MODERN WORKPLACE

# Enterprise-scale secure remote work tools for everyone

Strategies for reliable location-agnostic business success

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# Necessity is the mother of a communications revolution

One of the clear outcomes of 2020 has been a complete shift to a new normal for workplace collaboration, communication and productivity. The idea that remote employees can get their work done and feel connected to each other with the right tools is clearly here to stay. Many businesses of all sizes have leaned into this notion, investing in tools that help teams and individuals stay productive and connected to each other and to their business world—even when they need to work apart. These companies have a substantial (and necessity-driven) head start in this new working environment with stable and happy employees.

The fact that this shift to remote and hybrid work has been driven by necessity has led to hyperfast shifts in remote everything. And those same companies that have leaned into new communication tools have also already tried, tested and refined a host of systemic structural changes across all their organizations that will define the way they live and work going forward.

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# The opportunities of hybrid work

Suddenly, face-to-face interactions—and even phone calls—have become rare, or things of the past, replaced by data-driven modes of communication. And remote or hybrid work is here to stay. Leading the growth in the software category in the video conferencing market will be cloud-based video conferencing software services.[1] With all this growth in the video conferencing category, businesses small and large are being offered new tools and innovations almost every week that provide:

- **Improved encryption and password protection** for cloud-based video conferencing systems—driven by well-publicized breaches.

- **New 3D technology** in video conferencing solutions for more effective collaboration.

- **Advanced virtual reality functions** that are making video conferencing a more realistic interpersonal experience while helping reduce issues such as poor lighting and sound.

The good news for productivity: Remotely collaborating teams are 5x more likely to be high-performing.

[1]Transparency Market Research 2020 Video Conferencing Market Report.

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# Shifting to the remote-work fast lane

As many businesses have discovered, moving from traditional communications and modes of work to remote, digital collaboration will have its challenges—and innovations to overcome them. To meet the sudden scale of all-digital remote work, companies will need to consider:

- **How to keep IT and capital expense budgets under control as the need for more hardware capacity grows.** Rather than ballooning those line items, consider hardware-as-a-service (HaaS) in the cloud. Much like other as-a-service innovations in the cloud age, HaaS enables virtually instant scaling of computing capacity without buying infrastructure or expanding facilities.

- **How cloud providers will be able to expand data flow capacities to meet demand without downgrading service.** Many are already expanding capacity to meet the increased demands of both paid and free users. Look for these improvements from your provider—or consider others who might offer you better service for money.

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# Shifting to the remote-work fast lane (continued)

- **When your provider might be reaching the limits of their platform.**
  With the explosion of video and other data, many providers have exceeded their threshold for additional network capacity and require added physical hardware within existing datacentres. Be on the lookout for limitations to new signups, or for reductions in quality and consistency for existing users. Providers with a truly scalable and globally distributed architecture will stem the tide better than others.

- **How to meet security and manageability standards during a tidal wave of data.**
  The rapid introduction of video tools for workers across the organization and in educational settings has already resulted in breaches. However, businesses also have to be aware of data collection, security and user privacy. Now—or sooner—is a good time to ask your provider about their global security, manageability and monitoring. They should offer you comprehensive support. If not, you've got bigger problems.

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# Supporting the location-agnostic future

## Let's make "where are you" matter less than "who are you"

Even for smaller businesses, the norm is becoming more and more one of cross-country, or even intercontinental collaboration. It presents both a challenge and an opportunity for better supporting remote coworkers and collaboration technology. For smaller and medium-sized businesses, it may involve a shift in business model and adoption of video conference tools that are flexible enough to grow and change with them. These unprecedented changes in consumer behaviour will continue to appear daily across virtually every sector for the foreseeable future. And not all of them will be what we expect. Your business depends on being ready with a solution built to adapt to emerging technology. That's one reason Microsoft Teams makes sense for a confident future.

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# A known quantity for the future

As we've seen, a lot of remote work tools have suddenly had to be scaled and are finding themselves in build-it-as-you-fly-it mode. This puts your business at unnecessary risk. For instance, businesses may have experienced rapid digital transformation, and they might be getting by with quick setups that are not always ideal. For instance, customers are:

- Sharing videoconferencing licenses

- Forwarding office numbers to employees' personal mobile phones

- Using multiple different products that don't play well together

We advise that you consider Microsoft Teams as the solution that can take you into the future, no matter how usage rates have been expanded. And at EC Managed IT, we've embedded Teams into our culture.

It's how we stay connected; it houses all of the capabilities we need on a daily basis, and it has become an important factor for getting every job done quickly, with certainty and excellence. In short, EC Managed IT is the Microsoft Teams meeting expert.

Our company has a long-standing partner relationship with Microsoft, where we have focused on their on-premises and cloud products for many years. Our architects focus on the Microsoft cloud platform, cloud productivity, collaboration and content, mobility management, communications and messaging. We view security as the foundation for all these productivity services so you can focus on what you do best: growing your business.

We invite you to view our website for more information about the services we offer, our methodology to identify the right-sized business solutions and the quality of our implementations.

