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A new remote-work reality will mean long-term changes for how M&E gets business done. Welcome to Hollywood's new normal. P. 15

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Rethinking the core concepts of infrastructure, workplace productivity and business processes

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Abstract: With the current COVID-19 crisis, technology leaders are experiencing challenges at an incredibly large scale and at an unprecedented speed, from workforce impact, to supply chain disruption, to increased customer demand, to shifting financial goals. Here are some ideas on how to keep up.

The entertainment industry is no stranger to disruption, and change is a constant part of the landscape.

In the past few years, fueled by technology, growth in content creation and consumption has skyrocketed by double digits around the world. This has created new sources of revenue and platforms for the M&E industry to capture and capitalize on. To keep up with the demand and global regulations, as well as prevent new security threats, IT teams have had to rethink internal workflow and processes and leaned on cloud technology to support these new mediums.

In a world of uncertainty and constant change, mandatory remote work is the current norm. Organizations that want to ramp up their success are now forced to develop new cloud-collaboration strategies to get the most out of their work-from-anywhere teams. Technology leaders and their business counterparts have to embrace the philosophy of work from anywhere, particularly when it comes to rethinking the core concepts of infrastructure, workplace productivity, and business processes.

Here to help are steps to ramp up remote work in the cloud and thrive in this environment:

1. Confirm core infrastructure and system capacity

When you enable remote work for your internal and external teams, you need to consider a number of factors, including infrastructure stress, system and bandwidth capacity, software licensing, physical capacity for VPN and network capacity. Organizations that expect to initiate broad work-from-anywhere policies should focus on the following areas:

Bandwidth to support remote work

At the core of remote work is the ability for employees on private networks to connect to applications and content via VPN. This requires network throughput capacity, VPN hardware and enough user licenses to scale seamlessly. Plus, you'll want to make sure that you have enough VPN appliances spread out geographically to handle 100 percent of your workforce working remotely. These appliances should also be located in areas where you have a larger number of workers to minimize latency to resources they may be connecting to.

Ensure you have a readily available identity and access management (IAM) capability

Being able to authenticate users and assign them appropriate privileges and access to (and within) applications is a critical precursor to securely enabling remote work. Companies should consider an access management platform to keep critical resources secure.

Exercise business continuity plans

Planning is essential for managing any crisis. Build a preventive framework to reduce and mitigate the likelihood of business disruption and identify potential risks associated with an adverse event like COVID-19. This reduces the impact to operations, sustains shareholder value, and ensures continued service for your customers. Built correctly, a business continuity plan should be business-as-usual from an infrastructure and services standpoint. You should also confirm that third-party service providers, vendors and partners that are business critical also have a business continuity plan in place, including the ability to rapidly implement secure remote work practices.

2. Implement the most immediate cloud workplace tools you need

Whether it's the way your organization works every day, or in response to an immediate business continuity risk, you have to deliver a virtual workplace that enables people to be productive on any device, from anywhere, securely. For organizations that haven't fully established their remote work capabilities, technology leaders need to identify core business use cases so they can implement short-term, interim solutions to satisfy the immediate need.

Determine main software tools

Video conferencing, messaging, collaboration and document sharing are just a few examples of technologies that enable remote work and are the backbone of the communications fabric you'll need. These systems should power efficient and easy collaboration so that they work across teams, geographies and technology platforms. Here are the top categories of best-of-breed solutions to consider.

■ **Team messaging tools:** To keep everyone in the loop, facilitate interactive discussions and increase team responsiveness.

■ **Video conferencing tools:** People who are accustomed to working in the office may feel disengaged from the resources, information or relationships they need to do their jobs well. Enable everyone to effectively conduct one-on-one meetings, team meetings and phone calls.

■ **Content collaboration platforms:** Make it easy to store, access, edit and share critical files with anyone, from teammates to vendors to partners. And with security and compliance built in, you know your data is safe and secure, while teams stay productive and healthy.

■ **Project management tools:** Working remotely will put a strain on your project collaboration, so tools will keep teams on the same page and keep work moving smoothly.

■ **Phones:** Cloud VoIP PBXs allow your people to decouple themselves from a traditional hard desk phone and instead work with a software dialer and headset from their laptops. Be sure to loop in your network team to ensure that best practices around QoS are configured.

Deliver workplace technology securely

A key aspect of delivering a modern, cloud-based workspace is keeping remote work both secure and compliant. Just because you're responding to a crisis doesn't mean security threats or compliance risks are any less pernicious and pervasive.

■ **Manage user devices:** As your people are working from home, make sure they're working on devices that have the appropriate levels of security. Endpoint management tools will allow you to securely manage re-

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mote devices. Also, consider restricting people from downloading sensitive content or data on personal devices. And ensure your content management and sharing systems offer the necessary level of security controls in these environments, especially since the usage volume of these services will significantly increase in a work-from-anywhere scenario.

■ **Prevent data leakage:** Enabling a remote workforce while preventing sensitive information from being leaked should go hand in hand. Advanced threat detection and monitoring technologies will enable internal and external collaboration and educate employees on internal security policies, all while preventing data leakage.

■ **Monitor user activity and security events:** Gaining visibility into the risks and threats to your distributed workforce is a new challenge, and you'll need to implement cloud-based SIEM tools to address these needs.

■ **Meet compliance and data privacy requirements:** Early on, consider the compliance and privacy implications of remote, distributed work.

3. Put the right business processes in place

As events like COVID-19 occur, businesses will ask more people to work from home. While you can speed up some things, speeding up the work-from-anywhere culture can be difficult. Some of your people just aren't

used to open, social, and collaborative types of working.

Plus, the cultural aspects of how a company works may not match a work-from-anywhere situation. Below, we've outlined some steps that technology leaders can take to make sure people have the systems they need to stay productive, and to help ease the transition:

Create a distributed work culture

The best remote work cultures don't just digitally replicate traditional business processes and work styles, they fundamentally leverage new work styles to execute and build a sense of community in the process. Here are a few tips and tricks to power a remote work organization that's collaborative and fast-moving:

■ **Agile work:** Remote work is often smoothest with agile teams that come together in virtual workspaces. Consider doing daily virtual "stand-ups" over video where you can share project plans, goals, and other critical content within Box shared spaces to coordinate work.

■ **Virtual all-hands:** Large-scale virtual internal events and webinars are often the easiest ways to communicate on a large scale to employees and partners. You can also easily add audience and group participation with capabilities like polls, real-time content editing, and curation for agenda setting.

■ **Home office hours:** Consider having open video call times between managers

and team members to pop in and ask questions of managers or other teammates.

■ **Over-communicate:** This is the most important thing you can do when working remotely. People have a natural tendency to forget to communicate — especially the small things — if they don't see your face every day. Don't be afraid to connect with coworkers just to see how they're doing.

Define policies around remote work

While remote work policies will vary from company to company, a general remote policy should at least outline the following:

■ **Availability:** Does the team need to be online during specific business hours or will they be able to set their own schedules?

■ **Tools:** What tools are available for your organization to use for messaging, conferencing, and collaboration?

■ **Productivity:** How will your organization track progress and measure results?

It's impressive how quickly the old 9-to-5 grind and daily trips to the office have been replaced by flexible, work-from-anywhere schedules and teams that span traditional workplace boundaries. And the technology is now in place to securely support a much more distributed and virtual workforce for many companies and industries, including M&E.

Now is the time to embrace the future of work. ■

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