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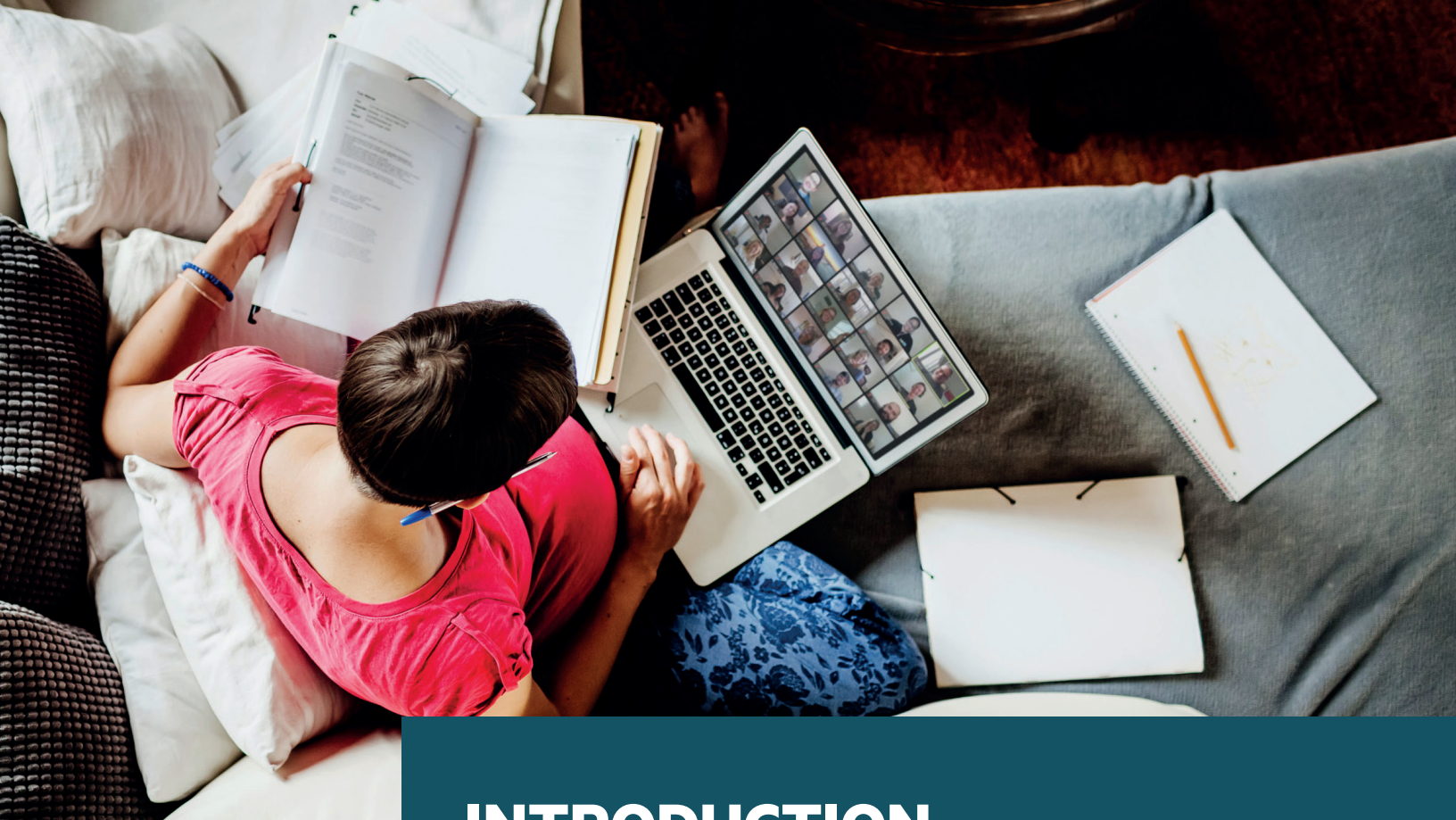
EMBRACING AND ENHANCING THE FUTURE OF WORK

From the hybrid office to the cloud, explore these new approaches for small businesses to create more flexible and effective workplaces.

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INTRODUCTION

In early 2020, businesses around the world were forced to make a dramatic transformation in the way they worked. Employees could no longer go into the office. So IT staff had to respond by setting up and supporting a remote workforce – virtually overnight. From network outages to limited capacity to huge increases in helpdesk requests, it took a constant effort by IT workers just to keep employees supported so they could continue to be productive.

While that period of make-do solutions has passed for many businesses, the future of work is presenting its own set of new and daunting challenges. As remote work becomes an enduring reality, IT teams need to re-envision their infrastructure in order to develop and deploy solutions that support the security standards, required capacity, and long-term demands of a mobile workforce.

What does this new reality mean for small businesses? As the leader of a small IT staff — if not the only IT professional — the needs of your workforce will continue to evolve rapidly. You need to start by clearly defining your goals and finding innovative solutions that will enable you to scale at a pace that fits the new ways your business will work going forward.

