5 LESSONS LEARNED FROM REMOTE WORKING DURING THE PANDEMIC
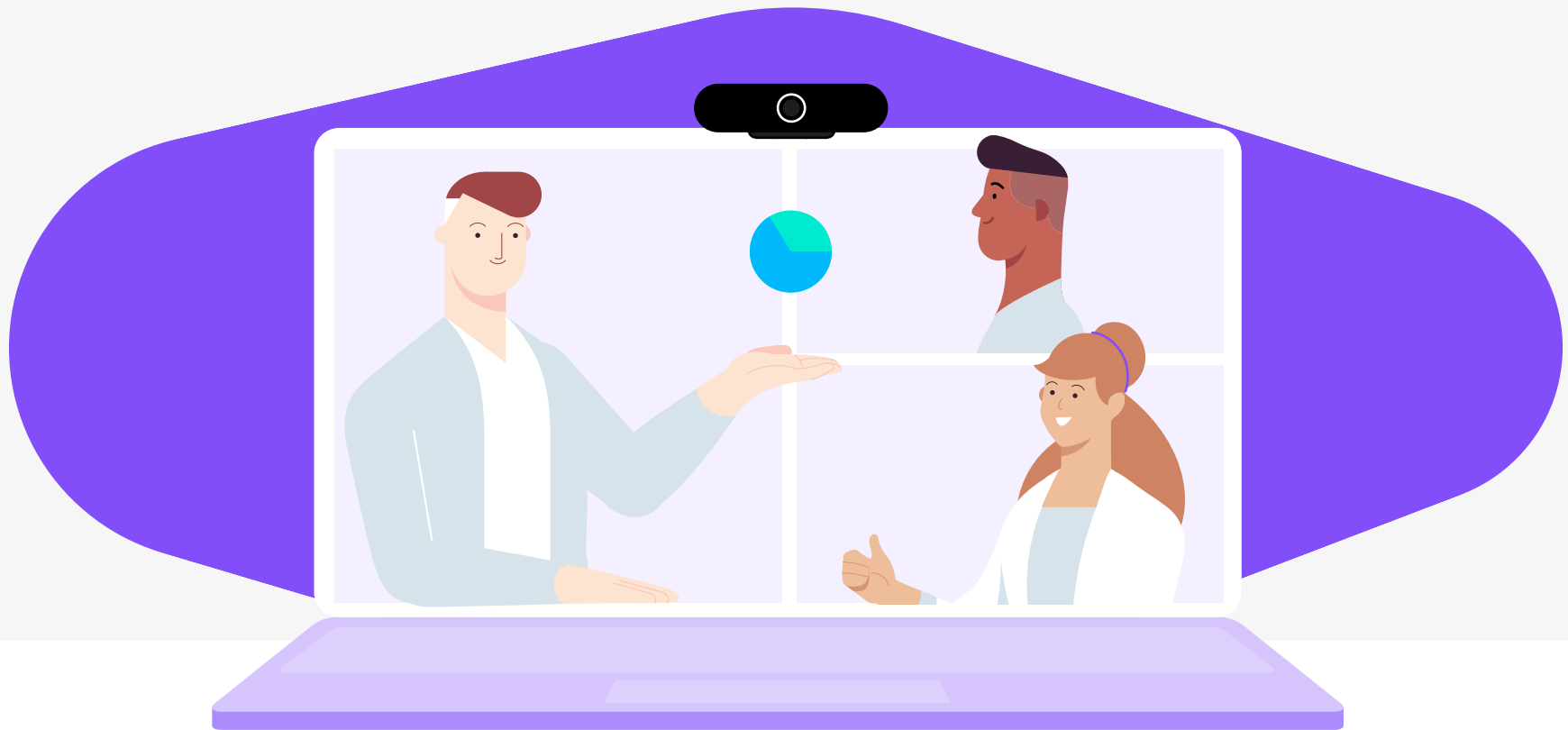

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5 LESSONS LEARNED FROM REMOTE WORKING DURING THE PANDEMIC

Work has changed. In just a few short months, remote work has gone from an occasional possibility to an everyday reality for many knowledge workers. The global pandemic has accelerated the previously slow shift of where and how we work. But is the explosive growth of remote work a temporary blip, or the beginning of a more significant post-pandemic trend?

