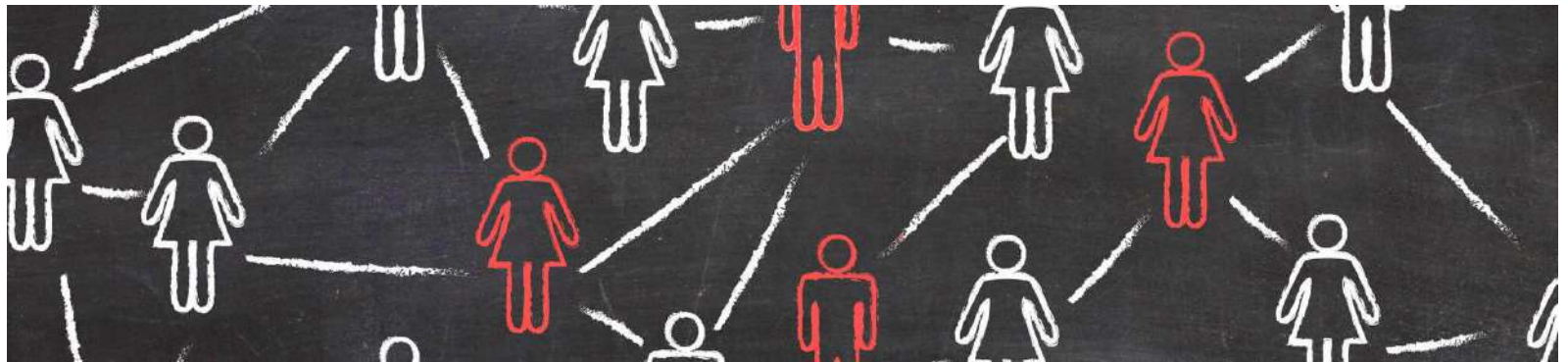
The challenge facing business leaders

As individuals face their own challenges with remote working, so too does the wider organisation.

One difficulty lies in the ability to communicate with your teams. Emails and video conferencing have their limits, one-to-ones won't feel the same and social interactions are reduced. But it's crucial that leaders find away to provide support and motivation.

Technology plays a significant part in this - but it's a double-edged sword. It provides functions that make remote working more feasible, but also complicate life by making devices more complex.

Ask the right questions, analyse the needs of your employees and business, and find the technological solutions that work for you. Then you'll maintain productivity and enable future growth.



The questions you need to ask

These are tough questions to face up to, but doing so with an open mind will lead to long term benefits for your business:

Is our IT infrastructure resilient to this increased demand for remote working?

Do our employees have everything they need to work remotely effectively?

Do they have the necessary technical knowledge to use everything easily?

What business-critical processes do we normally undertake in an office location?

And does our IT team have the capabilities to provide support remotely?

Give each question due diligence and work quickly to fill any gaps, or risk business continuity dropping.



Empower remote workers with technology

You might quickly discover that you may not have the right technology solutions in place to support effective remote working. So, what can you do?

Long-term you can complete a detailed experiential audit of your existing IT infrastructure and make a plan for its review. But in the short term, you may need to make some quick adjustments in order to address the most immediate and challenging issues. For instance;

Can your people access online workspace and documents?

Are they restricted due to a poor VPN experience or connectivity issues?

Is their device set up correctly for remote working?

Do they still need access to printing for documents such as orders and contracts etc?

Do they have the right digital tools to collaborate?

If you need help addressing any of these challenges, employ the expertise of a third-party company such as Key Digital - who offer a wide range of digital solutions, as well as insight into connecting with people and promoting collaboration.

The 3 R's of remote working

When planning for mass remote working, focusing on these three principles will allow you to adapt, and leverage your teams individual and collective strengths.

Role Clarification

Prioritise the development of clear boundaries and guidelines for what you expect from people in your organisation.

Clarifying roles and expectations will give your people a firm foundation from which to meet expectations and aspirations, manage their time, and understand their requirements.

Not only will this help keep people on track, but it will also prevent the more ambitious or hard-working individuals from becoming burned out.

