Top 10 IT Considerations for
REMOTE WORKING READINESS

You likely have Business Continuity plans in place to deal with various scenarios such as mass transit incidents, data centre outages, building incidents and maybe even epidemics which impact a percentage of staff. Have you considered plans for a pandemic which has the potential for all employees in a location or perhaps country needing to be isolated from congregating and forced to work remotely?

Traditional plans typically address a disaster affecting one location and often plan for only critical employees being enabled to work. This may include them working from a different office, leveraging colocation facilities or working from home. These approaches work for isolated incidents and are often based on relatively short-term scenarios targeted at fewer individuals. In the event of a pandemic everything changes.

Leveraging our extensive experience in remote working scenarios and the creation of cloud based virtual infrastructure, we have created this guide to provide the top 10 considerations and sample questions we are asking our partners and their clients to help them get prepared.

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1. Existing BCP Plan

1. What is the scalability of your current plan?
   a. Does it cater for critical staff only?
   b. How easy is it to change your plan to cover for all staff?
   c. What other gaps exist between your current plan and what may be required?
   d. How are you planning to rapidly close this gap?

2. What happens if you need to invoke DR during a work from home scenario?
   a. Can your DR environment cater for the whole company?
   b. What issues were identified in your last DR test?
   c. Have these issues been addressed?
   d. Have they been re-tested to ensure they are rectified?

2. Remote Working

1. What percentage of your staff have a PC at home?
   a. Do you need to provide devices to home users?
   b. Would your home users benefit from a thin client?

2. Do your staff all have internet connectivity at home?

3. Do you have a VPN capability in place? Do your staff know how to connect?

4. Where home internet is not present, will you have users leveraging their mobile devices?
   a. What are the implications of the data plans for the individuals?

5. How do you plan on remotely supporting disparate devices?

6. Do you have dependencies on key applications which may not work when accessed remotely?

7. Is there a requirement for you to control data transfer when users work remotely?

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2
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3. Virtual Desktops

1. Do you have a Virtual Desktop Infrastructure (VDI)?
    a. How many concurrent users can your existing solution cater for?
    b. Is your licensing named user or shared license?
    c. Have you load tested your existing platform?
    d. Can your access gateways and firewalls deal with the load of more VDI Users?
    e. Does your SOE cater for all applications needed if new users are required to VDI connect?
    f. If you are a Citrix client, are you aware of Remote PC?

2. What are your plans to scale this environment if needed?
    a. Do you have a current cloud setup? If not, can you accelerate connectivity?
    b. Do you plan to scale to cloud? Which one and how?
    c. How rapidly could you scale to cloud?
    d. Have you considered reserving cloud infrastructure in the event of a rush on resources?
    e. Have you considered leveraging Microsoft Virtual Desktop (WVD) for rapid cloud VDI provisioning?
    f. Have you considered setting up a VDI in the cloud and leaving it off until it is required?
    g. What are your plans to manage costs during time of cloud bursting?

3. Licensing considerations
    a. How easy is it for you to access additional licenses?
    b. Can you be licensed on a monthly burst basis or will you need to subscribe for more perpetual licenses?
    c. If you are considering Microsoft WVD, are you appropriately licensed?
    d. Are you working with your vendors now to negotiate pricing?

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4. IT Support

1. Can your IT Support be completed remotely?

2. If you need to stand up additional infrastructure are your team skilled and capable?

3. Will your team be able to expand environments in a controlled manner?

4. Can you monitor and manage these environments given your team will be heavily consumed helping people at home?

5. Do your staff know what they can expect from a support perspective when working at home?

5. Security

1. Do you have a firm handle on identity management?

2. How will your users authenticate should primary auth not be available?

3. If you are establishing a new cloud environment, what security considerations must be a priority?

4. How will you manage remote workforce end point security?

5. How will you address shadow IT with people working at home? Do you have a CASB solution in place which caters for remote access?

6. Do you have risk based access control or conditional access implemented?

6. Governance

1. What data controls are in place when all people are working remotely?

2. Are there any data privacy issues to be aware of?

3. Does Data Loss Prevention become more important to your organisation now?

4. Phishing and scamming will no doubt increase. How confident are you in your ability to manage?

5. Do you have easy audit visibility of what your staff will be doing remotely?

6. Do you have any regulatory compliance requirements to address?

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7. On Premises/Co-located Infrastructure

1. Can you remotely administer all servers in the event no one is permitted to enter a data centre?

2. Do you have remote boot capability?

3. What are the plans for your co-location hosting company if physical access is required?

4. What policies do you have in place if staff must visit a data centre?

8. Collaboration

1. Do you currently have collaboration toolsets?

2. Will your collaboration toolsets work on home machines?

3. Are you aware of Microsoft's offer of free Teams usage for 6 months?

4. Are your staff enabled to truly capitalise on the collaboration toolset capabilities?

5. How would you quickly enable your staff to leverage your collaboration tools?

6. Does your remote desktop solution provide a good enough user experience for voice and video?

7. Have you prepared communications for your staff regarding best ways to work remotely?

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9. Telephony

1. Where will your reception calls divert?

2. How will you enable your staff for conference calling?

3. If you run your own conference platform, can it scale appropriately?

4. What will happen to your call centre?

5. Do you need to enable soft phone usage?

6. Do your staff have the necessary technology required in the event soft phones are needed?

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10. Supplier Relationships

1. What are your key supplier dependencies?

2. Do you have a view of their plans?

3. Are you comfortable with the support SLA's in place?

4. Have you discussed their offerings to assist you with rapid expansion?

5. Have you considered engaging your IT partner to monitor and manage your environment given your team will be busy trying to support BAU?

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