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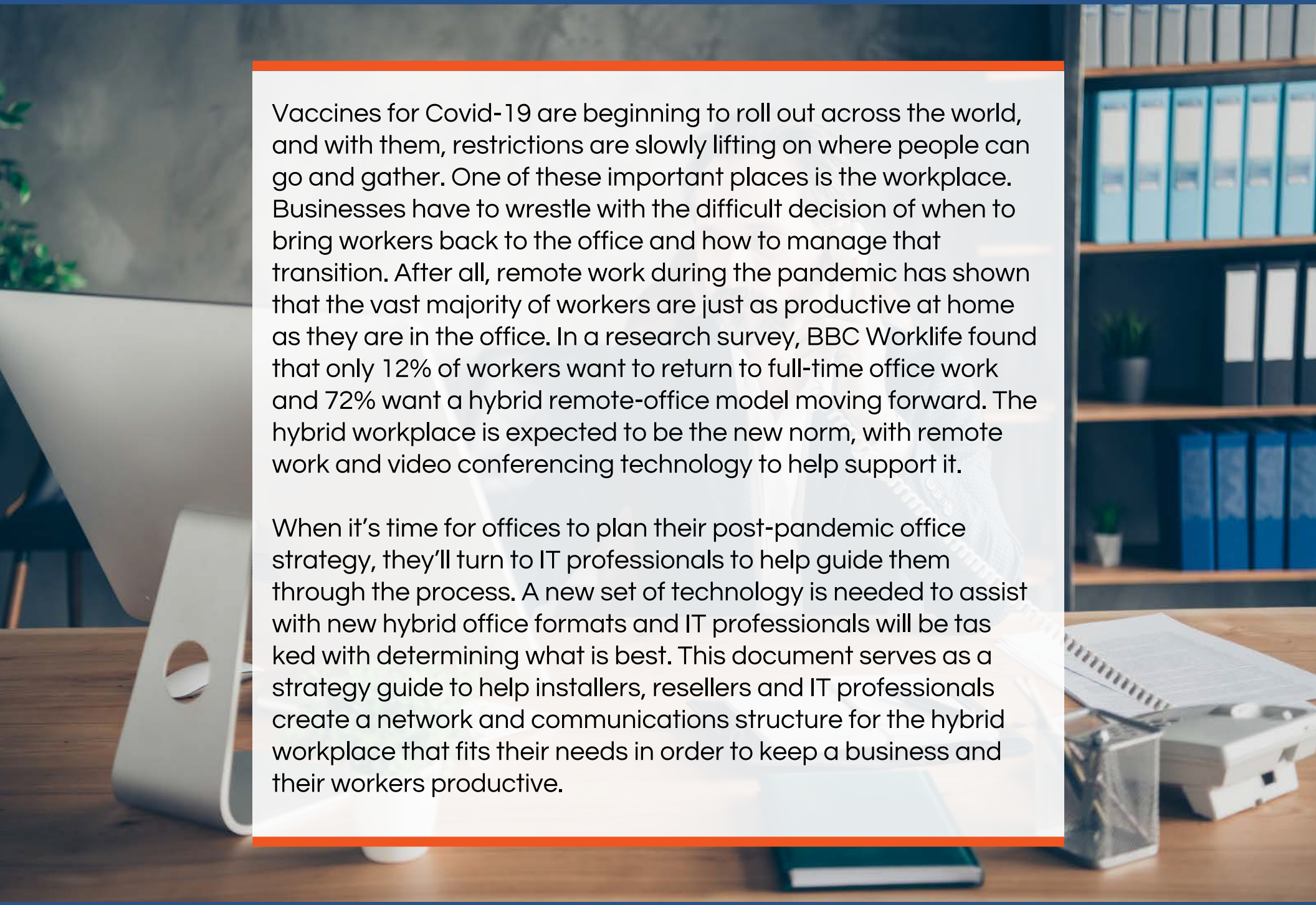
Hybrid Office Solution Strategy Guide



Vaccines for Covid-19 are beginning to roll out across the world, and with them, restrictions are slowly lifting on where people can go and gather. One of these important places is the workplace. Businesses have to wrestle with the difficult decision of when to bring workers back to the office and how to manage that transition. After all, remote work during the pandemic has shown that the vast majority of workers are just as productive at home as they are in the office. In a research survey, BBC Worklife found that only 12% of workers want to return to full-time office work and 72% want a hybrid remote-office model moving forward. The hybrid workplace is expected to be the new norm, with remote work and video conferencing technology to help support it.

When it's time for offices to plan their post-pandemic office strategy, they'll turn to IT professionals to help guide them through the process. A new set of technology is needed to assist with new hybrid office formats and IT professionals will be tas ked with determining what is best. This document serves as a strategy guide to help installers, resellers and IT professionals create a network and communications structure for the hybrid workplace that fits their needs in order to keep a business and their workers productive.

Step 1: Analyze How Much Business will be Remote

Every business is different and the way they may want to approach returning to the office will be different as well. Before deciding on the type of technology to use, it is important to understand exactly how businesses will handle their office transition. Some of your clients may already have a firm idea on how to do this, others may not. Below are suggested methods to understand a business's remote work needs to help you create a better solution.