Regular communication

The best leaders are those who listen, communicate with trust and respect, inquire about workload and progress without micromanaging and regularly reach out to their teams.

Ask these quick questions each week:

How are you?

What have you done?

What are you working on?

And where do you need help?

This allows individuals to take ownership of their habits and behaviours and make major leaps in productivity of their own accord.

Don't forget, there are differences between individuals in how they'll view the challenge - some will relish it; some will find it daunting.

Promote a message of accomplishment over activity and make sure that every individual is given the same opportunity and attention.

Retain connections

Remote working makes maintaining personal connections more important than ever.

Amidst today's challenges, It's easy to become overly focused on how you are going to deliver on various metrics for business success and delivery of work. But this would be a major mistake.

Think of innovative ways to provide 'virtual water coolers' - digital environments where your employees can talk about what they're up to and express themselves. Collaboration platforms such as Microsoft Teams are ideal for this.

A workplace revolution is here & your business must change

In the last 20 years, technology has transformed how we live, how we interact and, crucially for Key Digital, how we work. Over the last few years alone there has been the move towards cloud computing and, what's been termed as, a mobile-first approach to the work environment.

If you cut through the jargon, what we're really saying is that we're giving people the ability to work and be productive anytime, anywhere and from any device. Employees are no longer tied to the computer in the office.

The changing world of work and digitalisation has fundamentally changed the landscape and this has driven the need to adapt across many businesses and markets. An interesting statistic recently claims that 75% of the workforce will be millennials by 2025. (Millennials are those born, roughly, between 1980 and 2000).

As Generation Z starts to enter the world of work (those born after 2000), there is going to be even further disruption. They're the most connected generation of all, having grown up only knowing the technological world. They have an insatiable hunger to keep up with information and trends, to set the rules and use technology to get things done.



The revolution gives rise to a new breed of organisation

The industrial revolution provided mass production on a grand scale by creating the ability to produce through giant physical infrastructures, supported by equally large workforces. The work carried out by the workforce was integrated into the manufacturing process and so manual work was enhanced by machine and automation. At this time, because machine intelligence and supporting technology didn't exist, people filled in these gaps.

Today we are seeing a new breed of organisation born with technology, that's more dynamic and fast paced and has the agility to change at an unprecedented rate when compared to traditional business processes.

"When I sat down to write *The World is Flat*: Facebook didn't exist, Twitter was still a sound, the cloud was still in the sky, 4G was a parking place, LinkedIn was a prison, applications were what you sent to college, and Skype was a typo."

Thomas Friedman, American Journalist and Editor

Have office environments kept up with the change?

We talk of how people and technology have changed, but how much has office space changed to offer employees what they are looking for? If we look at the workplace of the future, we predict holograms, robots and wearable devices. There is a drive for more remote and flexible working, that enables employees around the world to collaborate, work in a shared digital workspace and seamlessly communicate virtually.

But what is happening now?

New internet businesses are overtaking large corporates, disrupting decades of predictable growth and comfortable trading. This is forcing organisations to change and to re-evaluate whether their workplace is fit for the future. We are at a critical time where organisations need to radically change to compete transparently in a marketplace with is not just supported by technology, but fundamentally driven by technology.

The advantage of agility

The disruption is driving huge change in culture, systems, processes and, fundamentally, in the way of working across so many large businesses. The fear of changing has now been replaced by the fear of not changing.

There is a distinct advantage for businesses created in the post-IT revolutionised world. Their internal processes, the systems and methods by which they trade have been designed to be more automated and efficient, with technology at the very core of their infrastructure. Typically, they grow faster than traditional ones because agility is inherent in the systems they create.

Now, compare this to the traditional business that have been trading for decades in the same marketplace. These traditional businesses have grown slowly, organically into huge businesses. During the growth, they typically run on the same processes and infrastructure they have always done, introducing new technology in isolated. Often the fundamental method by which they do business hasn't changed because it hasn't needed to - **'if it ain't broke, don't fix it'**.



