

# Embracing Work-From-Home Trends: 5 Tools Every Business Needs Today



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When do work-from-home trends stop being trends? It happens when employees stop requesting remote days as a perk and start demanding them as a standard expectation.



With the right software, hardware, and – most importantly – UCaaS system, any business can keep up with work-from-home trends.

The working world is close to that point, in part because of emerging research on the business benefits of remote work. A study reported by Stanford University found that businesses saw a 50 percent reduction in turnover and greater employee productivity upon implementing remote work capability. These numbers back up the idea that more flexibility leads to a happier, more productive workplace.

The transition to a remote-friendly office doesn't happen overnight, however. To keep team members connected and productivity high, businesses need to put the right technologies in place. Before making the switch to a remote work policy, ask yourself if your business needs to acquire the following tools.

## 1. Mobile Office Capabilities

For employees who regularly work from home, having a mobile office solution is essential to collaborating from afar. Tools like call flip, for example, allow remote employees to seamlessly transfer a call from a mobile device to a desk phone without anyone on the line knowing. This kind of capability enables remote employees to collaborate with colleagues and talk with clients or customers no matter where they are. And this collaboration goes a step further with one-click mobile conferencing, which allows employees to use web, video, and audio tools when conferencing at home with colleagues in the office.

What's more, a company can also connect a remote employee's tablet or smartphone into cloud-based integrations like Zendesk or Salesforce, allowing remote workers access to all company tools. With the right mobile solutions in place, an employee's home desk can quickly become a fully integrated office that is seamlessly connected to the company's systems.

## 2. Viable Communication Software

All work-from-home trends share an underlying need for tools that take the best parts of working in the office and make them available anywhere. With communication, this means a heavy focus on seamless solutions: Whether they're working from the desk, their kitchen, or a quick pop-in office session, employees should be able to enjoy the same calling, video, and SMS capabilities, at the same quality, in the same format.

The benefits that make unified communications-as-a-service (UCaaS) platforms so useful to standard offices double down on their value when remote work is a concern. Technology that combines multiple forms of standard office communication (calling, document sharing, virtual whiteboarding, videoconferencing, etc.) into a single interface puts critical remote work functions and features in the same space, streamlining work for employees both in and out of the office. UCaaS operates the same way no matter where an employee is or what device they use at the time. Getting this technology in place *before* opening the remote work floodgates improves the current state of communication and knocks a major concern off the list when it comes time to offer remote options.



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## 3. Tools for Elevated Communication Quality

Internet-based communication tools such as voice over IP (VoIP) and web conferencing apps don't chew up an inordinate amount of data on their own. That said, an entire office's worth of IP phone and video calls may tax a network, especially if it was on the verge of an overload to begin with.

Because of this, SD-WAN represents a tool most modernizing offices need now (or will in the future). Much like UCaaS, this kind of network only grows more useful in an office that's looking to hop on work-from-home trends. SD-WAN technology ensures real-time data

sent during communication (with remote workers or clients, for instance) maintains bandwidth and quality, keeping communication lines open no matter how far they stretch.

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## 4. End-User Hardware

Your business hardware shouldn't prevent the software from performing at its best. While the office's specific purchases will largely depend on its structure and plans for remote work, it will likely require decent webcams and microphones for employees in the physical office.

Offices providing hardware to remote employees will need to make similar decisions on that end, with added consideration for tools that promote flexibility and mobility. For instance, a workplace that equips office employees with smartphones might consider moving remote staff to phablets or tablets. Besides the obvious benefits that come with employees having the right tools for the job, potential frustrations of remote work are diminished when everyone can approach work their own way without worrying about hardware limitations.

## 5. Authentication Solutions

Spouses sharing devices. Nosy children. Work laptops left on coffeehouse tables. There are numerous ways employee and workplace privacy can be impacted by the inclusion of remote work, but they do not have to be insurmountable. Some of the extra steps a company takes to protect remote work can similarly boost privacy within the office.

Two-factor authentication offers one smart approach. By requiring employees to confirm their identity on a secondary device like a smartphone, the company gets practical privacy protection and sends along a polite, implicit message every time employees utilize protected devices, apps, and systems: *Only you are supposed to see this*. Best of all, your business can choose from a variety of compatible apps and services, reducing the technical work and expertise needed to implement this extra layer of confidentiality.

As remote work trends become more and more popular with employees in various industries, businesses will have to adapt their communication technologies to account for these new ways of working – or else run the risk of losing fresh talent to their competition. But with the right remote working tools, any business can draw in employees and increase retention.