MOBILE WORKFORCE STRATEGY

COVID-19 has changed the needs for a mobile workforce, almost overnight. Companies that will be successful in the future, will stay innovative, challenge the status quo, and push the boundaries on the traditional ways of doing things.

SELECTING THE RIGHT TOOLS

COVID-19 has changed the way we see the need for collaboration, which now has become vital for businesses, who have had to rapidly embrace remote working. Technology has been key to this transformation. In March (2020) alone, video conferencing applications achieved 62 million downloads. In response to this growing reliance on video conferencing for collaboration, there has been a rise in demand for laptops and notebooks. Businesses are seeking to equip themselves with the right tools to facilitate effective home working. There has been a surge of almost one third in year-on-year demand for these devices across Europe in the first quarter.

IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS

Businesses which are investing in new technology need to consider that successful remote collaboration often requires more than anticipated. Factors like internal storage capacity, core processor speed and power, among others, all impact a remote employee's work environment. However, connectivity is one of the key considerations. Employees must be issued with devices that feature the latest WiFi network support, Bluetooth capabilities, and HDMI and USB ports. Moreover, they need a reliable camera, quality audio and reduced fan noise for smooth team video calls.

The pandemic has provided a unique opportunity for business leaders to re-imagine their future operations and employee experiences. Almost half of employees (48 per cent) will likely work remotely at least part of the time after COVID-19, versus 30 per cent before the pandemic. For many, the move to remote working has been both a challenge and a success. It has unearthed new ways of achieving collaboration, but also reinforced that teamwork must be central to any organisation's strategy moving forward.

IMPORTANT LEARNINGS

- Mobile employees should be given strategies to help them manage negative emotions in the absence of peer support, such as relaxation and positive self-talk techniques.

- Technology must be appropriate and reliable. IT support should also be available for times when there are technical problems or failures. Technology must also enable easy-to-use links to mobile workers' support networks in order to reduce their feelings of loneliness and isolation.

- Managers need to act as a bridge between office-based workers and mobile workers. Both groups need to be encouraged to communicate and helped to appreciate the unique difficulties each faces.

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