Large corporates are now fundamentally challenging themselves to change and adapt to the new world. Does your working environment match what your employees are looking for or are you trying make the best of an old office environment?



Report: 97% of business collaboration investments lack strategy

We're fortunate enough to live in an era when purchasing is easy. If you want to buy a television, a car or a piece of office equipment, there are countless options to choose from.

If anything, sometimes, there are too many options. As Barry Schwartz pointed out in his 2004 book and TED talk, *The Paradox of Choice*, too much choice can be a bad thing.

Having to choose between many similar products can leave us feeling paralysed or cause us to lose sight of the bigger picture. It's easy to get caught up comparing one set of features with another, when really what we should be asking is:

What are we trying to achieve? What's the end goal?

Once you have the answer to this question, choosing between products becomes much simpler. If you buy products on their individual merits, you can end up focussing on what the products are capable of, instead of what they can help you do.



With this in mind, Key Digital's latest IDC report contains a lot of eye-opening data and we would recommend all Facilities and IT leaders who want to know where their peers are investing and why to give it a read. But one specific statistic really jumps out:

Organisations still lack a holistic business collaboration strategy

The survey shows there is patchy penetration with only 3% of respondents deploying a complete set of business collaboration solutions. However, it is worth noting that this small proportion of companies with end-to-end solutions report much higher levels of satisfaction. Roughly 95% are more satisfied.

97% of organisations are not starting with a business collaboration strategy, but buy fragmented collaboration and workplace solutions. Of the 3% who buy complete sets of integrated solutions, 95% are satisfied, compared with 62% satisfaction for the others.

Almost all organisations have recognised the value of investing in workplace collaboration solutions. They particularly appreciate the benefits of seamless communication and collaboration. The next step is a more considered, business collaboration strategy approach to deciding what your organisation really needs. As the IDC report shows, businesses who invest in end-to-end solutions as opposed to individual products report a 33% increase in satisfaction.

Integrated solutions are the way to go. And the best way to design a solution that's right for you is to form a strategy, rooted in what you know about your people.

The real crux of the matter isn't choosing the right technology. Technology is always the means, never the end. The skill lies in identifying the problems you need to fix and setting the right goals. Our approach to this is simply to speak to your people. Nobody knows better where you should be spending your money.

How to meet the challenge of collaboration for your remote worker

We're entering an unprecedented era for business. As we transition from groups working in central locations, to teams spread far and wide, working practices are changing too.

We're experiencing the biggest shake-up of working practices since the introduction of the personal computer.

People who have never worked from home are now doing so; people who worked remotely once a week now do it five days a week - and for the foreseeable future, week after week. Indeed, some of the changes we face may even be permanent. This isn't just difficult for individuals. Businesses are faced with a serious challenge: how do they adapt now-obsolete working practices and continue to support their people?



So, in a world where everything from customer data to the office coffee machine has become out of date overnight, let's discuss three key areas:

1. How do businesses rise to the new challenge?
2. What are the most common issues?
3. And why is outsourcing to a specialist technology partner the quickest and best way to resolve pains?

Taking stock of our new demand for collaboration

IDC has carried out research to help us establish the expected impact of spending on major technology areas, and to show the immediate IT priorities among businesses across Europe.

Their findings - reassuringly - validate what we think we already know: the biggest challenge right now is teamwork and collaboration, and this is where technology is most likely to attract investment in the coming months.

70%
of businesses were mandating work from home

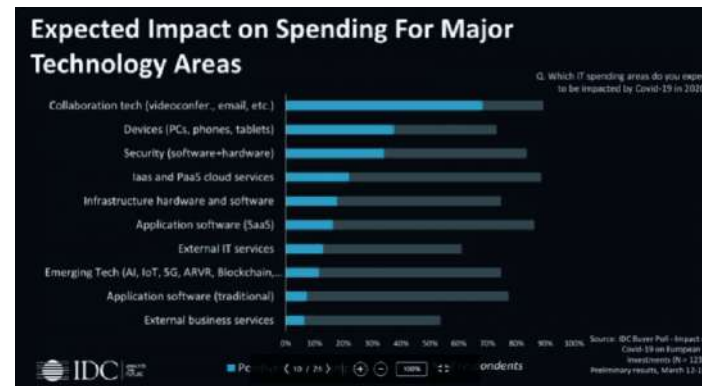
At the time of the survey, 70% of businesses were mandating work from home for all suitable employees or extending existing home office policies.