This eBook will help you take the first step in understanding this new environment. Explore new and better ways to support your remote workforce, and ensure you have the right security and capacity as your business grows. See how you can be better prepared for the future of work with the help of HPE.

UNDERSTANDING THE NEW EXPECTATIONS OF IT INFRASTRUCTURE

In the new remote work environment, IT needs to ensure that users have everything they need to be productive – from wherever they're working.

With small and mid-sized businesses, there haven't always been resources to support a remote workforce. Before 2020, only 24% of their global workforce was mobile.[1] But throughout 2020, they were forced to adapt. As many as 78% of small and mid-sized businesses went remote through portions of the year.[1] With the sudden spike of remote workers, businesses saw the limitations in their legacy systems in terms of both capacity and flexibility.

How are small and mid-size businesses responding to the new reality of remote work?

64% of businesses are increasing their investments in remote work solutions.[1]

51% of businesses are increasing their investments in digital transformation.[3]

25% of businesses are accelerating digital transformation efforts.[4]

In addition to responding to changing business demands, the needs of employees are also evolving. In a survey for PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) on the state of remote working in the U.S., 72% of office workers shared that they would prefer to work remotely at least two days a week.[2] They also expect the same capabilities that they had in-person, from the being able to collaborate to running complex, specialized workloads.

Businesses now have the opportunity take a deeper look at how to securely support the new ways people work and thrive. Through 2020, business leaders saw the value of flexible technology, and 64% of small and mid-sized businesses report that they are increasing their investments in remote work solutions.[1] The question isn't if small businesses will adopt remote work technology, the question is how to do it in a way that causes minimal disruption, reduced risk, and maximum benefits.

Despite the perception that small and mid-sized businesses aren't able to use enterprise-grade technologies, innovations in storage and networking have made it easier than ever for the smallest companies to adopt new solutions. With the help of HPE, every size business can enable secure and seamless work across physical locations.

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REINVENTING THREE PILLARS OF YOUR WORK ENVIRONMENT

It's never been more important to understand how to support employees where they work, how they're working today, and how that work will evolve over time in response to the changing demands of the business.

Organizations are adapting their infrastructures to support a future workforce that is more flexible, remote, and increasingly mobile. But in a time when so much is changing, how do you plan your company's evolution? As you explore new and different technology solutions, keep in mind the importance of three critical pillars of your business: workspace, workflow, and workforce.

A Secure Workspace

First and foremost, employees need an alternative to the office — a secure virtual environment where they can easily access all the resources they need to do their jobs. There are multiple formats for a future workspace, from a completely virtual business with a work from anywhere policy to a hybrid office model. Either way employee resources need to be secure but unrestricted by physical location.

As your leadership team plans for this new type of workplace, you need to identify the right technology to ensure success. Decide how to set up remote offices with a virtual desktop infrastructure (VDI) that is easy to deploy and scale. And just as you would with physical security, determine the smartest way to manage and protect access across your virtual environment.

A Productive Workforce

Employees are now relying almost exclusively on technology to maintain relationships with customers. As you bring on new employees or introduce new tools to your workforce, make sure your technology is simple for users to manage. IT staff should be able to easily deploy solutions that help users to connect and communicate virtually.

Determine if you will need to conduct training sessions for using new products in a virtual environment. Small and mid-sized businesses often benefit from ready-to-go server configurations that enable IT staff to quickly deploy compute or storage resources that drive productivity.

A Dynamic Workflow

Another critical issue facing companies is the ability to dynamically change business practices in order to quickly respond to the demands of an evolving business landscape. As organizations continue to adapt to a virtual environment, they need to make sure applications and platforms can easily and reliably meet the changing needs of the marketplace.

Consider how users first responded to remote work. What can be automated? What tools can better empower workers? And determine the best ways to maintain and optimize workflow throughout the process of a changing technology environment.
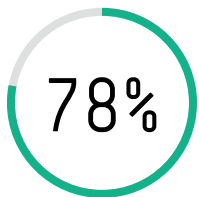
GETTING THE BEST OF BOTH WORLDS IN A HYBRID WORKPLACE

IT staff need to be on the lookout for new and better solutions that bring together the best benefits from multiple technologies.

From an office environment to a cloud infrastructure, "hybrid" is an increasingly popular model for addressing the challenges of remote work. By combining multiple types of solutions, a hybrid model can provide a flexible environment that keeps your organization ready for any new or unexpected IT or business challenges.

A hybrid workplace model supports both office workers and remote workers. Using techniques like hot desking, some employees can work onsite at assigned desks while others can sign in remotely. Many small businesses can't entirely eliminate their physical location, so the hybrid model enables flexibility that provides an alternative workplace option.

78%

of IT pros at small and mid-sized businesses cited increased IT flexibility as a top benefit of hybrid cloud *before* the rush to remote work.[5]

Many organizations are looking at new and more efficient ways to use cloud technology to support a remote work environment. By bridging private and public clouds, organizations can leverage flexibility that is especially beneficial to small businesses. Even before the rush to remote work, IT pros at small and mid-sized businesses valued the freedom of hybrid cloud with 78% citing increased IT flexibility as a top benefit.[5] A hybrid approach lets you get the most out of your IT infrastructure with increased performance, management, and reliability.