Break Down Remote Work by Department

One of the best ways to organize a business's remote work needs is by department. The functions of a particular department within an office deployment will typically determine how much on-site or video collaboration has to happen between the coworkers within that department, and as a result it will also determine how often they will spend working remote. In turn, it may also determine how necessary video collaboration tools are for these teams. For example, an accounting department most likely will require very little department collaboration, as a result they may spend as little as 20% of their workweek on-site. On the other hand, a marketing team will most likely require greater levels of collaboration, meaning more on-site time or video conferencing software/hardware to help bridge that gap and push productivity.

Understand How the Business Works with Its Customers

The deployment that you create won't only be impacted by how coworkers within the business work together, but also how the business works with its customers. As remote technology and collaboration have become the new norm, collaboration with customers has begun to shift to a virtual space. Video conferencing technology is a crucial tool in this aspect.

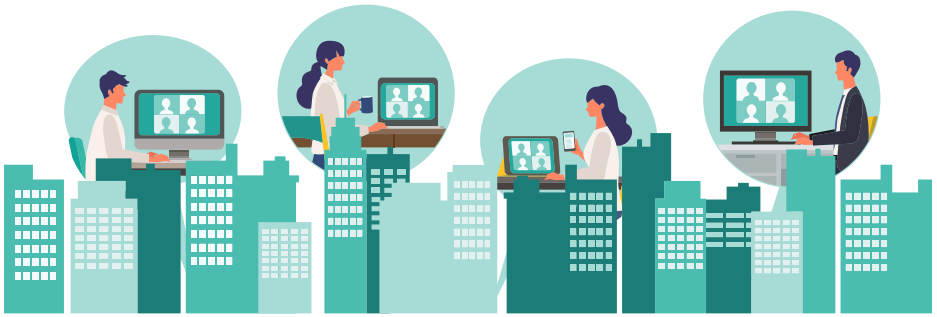
According to research by Lifesize, 90% of survey respondents felt that video conferencing makes it easier for them to get a point across. Another 89% say that video conferencing reduces the time required to complete projects and tasks. If a business requires customer interaction beyond simple email, providing workers wit h the ability to work in a video conferencing space will help drive productivity and close projects faster. This may take the form of cloud conferencing solutions, room-based video conferencing and personal collaboration devices.

Step 2: Leverage Technology to Meet Department Needs

Prior to the pandemic, the technology has been out there to help create productive remote work and virtual collaboration environments that help workers excel. The trend of remote work has only been catapulted by the pandemic as businesses have learned the wide variety of benefits that come with remote work. According to a study by Global Workplace Analytics, "56% of the U.S. workforce holds a job that is compatible (at least partially) with remote work." Additionally, UC Today reported that the remote workforce increased by 140% between 2005 and 2019, that number has only increased in 2020. Once the dust settles, we are expected to see businesses permanently adopting remote work and hybrid workplace practices, along with the technology to support them.

Organizing Software and Hardware Technology by Type

For a hybrid on-site and remote solution, there are several categories that product should be organized into. Following is a brief outline that should be used to determine the hardware and software that will be utilized both on-site and remotely in the deployment. Cover this list of devices with your client and then begin structuring the technology department by department.



1. Desktop IP Endpoints

Desktop phones and video phones will always play a part in the workplace. Likewise, desktop devices may be needed for users who are frequently operating remotely and require access to advanced telephony features out of a home office. Advanced solutions can support the same extensions and features on multiple devices for a seamless experience whether in the office or at home.

2. Room-Based Video Conferencing

Video conferencing and collaboration has already taken a bigger role in project coordination between teams and customers. In a world where both customers and coworkers will frequently be geographically separated, a room-based device will be necessary to connect those in the office and those working remotely.

3. Cloud Video Conferencing

Video conferencing solutions have taken major strides within recent years. Originally only providing a place to simply see each other while you speak, cloud conferencing platforms now offer a virtual meeting space that anyone can come together in to collaborate. They frequently provide productivity driving tools, such as interactive document/presentation sharing, Q&A features, virtual whiteboards screen sharing, video sharing and meeting recording. All of those features come together to make the experience as efficient as one held in-person.

4. Personal Collaboration Devices

Lastly, devices such as personal webcams and headsets can help a worker present themselves more professionally and stay more productive. Many of these devices can be taken in and out of the office, and paired with various hardware like laptops, IP phones and even smart phones.

Step 3: Finalize Deployment Details

As an installer, reseller, or IT professional, the following steps you take are fairly similar to what you would experience from an entirely onsite deployment. Begin gathering details on desired features, needed SIP accounts/lines, and extensions, planning the backend network infastructure, and allocating both hardware and software tools for workers.

STL Communications offers a full portfolio of communication and video conferencing solutions that enable you to easily create an integrated hybrid solution, all under one brand.

Hybrid Solution Step Guide

Step 1: Analyzing Remote Business by Department

Department	Percent of Week Spent Remote	Collaboration Level (1-10)

Notes:

Step 2: Leverage Technology to Meet Department Needs

Department: Total Users:
Hardware and Software Requirements:

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