



E - GUIDE

UCaaS & CCaaS: Transitioning to work-from-home model

WHAT YOU'LL LEARN

- ✓ Three guidelines for work-from-home communications
- ✓ How to keep team collaboration simple
- ✓ Tips for at-home contact center agents

The transition to managing a remote workforce may seem daunting. However, with the right strategy global enterprises can recognize productivity gains all while building stronger teams. To achieve this, it is necessary to have a solid plan for both your communication and collaboration needs, so your team can remain engaged and productive. When designing a remote workforce strategy, many leaders use the following to serve as their communication guidelines:

- Engagement and culture
- Productivity and collaboration
- Training and management

Here's a breakdown of each guideline as well as the technologies and resources required for success.

Engagement and culture: Video conferencing is the new must-have

When planning for teams to work from anywhere, technology takes a more pronounced role in helping employees stay connected. Email alone is no longer sufficient. Remote workers require a broader set of tools to stay connected, find the resources they need, and access to managerial support.

Now, more than ever, video is an essential way to maintain the cultural structure of the remote organization. When working remotely, employees require the visual cues and face-to-face feedback that only video conferencing technology can deliver. Video is also particularly useful for complex or sensitive conversations,

as it is more personal than written or audio-only communication. Not just for one-on-one discussions, video collaboration has the power to transform the work-from-home team experience. When the constraints of commuting or cross-campus distancing is removed, you can quickly and intimately connect with more groups and do so more frequently.

Productivity and collaboration: Teams technology simplifies work

Employees who are new to remote work are often surprised by the added time and effort needed to locate the resources and information they require to do their job. Getting answers to simple questions can often feel like an obstacle when working from home. Team Collaboration technologies can help solve these problems. Teams tools provide virtual spaces, where groups of employees can collaborate around projects. These virtual meetings spaces serve a multitude of needs from staying in touch to getting questions answered quickly. The simplicity of a Teams meeting space allows members to quickly see who is available, share files and feedback, ultimately facilitating collaboration.

Creating specialized Teams spaces can measurably improve productivity and engagement:

- **Spontaneous engagement:** In the office, you may swing by a co-workers desk, but while working remotely instant messages can improve your team's communication and collaboration. Important information can be sent via chat to one person individually or to a group message thread. This allows the recipient(s) to read and respond right away or flag the message for follow up later.
- **Information tracking:** Keeping track of conversations is easy—all your messages are saved within the virtual Teams meeting space. Additional features such as read receipts show who has received and read the message. Plus, the message management tools allow you to remove redundant content, keeping the virtual Team space focused. You may even find you need to send fewer emails and make fewer phone calls to stay productive!

- **Project collaboration:** For a team to be successful, everyone must be able to fully participate. In a virtual Teams space, anyone can start meetings, sketch concepts on a white board, and share screens. When all relevant communications and associated documents are in one place, work is efficient and productivity can be accelerated.



Management and training: Communication frequency and guidelines

When working remotely, many employees struggle with fewer face-to-face interactions and reduced access to managerial support. A virtual workforce requires more frequent communications and more touchpoints between managers and employees. When communications are lacking, remote managers can be out of touch with employee needs, leaving employees unsupported.

As enterprises develop guidelines for working from anywhere, it is recommended to establish “rules of engagement” for the virtual workforce. Remote work becomes more efficient and satisfying when managers set expectations for the frequency and ideal communication channels used for each interaction. For example, “We use Cisco Webex video conferencing for daily check-in meetings, but we use Microsoft Teams when something is urgent.” Also, consider the additional training teams may require as they rely on more robust technology to stay connected. There is a learning curve to working remotely. Thus, it's important to acknowledge this ramp-up period and provide the necessary training, support, and guidance.

Work-from-home contact center agents: Cloud analytics work best

Work-from-home models are yet another driver for transitioning communications applications and customer service operations to the cloud. With your contact center in the cloud, setting up agents to work from home is simple. An agent only needs a computer with a browser and internet connection as well as a phone that can be dialed directly. This phone can be their smartphone, a desk phone or even a softphone on their computer desktop. Softphones should be used with a headset, as this ensures they can stay fully productive and connected to customers and the rest of the business.

The additional visibility and flexibility needed to manage at-home agents working at different hours is also a necessary consideration. You'll need to have lots of insights to manage your team virtually. From dynamic scheduling tools that allow agent participation, to quality management and voice-of-the-customer data gleaned from speech, text, and desktop analytics, operational intelligence should be available in a single cloud platform. And in today's rapidly changing world, making edits on the fly is essential. You'll want flexible call routing features supported by drag-and-drop capabilities, so adjustments can be made in just a few clicks.

If you're looking to quickly ramp up a crisis response contact center, leveraging cloud options will help you cost effectively facilitate the world-class experience clients expect. With a strategy that adequately bridges technologies with management techniques, enterprises can make working remotely the new normal--all without sacrificing productivity.

About Masergy

Masergy is the software-defined network and cloud platform for the digital enterprise. Recognized as the pioneer in software-defined networking, Masergy enables unrivaled application performance across the network and the cloud with Managed SD-WAN, UCaaS, CCaaS, and Managed Security solutions. Industry-leading SLAs coupled with an unparalleled customer experience enable global enterprises to achieve business outcomes with certainty.