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# A known quantity for the future

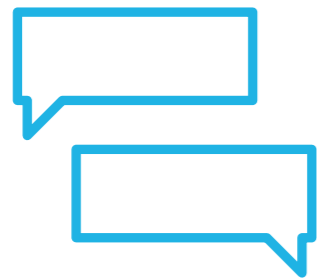## The desk phone is extinct. It's time to evolve.

The world is changing and in this new remote environment, the common desk phone has gone the way of the dodo bird. And even though staying connected is as important as it has ever been, the best, most efficient way to do it is Microsoft Teams.

At EC Managed IT, we can guide you through your Teams deployment, resource planning, technical readiness and change management. We want you to get the most out of Teams, not only when it comes to its features—calling, messaging, documents, calendars and more—but also when it comes to other benefits like increased productivity, reduced costs, better flexibility, enhanced security and the convenience of a streamlined, centralized workspace. Evolving means getting better. And EC Managed IT can help you make your evolution as good as it gets.

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# How to make the remote workplace better than the physical one

In the remote work future, workers who used to stroll up the corridor to ask a quick question will instead open up a quick chat screen; sitting together to collaborate on a project will be replaced by screen sharing with recording; the morning status meeting will become a Teams conference. And phone calls? They're already being supplanted by video calls. All the functions your office location has provided now must be digitized and work just as reliably as the construction of your office building. Teams provides you all those functionalities and more—with the levels of reliability and security your company is going to need, including:

## Chat

Communicate and stay up to date with your team.

## Screen sharing and recording

Easily share and record your screen during meetings.

## Video meetings

Use built-in group and one-on-one audio or video calling for your meetings.

## Live events

Create and expand a live event wherever your team, audience or community resides.

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# The 6 tactics for happier remote teams

## 1. Integrate communication and productivity applications

Ensure that your workers can easily access all the resources they need and share the files they work on. Microsoft Office apps across the web, mobile and desktop store content in the cloud by default, making integration the normal state. We recommend using cloud storage such as OneDrive, which is as simple as saving files on the old traditional C: drive. (Remember the C: drive?) This makes it simple to do real-time coauthoring and commenting in documents in the cloud, which has proved extremely useful for a distributed workforce.

## 2. Customize your experience

In remote work situations, every meeting is a Teams meeting, often with video. Explore features like background blur to block out mischievous kids, barking dogs and mismatched furniture. Recording meetings makes it easy for absent participants to catch up and hear the most relevant parts.

## 3. Get more from meetings than you ever did in a conference room

You can make remote meetings more valuable experiences than in-person meetings. For instance, when you make it a Teams Channel meeting, everything is captured in a single channel conversation for your reference. All the documents, all the chats and of course, the recording of everything everyone said is in one place, and much of it is searchable. It's a huge timesaver that also improves the quality of everyone's work.

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# The 6 tactics for happier remote teams (continued)

## 4. Create targeted self-service Groups

Within Microsoft 365 you can also collaborate through self-service creation of Office 365 Groups or teams within Teams. These give you appropriate security, compliance and manageability for your information.

## 5. Be sure of your meeting quality

With the increased load and usage from so many people working remotely, service monitoring has proven crucial to making sure everything is operating as it should. Microsoft carefully monitors Teams and application and network performance to check reporting for user satisfaction metrics and changes to service behaviour.

## 6. Think of Teams as your office space in the cloud

To use Teams to its fullest, you could hold every call and meeting there; use channels, rather than email or group chats, for team-level conversations. Turn on your camera to connect during meetings. Use Live Events for larger gatherings. If your organization allows, record meetings to access the transcript later.

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# World-spanning network power and reliability

Unlike other online meeting solutions, Microsoft Teams uses the power of the Microsoft Azure global network (one of the largest in the world) to connect users no matter where they are located. Microsoft has partnered with thousands of internet service providers for a direct connection to their infrastructure. This connection minimizes network hops for the best possible meeting experience. Other cloud meeting solutions depend on the public internet to route their calls, making call quality impossible to predict or control.

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# How EC Managed IT
# handled a monster of a problem

## The challenge

Monster Industries Ltd. Is a rapidly growing contractor with 40+ employees spread out across four offices and countless remote locations. They needed a better way to stay connected and collaborative across communication and file sharing, especially when remote wi-fi connections weren't at their best.

## The solution

EC Managed IT flew out to Monster's British Columbia headquarters over the Christmas holiday to assess the situation. Within two days (yes, just TWO days), EC had fully implemented Micosoft 365 and Microsoft SharePoint and migrated their on-premise server environment to Microsoft Azure.

### The results

Today, Monster is using Teams, Calling, SharePoint and more to the fullest. The implementation allowed them to scale their business, made communication across the company more efficient and centralized and helped their remote workforce stay connected from wherever they are. And when Monster needed support, EC was there to help, increasing response time to users by 96%.

If they can tame a beast like Monster, what can't EC do for you?

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# Ready to evolve?

It's time to move into the future and bring your remote workforce along for the ride. Reach out for a **FREE consultation** and let's talk about how EC Managed IT can move you forward by customizing your Microsoft Teams modern workplace deployment to give you more benefits than you ever imagined.

**CONTACT US**

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