To learn more about people's remote working habits, the Remote Work Association conducted an in-depth study of global workers, exploring their working habits before, during, and after the pandemic.[1] This study provides insights that will help every business and I.T. team prepare for the future of remote work.
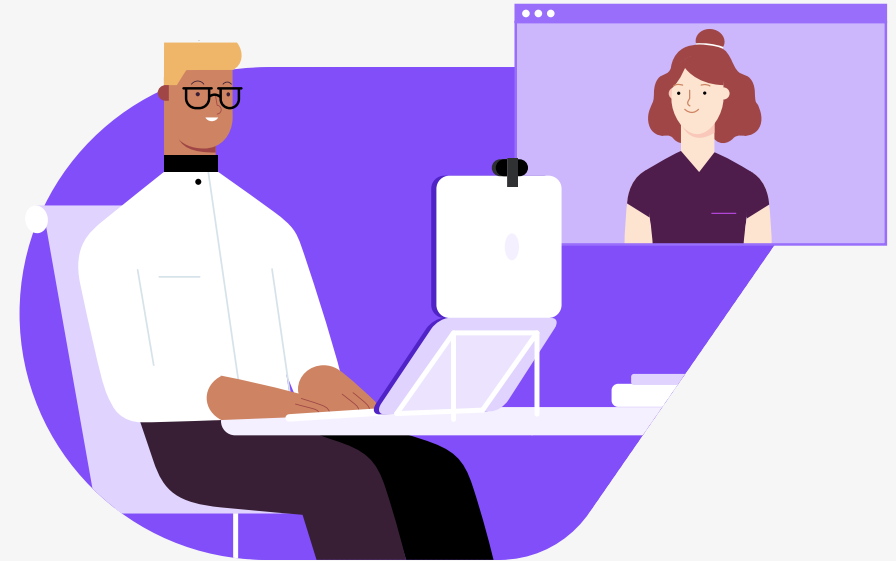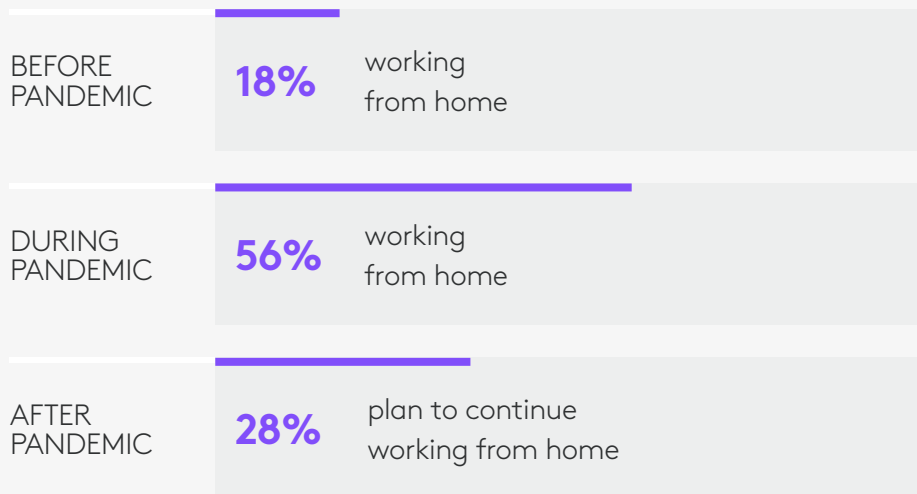
1 REMOTE WORK IS HERE TO STAY

THE OFFICE WILL NEVER BE THE SAME

Before stay-at-home orders, remote workers were still in the minority. During the pandemic, 56% of knowledge workers are estimated to have switched to working from home. But will this have a long-term impact?

Various studies reveal that between 15-28% of workers say they will work from home in some capacity after the pandemic.[2] This signals a growing shift in business attitudes to remote work and will transform the way the modern offices operate. It will also have a significant impact on office spaces, as many businesses reorganize to accommodate fewer full-time office workers and more remote workers.

WHO'S WORKING REMOTELY?
(According To The Remote Work Association)[1]

BEFORE PANDEMIC	**18%**	working from home
DURING PANDEMIC	**56%**	working from home
AFTER PANDEMIC	**28%**	plan to continue working from home

LEADERSHIP TAKEAWAY

If most work can be performed effectively at home, the office will become a space for facilitating collaboration, rather than completing work. This drive for collaboration, combined with social distancing guidelines, will create new demand for smaller meeting spaces. Leadership must ensure that the office is prepared for its new role as a collaboration hub by creating more meeting spaces, video enabling more personal workspaces and meeting rooms for collaboration with remote teams.