Top Benefits of Hybrid Cloud for Small and Mid-Sized Businesses:

1. Improved IT flexibility
2. Reduced risk
3. Reduced downtime
4. Reduced cost
5. Improved visibility

Hot Desking

A practice where employees do not have a permanent desk. They are assigned a space for the day or they take whichever workstation is available.

THE KEY TO MAKING A SEAMLESS TRANSITION

Any successful transformation should ensure maximum impact with minimal disruption. When done correctly, the only noticeable change will be how smoothly it all operates.

Unlike the initial rush to remote work, when many businesses had an extremely short amount of time to transition employees to work from home, organizations now have some time to take a more deliberate approach to implementing a thorough digital transformation. You'll need to identify and deploy a solution that can grow with your business, as well as ensure minimal downtime so your remote workers can stay productive while you improve their environment.

It is still a challenging time to transform your infrastructure, but it is also imperative not to delay your preparation and execution of creating new ways for your employees to work more effectively. As you move forward in deploying a long-term virtual workplace, make sure the solution is configured to fit your needs, as well as those of your workers. You also need to make sure that any solution you choose can fit your budget.

Accelerating Your Transformation

By choosing the right partner to help you implement your digital transformation, your staff can focus on achieving your business goals, and not worry about the heavy lifting required to update your digital environment.

That's where HPE can make a big difference. By helping you develop the right strategies, HPE experts can help you find the ideal solution to meet your business needs – today and tomorrow.

HPE Pointnext Services help guide you through these challenges. Especially as you maintain the productivity of your workforce, you can have a single partner that manages your full stack of remote work solutions. HPE will be there to provide the expertise required to implement the best solutions available to optimize your virtual environment.

Finding a Simple and Secure Solution

Another way to ease your transition is to take advantage of solutions configured to fit your needs, with premier performance and protection. As technology gets more complicated, building infrastructure from scratch is becoming less common – with reason. Rather than bringing on a specialist and spending countless hours configuring a solution, it's more efficient to pick a preconfigured solution that is right for you.

HPE Small Office Deployment offers an office-in-a-box solution that streamlines digital transformation with easy-to-deploy technology solutions perfectly suited to achieve your business objectives. The solution pairs the security and performance of HPE ProLiant Gen10 servers with the reliability of Aruba networking, all at an affordable price.

Financing Support

It can be difficult to put a price on adaptability, but it's even more costly to delay or fail to act when necessary. Many small and mid-sized businesses report reduction in costs and increases in productivity after investing in their infrastructure, but that doesn't equate to a clear number for your budget. You need a partner who can offer the financial services your business needs to ensure success.

HPE makes it easy to invest in your IT infrastructure. Solution bundles offer powerful yet affordable options for small businesses. HPE Financial Services can work with you to plan out payment schedules, reduce cash outlays, and alleviate the strain on your budget.

BUILDING YOUR VIRTUAL WORKPLACE WITH HPE

When designing and deploying new, more effective IT solutions for a remote workforce, start by selecting a trusted partner with proven expertise in making technology a game changer.

HPE can provide support and solutions built around your business as you reinvent the work environment for your organization, from solution experts to management services to a powerful technology.

1

Remote Management

A remote workplace doesn't just apply to end users. HPE offers tools and services like HPE Integrated Lights-Out (ILO) and HPE InfoSight that enable organizations to monitor, optimize and leverage advanced AI to manage your technology from anywhere.

2

Consistent Security

A mobile workforce comes with new risks. Security is built into the silicon of the entire HPE ProLiant portfolio, from edge to core, to keep your environment protected.

3

Virtual Desktop Infrastructure

Make sure your virtual workplace is centered around your users. Provide them with a friction-less experience with a hybrid approach to VDI built on powerful HPE ProLiant servers.

4   Streamlined Operations

Make the most of compute and storage resources with AI-driven predictive analytics, and trust HPE SimpliVity to make deployment of virtual desktops fast and easy.

5   Flexible Cloud Services

You should be able to easily configure the cloud experience that's right for your business. Optimize your solution for the size of your company, and only pay for what you use with HPE GreenLake or HPFS Subscription services.

6   Industry-Leading Expertise

You don't need a team of specialized technicians to provide innovative technology for your business. HPE offers expert support and guidance to help you through your digital transformation.

CONCLUSION

Small and mid-sized businesses rely on a dedicated group of employees who are working hard to achieve their business goals. Even as employees embrace different ways of working, they are pushing their organizations forward.

By focusing on innovation, you can support the changing work of your employees and prepare for the future. You can ensure that they have a secure, simple, and flexible working environment whether they are on-site, at their home offices, or somewhere in between.

Count on HPE Small Business Solutions to guide your business through the new and ever evolving developments, from the workspace to the workforce to the technology that brings it all together. With expert support and innovative solutions, HPE is the partner that can help you through a digital transformation.

Learn more about how HPE can help you reinvent the way you work.

Explore Small Business Solutions →

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