

A background graphic of a network with glowing blue nodes and connecting lines, set against a dark blue space-like background with stars.

Connectivity, Cohesion, Collaboration: Helping remote teams work better together

The concept of the “office” is changing and expanding in today’s digitally driven world. Due to business globalization, increased travel frequency and a renewed focus on work-life balance, many formerly office-based employees have been going remote. While this isn’t a new concept, the global COVID-19 pandemic thrust businesses across the world into remote work with government-mandated, stay-at-home orders. It was during this time that a Fortune survey of 200 CIOs discovered that 53% saw getting their employees to effectively communicate with each other as the biggest challenge to remote work.

With a plethora of tech tools available to support remote work, it’s not surprising that CIOs don’t consider it the most prominent obstacle to efficient remote work. However, the survey findings underscore the importance of finding the right technology to support and enhance connectivity, ultimately helping ease friction points and break down workflow silos. No matter the situation, these are some key ways successful remote teams leverage technology to maximize connection and productivity:

Integrate mobility:

Having field and office-based team members contribute to the same projects is not new. But how these teams work together with optimal efficiency is certainly evolving. The difference between geographically dispersed teamwork operating smoothly or poorly – especially given the complexities and accelerated pace of today’s business environment – often lies with integration. Seamless workflows between remote team members rely on systems, tools and programs that are “location agnostic.” This allows employees to tap capabilities that are incorporated into existing processes no matter where they are.

Dedicated devices and web-based solutions for dictation, transcription, file transfer and document creation can be significantly impactful in this regard. For example, feature-rich voice recorders or smart phones equipped with a dictation app (either of which is integrated to a variety of common business apps) allows one team member to quickly send voice notes to another for editing, transcription or electronic storage.

Automate where possible:

Process automation is another prominent topic among business leaders, and for good reason: Minimizing time spent on the administration, oversight and management of procedural tasks allows employees to dedicate more time to impactful work and enhance throughput. The right technology helps here, too. Advanced solutions support automation by taking the guesswork out of process flows, which is another potential obstacle among remote teams that do not have the benefit of hallway conversations and impromptu in-person meetings.

To continue with the above example, voice recordings that are automatically uploaded to the cloud from one team member can be made available to another in near real-time. The teammate receiving the file, with established next steps in place, can then continue moving the work product through the organization's systems without having to wait for the sender to dock a device or return to the office. This creates efficiencies in the overall workflow, thereby adding value to the business as a whole.

Make security a priority:

Lastly, it's important to remember that as electronic information is shared across multiple physical locations, protecting data must remain paramount. No matter the industry, all organizations have confidential data meant only for internal use – and in many cases, only for designated team members. Many employees now use their own devices (BYOD) for business, and the proliferation of all types of devices is on the rise. As such, it's important to use solutions and apps that provide the highest levels of security among all team members who may handle restricted information.

Encryption is the foundation for this security. Throughout the upload, transfer and secure cloud storage process, leading-edge recording devices and software illustrate how technology helps protect companies and the clients they serve. Multiple layers of encryption at each phase creates an unbroken chain protecting data from end to end. Cloud enablement is another component of security. Generally considered more secure (and more agile) than servers, cloud storage helps mitigate the risk of file loss and vulnerability to other technical issues associated with physical servers. Finally, if using dedicated devices, teams should use PIN codes and write-protection to prevent potential unauthorized access and tampering.

When seeking to implement new tech tools, it's important to evaluate their ability to keep information locked down in these multiple ways, for comprehensive security when remote teams collaborate.

The culture, dynamics and structures of organizations will, of course, impact what technologies best meet their needs and furthers their specific goals when it comes to connectivity and collaboration tools. Learn more about how Philips can help your company enable high-impact remote teamwork with the solution that's right for you – visit our [website](#) or email us at info.na@speech.com.