I.T. TAKEAWAY

I.T. teams must shift their priorities to take into account the needs of remote workers. This means investing in technology that helps end-users switch seamlessly and securely between their remote and office workspaces. Data and device security must become a greater priority, as remote workers use personal WiFi and portable equipment for day-to-day work. Remote workers will also need access to technical support, so consider installing remote desktop software as standard.
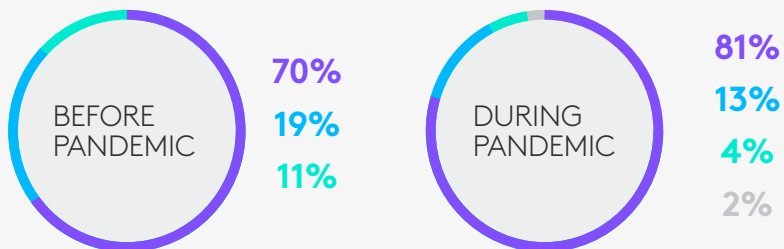
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2 REMOTE WORK CAN BE JUST AS PRODUCTIVE

Businesses are learning that remote workers can be just as productive as their office-based counterparts. The myth that remote work is somehow unproductive or 'just not possible for our company' has been disproved by the example remote workers are setting every day during the pandemic.
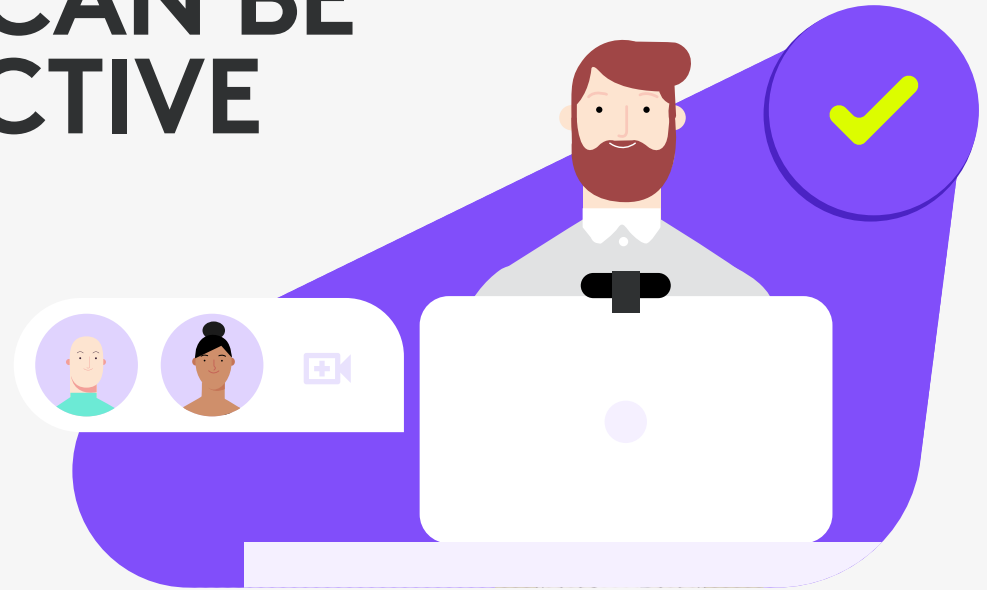
As more people gain direct experience in remote work, their confidence in their ability to perform their job effectively while working remotely has increased compared to the pre-pandemic period. Research indicates that a substantial 81% of employees now believe they can perform their jobs effectively from home.[1]

The real challenge facing companies is not remote worker productivity, but engagement. How can companies keep remote workers as engaged and connected as their in-office counterparts?

