

WORK FROM HOME FOR BUSINESS PROFESSIONALS

EVOLVE CHECKLIST

The way people work has evolved. Employees expect businesses to provide access to the right tools to be able to work remotely, at any time, on just about every device that you can imagine. According to IDC, 72% of employees will be working remotely by 2020. And with the outbreak of Coronavirus, it's become more critical than ever for businesses to be able to support remote working for their employees along with the ability to seamlessly and instantly collaborate with their teams and customers. Like most businesses, if you have remote employees or plans to implement a Work from Home (WFH) program, here are the top things that you need to think about:

IMPLEMENT A ROBUST WORK FROM HOME PLATFORM

The key items to address from a technology perspective are the ability for employees to collaborate with their teams and customers using a single platform along with the ability to access all the tools and business applications that they would need to get their work done.

Here are some specific suggestions to consider when determining the right technology platform for your employees:

Virtual Workspaces - Identity and Access Management, Desktop as a Service and More

Control SaaS Applications - Enable an IAM solution with a SSO portal so users will need only one set of credentials. Ideally, multi-factor authentication can be added into this offering to enhance security even further.

Check if your solution will be hosted in HIPAA / HITRUST, PCI and SOC compliant data centers as necessary. Help your helpdesk - Some estimates have a single password reset costing upwards of \$70 per incident. Lots of remote workers in new environments may tax your help desk more than ever. An IAM / SSO solution will be a big help here.

Legacy Applications and Virtual Desktops - Depending on your users you may have individuals that need access to applications that are hosted on premises. Others may need a full desktop experience to do their jobs. Get a list of user types together and determine needs for hardware such as thin / zero clients.

Team Collaboration -

- Do your employees use multiple/different collaboration systems today? If yes, have you considered adopting a single collaboration solution such as Microsoft Teams, Cisco UC etc.?
- What are the 'must-have' features for your collaboration solution? Here are the top few that we've seen customers typically choose to support their remote workforce:
 - Collaborative, persistent chat with your team members
 - File sharing and group editing simultaneously from anywhere in the world
 - Multi party audio and video calling for a more personalized meeting experience
 - Remote, mobile and guest conferencing with internal and external workforce
 - Presence to learn if your remote associates are available for a quick conversation
 - Workstreams comprising of direct messaging channels to collaborate with Teams
- Does your phone / communications system integrate with your collaboration software for a seamless experience?
If not, then that's where the market is headed.

- What are the 'must-have' features for your phone system? Here are the top few that we've seen customers typically choose to support their remote workforce:
 - Call recording
 - Receptionist Applications
 - Contact Center Features such as wallboard/dashboard, IVR, Callbacks, Surveys, Speech Analytics, etc.
 - CRM Integrations
 - Calling, number porting, global presence
 - Supporting Handsets
 - Miscellaneous UCaaS features
 - Administration portal to configure and manage telephony, voicemail, call center & conferencing functions
- Are your employees phone calls / agents customer calls being recorded?
- Do you have a bring-your-own-device (BYOD) policy? If not, and employees don't have a work laptop to bring home, it's a great time to investigate one.
- How will your employees access applications hosted on-premises?
- Will you remotely support the at-home equipment? Will your existing Support hours suffice?
- Where are the support boundaries drawn for personal equipment? Is this solely the employee's responsibility?

DETERMINE LEGAL AND FINANCIAL POLICIES

Addressing these items up-front and clearly communicating them will avoid gotchas and angst down the road. You need to be proactive in clearly documenting and verbally communicating these policies to the employees, avoid such things as employees attempting to submit expense reports for printers or expensive office equipment/furniture.

You want your legal team to weigh in on the compensation considerations and on how you will handle the approval of the work area; many legal teams do not want the liability of one employee visiting another employee's home for business purposes. Legal and financial considerations to address include:

- Will you pay your employees if their Internet connection is down and they are unable to access your applications?
- If their schedule has them "on-call" and you don't need them, are you going to pay employees for that time?
- What is expected of the employee to protect Confidential Information?
- Is the use of personal equipment allowed? Will the employees be compensated for equipment usage?
- How will you handle personal equipment failure or support?
- What is expected of the employee to protect employer assets?
- What items are reimbursable? Supplies, Internet, and phone?
- What items are not reimbursable? Heating/AC, furniture, electricity, commuting expenses?
- Will the agent's homeowners/renters policy cover employer equipment?

