

From disrupted to distributed:

How IT is navigating the changing
work environment



robust
resilient

Fostering a thriving workforce

stronger
unstoppable

in the changing
work-from-anywhere era

Executive summary

The past two years have changed the way we work forever. The pandemic forced businesses around the world to quickly adopt remote work solutions – disrupting the status quo. Ultimately, the access to remote work has forever changed the hearts and minds of employees who now realise that working from everywhere is a priority.

As a result, IT managers have faced growing complexity as they contend with a distributed workforce with expanded team locations, elevated security threats, numerous devices and operating systems on top of facilitating evolving work patterns and individual needs. Additionally, this past year we have experienced the “great resignation” combined with increasing IT skills shortage.

Despite this, new data from a Splashtop survey of 1,000 IT managers reveals the overwhelmingly positive impact of effective remote access and support tools on productivity and happiness. Navigating this landscape successfully both immediately and in the long-term however relies on a strategic implementation of distributed practices. In considering the four key principles of a successful remote access and support solution (uncompromised flexibility, intuitive experiences, trusted security and sustainable support) they can seize the benefits reported by IT managers in the survey, including:

42%

attribute remote tools
to greater workplace
satisfaction

34%

feel less stressed
at work



Introduction

The pandemic exposed a sudden necessity for remote working solutions, where organisations had to pivot at lightning speed to survive. But while many achieved digital transformation in a mere matter of months, the cracks from quick-fire responses have begun to appear from under the surface. They have now realised the pressing need for a robust, reliable and secure solution to sustain distributed work for the long term – an approach that goes beyond just enabling anywhere, anytime access.

With no time to implement change at their own pace, businesses need to know what sets apart the shortterm fix of remote work to a truly distributed workforce, one with real staying power and benefits. The answer? It lies in the human impact of remote access and support tools. Overcoming the ripple effects of rapid workplace change and uncovering more sophisticated, lasting ways forward will lie in proactively nurturing people and business growth with technology.

When effective distributed work practices are imperative to healthy business in a cutthroat world, how can we cut the complexity out of getting there? There are four core components of a healthier remote workforce that need to be considered before businesses can reap the benefits of boosted productivity and agility for the future:

- 1 The flexibility to prepare for change and adapt rapidly**
- 2 Improving the employee experience with easy-to-use tools**
- 3 Trust in technology security**
- 4 Implementing a sustainable and cost-efficient model**



The importance

of staying flexible

prepared
people-first
adaptable
productive



Prevention is the cure for businesses who effectively adapt to the changing world of work by implementing the right technologies and policies. In the case of remote working, prevention means having flexible tools in place to maintain high levels of productivity even as unexpected hurdles hit or threaten to damage businesses' efficiency, as the pandemic has so clearly illustrated.

Nearly half of survey respondents (47%) questioned said that remote access tools give them greater flexibility about where they can work.

However, a third of the IT managers anticipated challenges in the near future with supporting both remote and office workers. The strong implication therefore is that distributed workplace strategies need to factor in the teams who drive the remote solutions by enabling them to achieve more from their resources.

Putting these principles into practice is simple with an all-in-one remote access and support solution. IT teams can stay in control of remote access effortlessly with a centralised console equipped with all the features they need. There's one place to manage every user, saving time by negating the need to switch between complex systems and making way for improved productivity.

However, staying flexible and prepared is about more than breaking free from rigid, traditional IT systems. It's about being open to embracing new applications and service platforms that allow you to build on your current remote solution. Partner integrations empower businesses to customise their solution to match user workflows – whether that's for IT managers or anyone else in the organisation. When designing with the different users at the very heart, people are able to work how they want, on any device they want, not just where they want.

This could mean matching proxy and request permissions to the appropriate users. Or it could be ensuring that the apps or service platforms each business relies on are still in place and integrated into new solutions. Not only that, with the right remote tools and partner, integrations can be made quickly and securely to allow even more value to be squeezed from existing apps and platforms. They can even extend remote support to any device, including IOS and Android, to troubleshoot and resolve issues.

seamless
rapid

Reducing stress with intuitive tools

accessible
simple

IT leaders have long shouldered the burdens of fixing issues that can cause significant damage on a business's bottom line. Every minute wasted from lags in access, system crashes, data corruption or difficulties using new tools costs the organisation financially and harms the employee experience. Making IT leaders' and end-users' lives easier is central to maintaining and promoting a thriving flexible workplace.

Beyond the fact that a third of IT decision makers reported feeling less stressed at work because of adaptive remote technologies, 42% even go as far as stating that they make their job more enjoyable.

This suggests that easy-to-use, intuitive remote tools play a significant and positive role in the employee experience. Ongoing efforts to attract and retain talent in the IT sector could therefore be bolstered by this knowledge. By creating a desirable company culture and seamless workplace set up, businesses have the potential to hire and support top candidates from a richer talent pool around the world.

So how can remote solutions promote this feel-good environment? Simplicity is everything. Process overload or having to train teams in new ways of working can take its toll on individuals as well as precious business time. With a single tool that's instinctively easy to use while offering the capability to modify for various users, companies can free up headspace for people to deliver real value elsewhere. Resources need to be accessible at the click of a button, software needs to be designed to minimise unnecessary manual work and wasted time, and teams need to have the tools to get up and running with little or no training, with help desk support to identify and fix any issues that may arise along the way.

