

Best Practices Checklist for Large-scale Relocation of Work from the Office to Working from Home

This guide aims to assist companies in the large-scale relocation of work from the office to working from home for reasons such as a pandemic. It does not query the establishment of workstations from home in general. For this approach the list might not be complete and is legally not secured. Nevertheless, the given tips can be used for this purpose.

This guide is available free of charge and published in different chapters or blog posts. Some chapters cover topics such as managing employees and teams who are working from home or the usage of specific tools such as EMDS, Teamware, etc.

This chapter covers some basic ideas of IT support in terms of equipment and tools for working from home.

1. Preparatory measures by the employer

Once you have clarified all the organizational and labor law requirements for working from home, you should check a few more issues before releasing the employees to work remotely.

a. Check which activities can be fulfilled by working from home

Review all functions and tasks in your company together with the management team. Determine which processes, roles, and employees can work remotely and which tasks can only be performed on company premises. Typically, administrative functions such as HR, finance, and marketing, but also sales, R&D, consulting as well as parts of IT, can easily work remote. Separate plans should be in place for manufacturing, logistics, after-sales and service to maintain their services.

b. Preparation and testing

o IT infrastructure of the employees

Check if all employees who should work from home have a laptop available. Employees should announce whether they have access to the Internet with sufficient Internet bandwidth in their homes. Should employees need access to applications that are not operated in the cloud (SaaS), a VPN infrastructure must be available.

- o Let your IT organization perform a VPN stress test. If time allows, let all employees who are eligible for remote work access their company network via VPN from home at the same time.

c. Have the required physical documents at hand

All employees for whom working from home is possible should have all the physical documents necessary to perform their tasks at hand.

d. Inform your clients

Proactively inform your clients that you have sent your staff home and work remotely, making sure you continue to deliver your services in time and quality.

2. IT Applications for distributed working

a. Video Conferencing

There is a broad range of tools, such as videocalls, webcasts, or video conferencing. Some require specific hardware. A good start is a webconferencing tool such as MS-Teams, Skype (for Business), GoToMeeting, WebEx, and Zoom just to mention a few. These solutions support adhoc video calls and webcasts, team meetings, messenger, and desktop sharing.

The following tips should be considered to have effective conferences and calls:

- **Technical Requirements**
 1. Computer processing (minimum 2 GB of RAM) and a good and stable internet connection (r.a. 2 Mbps down and 2 Mbps up of Internet bandwidth on both sides).
 2. A high-resolution webcam
 3. A headset and or conference speaker
- **Figure out what works bests before you set up a webcast or video conference**
 1. It's easier and faster to write things down and share with a messenger.
 2. Using a team messenger with channels for informal communication and mail with recipients list for formal communication might be an alternative too.
- **The following Code of Conduct helps make your video conferences efficient**
 1. Use a headset in crowded spaces
 2. Mute when you're not speaking
 3. Find an appropriate location to avoid inappropriate backdrops, e.g., windows
 4. Opt-in for meeting recording
 5. Leveraging messenger features to share ideas and questions without interrupting the presenter
 6. Many web conferencing solutions offer sharing features:
 - Disable notifications from mail, chats etc.
 - Sharing applications instead of sharing desktop to avoid unintentional sharing of sensible content
 - Leverage the possibility to handover presenter rights
- **Don't forget that online meetings, webcasts, messenger and email** are just a different way to communicate with people and therefore have an etiquette as well

b. Sharing of content

If you do not have a tool for centralized content delivery in use yet, check which offers are best suited for you due to cost and time reasons. Usually, shared drives in the Cloud (Dropbox, OneDrive, GoogleDrive, Syncplicity, ...) are free of charge up to a specific storage

volume. Providers of Enterprise Shared Cloud Drives, also known as Cloud Content Management, offer free versions as well.

Collaboration Environments (Jive, Huddle, ...) as well as light or high-end DMS solutions (Sharepoint, Box, OpenText, Hyland, Alfresco, ...) must usually be purchased or rented from the manufacturer or distributor. These solutions offer more functionalities but the implementation and roll-out of EDMS solutions typically takes more time and needs to be planned carefully. Some solutions even offer simultaneous editing of documents.

In any case, check how sensitive your content is and whether it is subject to specific regulations regarding the physical storage location. With some free offers, the storage of your data in Germany or the EU cannot be guaranteed.

For more details about specific tools supporting the distributed work with content or managing remote working employees, please follow our next blog post.