- Will initial and/or on-going photos and site visits be required to ensure employee's physical environment meets your expectations? What are the legal implications of these?
- How will the employer be compensated for equipment that is broken or not returned?
- Will PTO be mandatory for unproductive time (equipment failure, power, Internet, etc.)? Or, will the employee be required to work out of the corporate office in such situations?
- How will the employer educate and enforce adherence to compliance requirements, i.e. HIPAA, PCI etc.

BUILD A WORK FROM HOME PROGRAM GUIDE

An over-arching program guide is essential to a successful Work from Home program. Sections that should be included in the guide:

- Program overview.
- Policies & expectations.
- Reimbursement criteria and process.
- Troubleshooting - should include as much descriptive step-by-step setup and troubleshooting information as possible - with lots of diagrams / pictures, to make set up and troubleshooting as easy as possible for the employees.
- Support contacts - should outline the support process that the at-home workers are expected to follow, along with the appropriate support contact information.
- Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)**
- A Work from Home Agreement document that the employee signs that is kept on file by the HR department. After you've fully documented all the policies, procedures, expectations, and reimbursement criteria, having the employee sign off that they understand and acknowledge all those items will eliminate confusion and issues later on.

** Sample FAQs could include:

1. Who is a candidate?
2. Can my work schedule be changed if I work from home? If I return to the office?
3. Will this impact my compensation and benefits?
4. Will the company's insurance cover the equipment?
5. May I use my own equipment?
6. Are there tax implications if I work from home?

SELECT EMPLOYEES TO WORK FROM HOME

Employee Availability:

- What are Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)? Is the employee meeting those KPIs now?
- Does the employee have the "right" personality / motivation to work independently?
- Is the employee willing to work flexible hours or shifts?
- Who is responsible for the employee's dependent care?
- Is there a high-speed home Internet connection?

- Does the employee have a landline phone installed?

On-going Considerations:

- What are the minimum acceptable KPIs to maintain at-home status?
- How will you handle "other" non-KPI challenges?
- How often are the employees required to work from the corporate office?
- Will home visits or photos be required?
- What kind of notice will be given if the employee is removed from the program?

PILOT, EVALUATE, ADJUST, AND DEPLOY

- Launch program and set regularly scheduled evaluations of all aspects of the program.
- Monitor KPIs and calls to detect early warning signs.
- Actively solicit feedback from agents, support teams, customers, and supervisors.
- When rolling out any changes to the program, be sure to update the guide and secure signed acceptances of the changes from all employees.

ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Evaluate your work-from-home program at regular intervals, and always look for ways to enhance it. Working from home is a privilege that can be revoked at any time, and at-home workers should be expected to be on-call as needed. Here are some additional recommendations you should consider:

- Clearly define your policies, document them, and make sure staff is aware.
- Create an at-home "community" to maintain interpersonal connections.
- Leaders of at-home workers need to cultivate engagement to prevent employees from feeling "disconnected" from their office.
- Leverage Unified Communication & Collaboration tools to bridge the distance.
- Monitor KPIs and customer interactions to detect early warning signs.
- Actively solicit feedback from employees, managers, agents, support teams customers, and supervisors.
- Communicate! Communicate! Communicate!

ABOUT EVOLVE IP

At Evolve IP we Make Work Better™, ensuring employees are more productive, more mobile, more secure and less dependent on IT resources. We design Purpose-Built® solutions, tailored just for your business, that unify workspaces, collaboration and communications, and contact centers. Integrating blue-chip technology partners like Microsoft, Cisco, Citrix and VMware, with our intellectual property, Evolve IP's analyst-acclaimed solutions have been deployed globally to 500,000+ users and into the world's most well-known brands. All Evolve IP associates are focused on driving successful client outcomes and that has resulted in our scoring at the top of verified analyst and client satisfaction rankings.