HOW WELL CAN YOU PERFORM YOUR JOB AT HOME?[1]

BEFORE PANDEMIC
70%
19%
11%

DURING PANDEMIC
81%
13%
4%
2%

● Well or Very Well
● Neutral
● Not Well or Very Not Well
● Not applicable

LEADERSHIP TAKEAWAY

Create a remote-work strategy for your company, which enables every worker to be engaged and productive wherever they work. Foster face-to-face collaboration between remote and in-office employees by video-enabling your meeting spaces. Keep your company culture alive with new company and team-wide events, such as a video happy hour, to allow remote workers to informally catch up with colleagues.
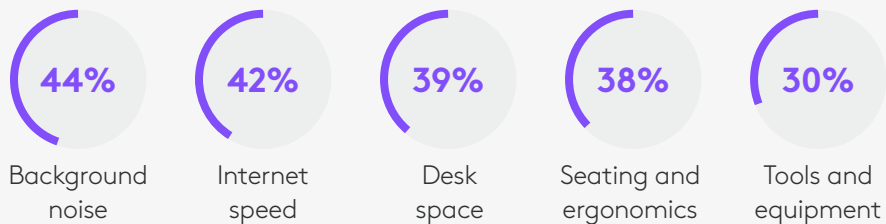
I.T. TAKEAWAY

The best way for I.T. to maximize remote-worker engagement is to video-enable every employee, not just remote employees. By providing every employee with video conferencing tools to use at their desk and in meeting spaces, workers can still have those vital, face-to-face moments of collaboration, no matter where they work.

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3 REMOTE WORK STILL HAS ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

The shift to remote work has been a learning experience. The pandemic closed more than just offices. It created a unique and largely unprecedented work environment—with other housemates also stuck at home. Many workers created their own workstations with the equipment they had available, which has led to noise distractions, technical problems, and ergonomic issues.
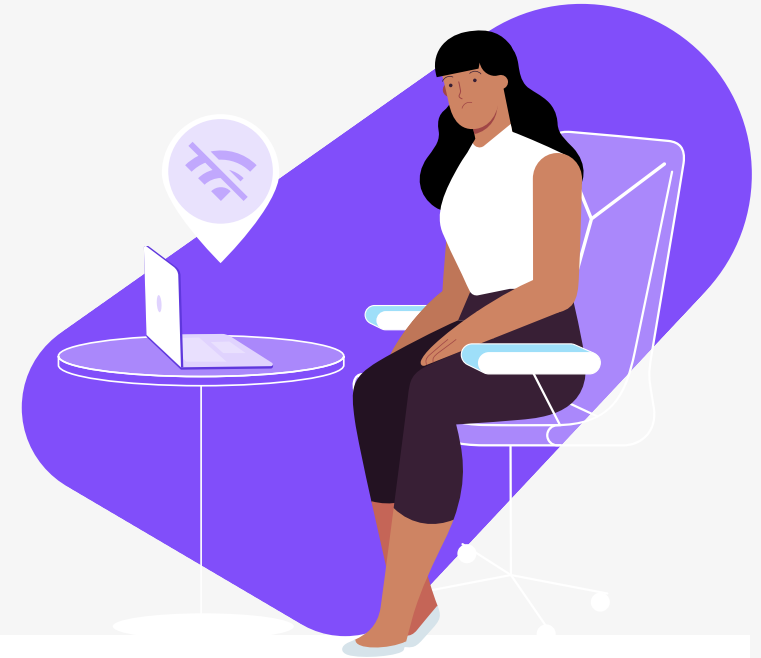
WHAT ARE YOUR REMOTE WORK PAIN POINTS?[1]

44%
Background noise

42%
Internet speed

39%
Desk space

38%
Seating and ergonomics

30%
Tools and equipment

Beyond the immediate distractions, there are persistent productivity challenges facing remote workers—they need stable internet, access to coworkers and company resources, clear communication, and the right tools to manage their work effectively.[1]

WHAT AFFECTS REMOTE WORK PRODUCTIVITY?[1]

1. Internet access and stability

2. Virtual access to coworkers and company resources

3. Self-management, task organization, and discipline

LEADERSHIP TAKEAWAY

Leadership cannot single-handedly overcome the technical challenges facing remote workers, but they can empower remote teams to do their best work. Ensure remote workers have access to the information and resources they need to excel. Take greater steps to keep them connected with managers and the wider team. Set aside time for formal and informal meetings to recreate the social connection workers typically experience in the office.

I.T. TAKEAWAY

Remote workspaces require the same consideration as a desk in the office. Start by standardizing the remote-work setup for easy use, effective ergonomics, and peak productivity. Ensure workers can be seen and heard clearly on their calls—regardless of background noise—with purpose-built webcams and noise-canceling headsets. Determine how you'll enable stable internet access for off-site employees—consider funding high-speed internet for employee homes, or WiFi-extending mesh kits. Support this with easy-win bandwidth-saving tips, such as router settings that prioritize work traffic.