What shouldn't be overlooked, however, is the potential benefits of remote technology as a result of better communication

and collaboration between teams, wherever they are. 18% of Splashtop's respondents said they anticipate both poor mental health and physical sickness to be a challenge to their remote and in-office plans. Although so many external factors for employee happiness are out of an organisation's control, taking responsibility for connecting colleagues can be a simple, yet effective measure for creating a nurturing team dynamic. With crossplatform collaboration at scale, businesses can mitigate the impact of feelings of isolation that are often associated with remote work, as well providing high-performance tools to help employees accomplish their professional goals.



The widespread impact of remote tools on confidence

reliability
trust
performance
control

IT leaders have proven their worth in high-stakes decisions, having been put under the spotlight and made responsible for guiding businesses through the dark uncertainty of the pandemic and its aftermath. But while their expertise and judgement are trusted to add value to the business, their roles have become more and more complex. As more devices enter the workplace across all locations security threats grow increasingly hard to manage, IT teams are challenged daily. This can make navigating remote access confidently seem near impossible. Safeguarding data, preventing cyber-attacks and commanding greater control of systems are top priorities, but gaining complete peace of mind in security measures relies on thinking differently about security.

The current fixed approach to security for remote support tools is a prime culprit for leaving organisations susceptible to attack. Businesses need to see security as something that is never finished. Constant monitoring of the environment is the only way to reinforce protection of proprietary information and spot early warning signs before they escalate into disruption. It's a task that few or no

IT teams alone can feasibly manage without the support of an external software support provider who can actively pursue improvements in data privacy, compliance, intrusion prevention and app security.

To instill a sense of certainty that company data is safe and compliant, features need to be robust across every different device without exception, including best-in-class encryption, device authentication and two-factor authentication. Trusted security can also be integrated into remote solutions by ensuring that the latest updates are installed in a timely manner, and that permissions for scheduled remote access, granular features and group-based access and more are tightly controlled.



Confidence reaches beyond security concerns to the way in which all employees conduct themselves at work and their belief in their ability to fulfil their roles to their potential too.

Secure remote access and support tools have been attributed to 36% of respondents feeling that they give their users and colleagues greater confidence in them as a decision maker, while nearly half (47%) appreciate that remote tools not only benefit users, but IT teams too.

With so much to win from reevaluating remote access technology and support across all levels, businesses who take change in their stride can benefit from the certainty in being ready for future challenges and supporting a revitalised workforce.

Striking the best balance between flexible working and cost-efficiency

streamlined
supportive
efficient
smarter

It's easy to assume that some organisations embraced the transition to distributed work as a cost-cutting exercise to save on overheads such as business travel. However, the real cost of realising a mix of in-office and work from anywhere has actually meant that budgets have been stretched further in many cases. In fact, 13% of IT leaders have flagged budget concerns specifically around remote working equipment (such as updated laptops, devices, headsets and printers) and running the office when it isn't at full capacity. To add to this, some businesses have been locked into expensive contracts with remote solution providers, paying for more functionality than they could ever utilise.

The difficulty lies in finding balance between the investment needed to create a healthy distributed workplace and the fundamental need to streamline costs. Some remote solution providers can however support this by maximising value from existing devices, without the business having to compromise on capabilities. A device agnostic approach negates concerns about having to overhaul device fleets as they can offer all the resource access users could need, regardless of the device. Users can continue to harness the device they prefer, while businesses can stay ahead by elevating how they use their assets for remote work. IT help desks are

able to remotely resolve support requests quickly to prevent a buildup of open support tickets and end-users avoid frustration and downtime.

Full transparency on pricing and a flexible approach to subscriptions are also key factors to consider when choosing sustainable remote access and support solutions. It's important to understand contract cancellation policies to avoid having to wait out long notice periods when the solutions aren't fit for the business.

The level of customer support provided by remote access companies doesn't necessarily correlate with the cost of the solution either. Businesses may have invested in 'premium' price solutions, yet still be at the mercy of a randomised ticketing system and have nobody to call for support when systems go down. This makes having a clear expectation for response times invaluable.

Creating a strong distributed workforce is first and foremost about nurturing the growth of individuals before the business itself can see the benefits. But reaching and maintaining prime health shouldn't have to be at the expense of the business's profitability, and nor should it weigh down on IT teams. Dedicated technical experts around the world can be on call to support with affordable, yet effective remote access partners, whether for attended or unattended support.



thriving
sustainable

Fueling the distributed workforce

successful
flexible

Stopping future setbacks in the evolving world of work is no different to maintaining personal health. Regular checkups, preventative measures and trusted support can ensure longevity and give you the best chance of surviving and thriving.

As the beating heart of any business, putting people first to invigorate real value from remote access and support tools are imperative. There is no going back to the old ways of working. Work from everywhere is now standard operating for many organisations. IT's drive to standardise remote work should be viewed simply as standardising how people work wherever they are. Whether a person is remote or in the office, the way they log in, access files, perform their tasks, and collaborate should be the same. Over time, the distributed work environment will no longer distinguish between remote and in-office workers. They will all simply be productive people who enjoy a flexible work environment.

Providing the right technology will allow distributed working to contribute to thriving employees, all the while ensuring that businesses are prepared.

Splashtop is passionate about helping organisations achieve a productive and distributed workforce. Backed by our next generation software and unmatched commitment to customer service, businesses can seamlessly navigate their way to a healthy, productive and flexible workforce. Splashtop gives IT teams the highperformance, security, flexibility and control you need to effectively manage remote access and remote support for your organisation.



Contact Splashtop to learn more about driving healthier distributed work strategies.

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