And it's certain that this figure has risen.

Understanding how businesses can adjust

Remote working has been on the rise for a while now: indeed, Condeco's Modern Workplace 2019 report highlighted, at the time, that **41% of employers offered some form of remote working** - a figure that was set to be higher this year, even if current events hadn't happened.

So, there are pre-existing experiences with remote working that we can draw from. They tell us that good communication is key. Leadership teams, managers, employees, suppliers and customers all benefit from being more connected.



What technologies do we currently have in place?

IT Managers have access to many well-established remote working solutions, suiting both current conditions and the specific needs of an organisation, including:

- Video conferencing
- Team collaboration
- Telephony
- VPN
- Document workflows and collaboration
- Digital approval processes and signatures

But these solutions may no longer be enough and could prove ineffective for your organisation

Collaboration and remote working challenges

Most collaboration technologies are at their most effective when they support a central working environment. But, when used more prominently, problems escalate significantly - quickly reducing productivity, causing frustration and harming morale.

With the majority of businesses now operating almost entirely remotely, there has been a stress test of their infrastructure's ability to support collaboration effectively. Many are experiencing challenges they cannot yet address.

What are these challenges?

One major issue is in giving your people the training or IT support they need to use the technology effectively. They might lack the necessary hardware, not understand the software or even be unable to login or access online files.

There are complications for a company's culture too. Two-thirds of organisations are finding it hard to align their local culture and communication styles with new ways of working - especially when they span multiple geographies.

So, what's the answer? Nearly nine out of 10 people feel that their company would benefit from the assistance of outside experts to help with cultural training and cross-organisational education.

Outsourcing to a specialist partner

Businesses need to resolve their collaboration issues immediately. But with their IT teams already busy handling day-to-day operations, and also dealing with the internal pressures of transitioning to remote working, there just isn't the capacity to rise effectively to the challenge.

And even if they did, they'd address issues in a traditional in-house way, committed to existing processes with no experience of alternative solutions.

What businesses need, therefore, is a highly experienced 'first responder' technology partner. One with a broad and deep understanding of entire digital workspaces and the immediate resources and solutions available.



Outsourcing to a partner will ensure that:

- Your people can maintain their focus on business continuity
- Issues are addressed more quickly
- You benefit from the partners vast experience
- You gain insight and ideas from cross-fertilisation

Looking to the future

While our immediate challenges take priority – and rightly so – it would be remiss of us to not think ahead to our future needs.

As we look to third-party experts to help us address our current situation, and we learn from their experiences, maybe we're seeing a glimpse into how business leaders will handle IT for years to come.

A world where businesses have IT teams at a management level only, outsourcing the execution of technical systems and solutions, while they themselves focus on their people to deliver excellent customer experience.

Perhaps that is the true future of collaboration.



Intelligent remote working

We help businesses of all sizes to deliver business as usual by enabling intelligent remote working, even at times of disruption. Our end-to-end remote solutions are user-friendly, secure and scale to meet your needs.

Productivity, employee engagement and company outputs shouldn't suffer as a result of remote working.

No matter your requirements, we can quickly and securely have your teams working remotely and more effectively. We'll help you automate mission-critical business processes and aid your digital transformation efforts with remote infrastructure and cloud solutions.

To find out more, [please visit our website](#).



Key Digital

About Key Digital

Key Digital are an industry-leading provider of document workflow solutions and IT services, recommending what's best for your business, not ours.

Our global customer base benefits from our expertise in the field of digital transformation, print technology and IT services, allowing them to work smarter.

As a business, we follow a people- and planet-first approach designed to drive us all towards a better future.

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