4 VIDEO IS GROWING IN POPULARITY

Before the pandemic, only 4% of meetings were full video meetings—that number has since risen to 60%.[3] Companies have identified video as an effective tool to support their meeting objectives when teams can't be there in person. Despite the constant changes facing workplaces during the pandemic, video provides seamless collaboration and continuity. It's also popular with end-users: research shows that 78% of meeting participants prefer to attend a video meeting compared to an audio-only meeting.[1] Video meetings are most effective when they drive collaborative decision making, productive outcomes, and reinforce important messages.

WHAT ARE THE MAIN PURPOSES OF YOUR TEAM'S VIDEO CONFERENCING MEETINGS?[1]

59% Collaborative decision making and problem solving

55% Productivity reporting and status updates

51% Company updates and announcements

LEADERSHIP TAKEAWAY

The role of leadership is to set the example and embrace positive change, ensuring that the meetings that would benefit from video collaboration are, in fact, conducted over video. This will build a culture of greater collaboration and communication across your business. Adopting video as a central pillar of communication in your business also allows you to tap into a wider pool of talent, as your workforce is no longer limited by geography.

I.T. TAKEAWAY

This moment is an opportunity to prepare for the growing demand in video meetings, both internally and externally. This means adjusting budgets to video-enable more meeting spaces and introducing remote device management tools, like Logitech Sync, to keep every device updated.

5 VIDEO ETIQUETTE IS NOT YET PERFECT

Now that video meetings are more widespread, companies are discovering they present their own challenges—such as bad lighting, crosstalk, or a pet appearing on camera. Personal and professional lives can accidentally cross over—especially if you have children in the house.
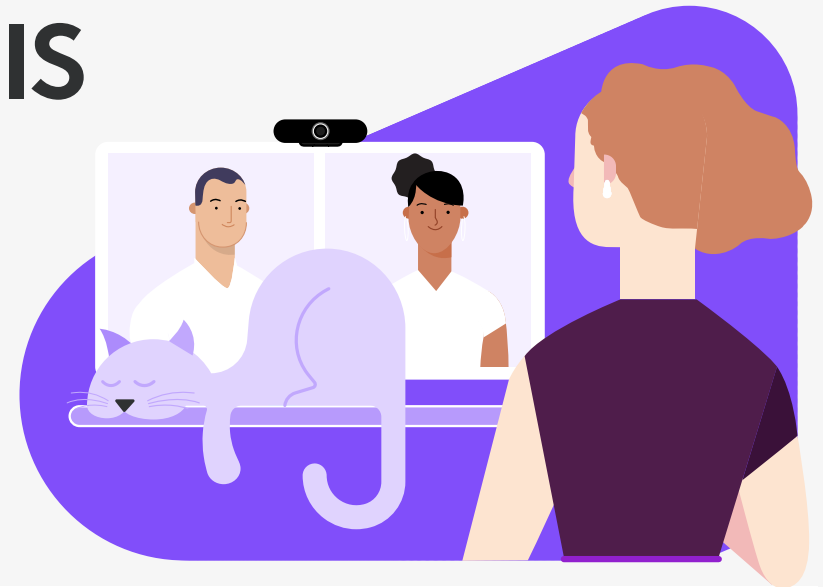
The most common challenges are seemingly minor but can impact the overall meeting experience. Some are the result of working remotely during the pandemic—every parent knows that a hungry child won't wait until the meeting is over. These problems are best handled with patience and understanding. Other issues, like people interrupting each other, have always been a challenge in meetings. Whatever the issue, they can almost all be resolved by establishing guidelines on meeting etiquette and practice over time.

TOP 3 VIDEO MEETING PET PEEVES[1]

41% People interrupting each other

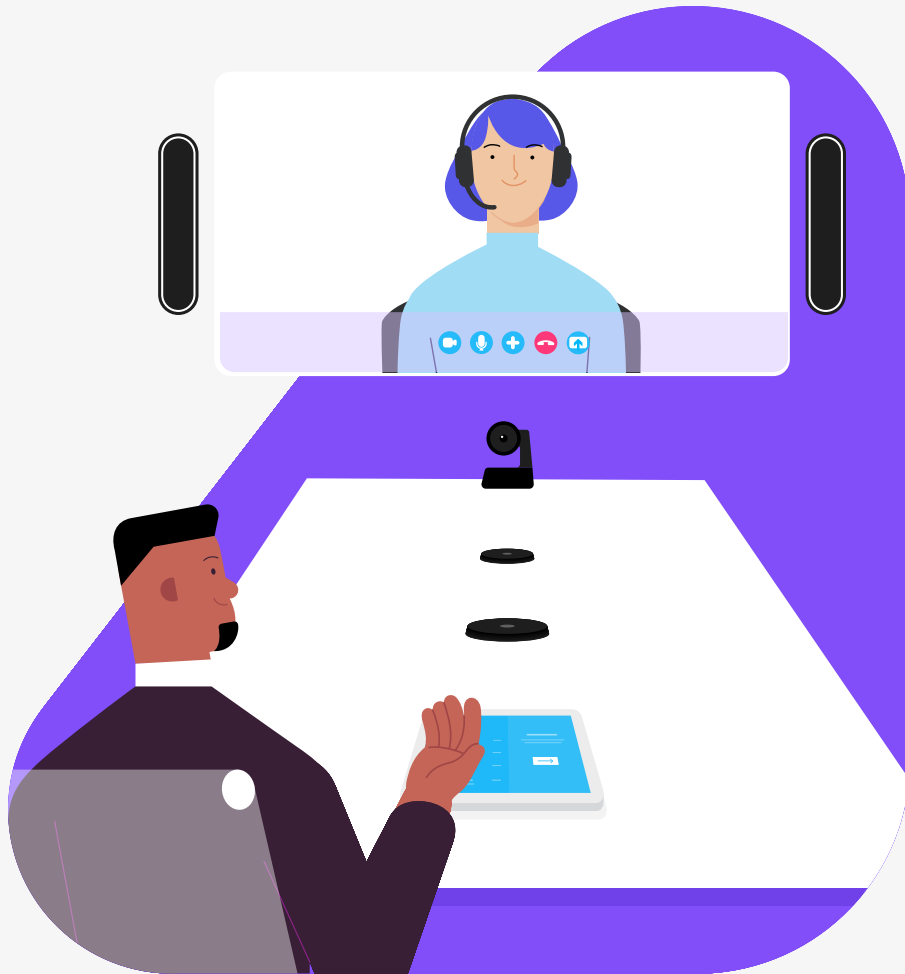**40%** People not muting themselves

37% Distracting backgrounds

LEADERSHIP TAKEAWAY

Develop a set of best practices for video meetings to minimize disruption while ensuring every person can be seen and every voice heard on the call. Share these best practices company-wide, and encourage workers to refer back to them often. Use chat and 'raise hand' features to equalize voices in a conversation. Create a meeting culture of empathy and understanding for dealing with occasional meeting mishaps. Acknowledge in your best practice guidelines that sometimes the unexpected can happen—and that the best thing to do is relax, breathe, and go with the flow.

I.T. TAKEAWAY

I.T. teams can minimize disruption by providing training for teams who have not yet mastered the art of video conferencing. Begin with training sessions for audio and video controls, so participants know how to mute, screen share, or switch off video if needed. Then add advanced features, such as hand raising and chat, as well as virtual background functionality. Finally, share best practices to ensure everybody looks their best on video.

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THE NEW FACE OF WORK

The shift to remote work was driven by short-term necessity. But forward-thinking businesses are embracing remote work as a long-term change.

For organizational leaders, the key takeaway is to **create and maintain an engaged distributed workforce.** The rise of remote work has emphasized the need for keeping workers connected, supported, and productive whether they are working away from or in the office. Frictionless, video meetings can drive collaboration and innovation in this new working environment.

For I.T., the key takeaway is to create a **seamless user experience**. Workers need technology that truly enables them to work from anywhere and collaborate easily with their colleagues and clients. Cloud-based collaboration tools, including video conferencing, need to be effortless with minimal disruptions.

Work has forever changed. We will not go back to the way we were before the pandemic. Businesses that embrace this transformation will find that with preparation, training, the right tools, and a little patience, their workers can work better together, from anywhere.

Looking for video conferencing
solutions to support your
remote workforce?
Visit: www.logitech.com/vc

Sources

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2.   Remote Work Association, COVID-19 Impact on Corporate WFH Research Report, 2020, Frost & Sullivan, Responding to Disruptive Shifts in the
       Workplace, 2020 MSI, Quick Insights Survey, 2020

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