



THE I.T. PRO'S GUIDE TO TECHNOLOGY FOR

ATTRACTING AND RETAINING REMOTE WORKERS



CONTENTS

➤ Introduction	03
➤ The Challenge of Remote Work	04
➤ Building Inclusive Remote Work: Three Key Considerations	05
➤ Understanding Roles and Workstyles	06
➤ Understanding Spaces	08
➤ Giving People the Technology They Need	10
➤ Make Virtual Meetings Great for Everybody	12
➤ Why Poly?	13



One clear trend has emerged from the pandemic and the ways it shook up the labor force:

Employees have grown accustomed to working from many different locations.

The new workforce includes those that have decided to permanently work from home, those that want a hybrid schedule, working from home some days and in the office others, and those that are mobile and need to work from a coffee shop, an airport, hotel lobby, or the back seat of a ride share.

In this new way of working, audio and video conferencing keeps office and remote workers connected and on the same page. People want flexibility to move between work locations without missing a beat.

The companies that are making this happen will have a decided edge when it comes to attracting and retaining top talent, engaging and serving customers better, boosting productivity, and driving down costs. It's a recipe for blowing the competition out of the water...if you get it right.

These remote workers also rely on IT to ensure they're not at a disadvantage or treated like second-class citizens because of technology shortcomings

that make them stand out in virtual meetings in a negative way. Things like noisy backgrounds, choppy audio, and dark or grainy video is disruptive to the conversation and can portray remote participants in a way they're not even aware of. That means outfitting remote workers with the appropriate technology that makes them look and feel confident will ensure they are seen and heard consistently well, giving them an equal opportunity to connect and make positive contributions from anywhere.

This eBook is designed to get you started by delving into the needs and challenges of employees working remotely. But remember that is only one side of the equation, see also our companion piece that specifically addresses the needs of outfitting spaces in the office for participants in the conference room.

6 CRITICAL ROOM VIDEO DECISIONS THAT CAN MAKE OR BREAK YOUR UC INVESTMENT >

When employees on all sides of a call have the technology they need, communication and collaboration become seamless, team cohesion gets stronger, and a true hybrid organization emerges that's ready for whatever comes next.

82% OF COMPANY LEADERS PLAN TO ALLOW EMPLOYEES TO WORK REMOTELY SOME OF THE TIME.¹



THE CHALLENGES OF REMOTE WORK

Getting out of bed a little later, working in your pajama bottoms, drinking good coffee, and not having to waste time commuting—it's easy to see the advantages of remote work. But remote working has some challenges that technology can help overcome.

Nine in 10 remote workers want to maintain remote work to some degree.²



FEELING DISCONNECTED

People working at home, while traveling, or in third spaces can feel underrepresented and not able to engage and participate as well as their colleagues who are in the office.



DEALING WITH NOISE AND DISTRACTIONS

Home and mobile environments are often noisy and poorly lit in ways that make it difficult to concentrate and look and sound your best in virtual meetings.



MISLEADING EQUIPMENT

Many remote workers are using consumer ear buds and built-in laptop cameras for video conferencing and conference calls, thinking they look and sound good. These solutions do let you hear and be seen, but their shortcomings can keep you from looking and sounding your professional best to everyone else on the call. Built-in laptop cameras don't adjust well to changes in lighting, often produce dark and grainy images, and can fail to keep you in the center of the picture as you move around. Music headphones, laptops, and smartphone audio often don't screen out background noise and can produce inconsistent, muddy audio that makes it hard to hear.



BUILDING INCLUSIVE REMOTE WORK: THREE KEY CONSIDERATIONS

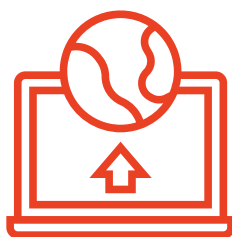
Giving remote workers a strong and equal voice in meetings requires solutions that take into account three main elements:



THE ROLES AND WORKSTYLES OF INDIVIDUAL EMPLOYEES



THE DYNAMICS OF THE WORKSPACES USED BY REMOTE EMPLOYEES AT HOME OR ON-THE-GO



THE TECHNOLOGY NEEDED TO COLLABORATE EFFECTIVELY AND PROFESSIONALLY



94% OF EMPLOYEES SURVEYED IN A MERCER STUDY REPORTED THAT REMOTE WORK WAS EITHER BUSINESS AS USUAL OR BETTER THAN WORKING IN THE OFFICE.³



UNDERSTANDING ROLES AND WORKSTYLES

Not everyone in your organization has the same personality, job description, or ways of getting things done. When outfitting employees for remote work, it's important not to view them as one homogenous group. Your desired end state is an equally great meeting experience for everyone, but that doesn't mean providing every remote worker with an identical workspace or technology setup.

Research has identified six distinct workstyles, sometimes referred to as personas, which describe 92% of workers in a typical enterprise and how they interact with others throughout the day. Each category of worker has unique communication and collaboration needs that if satisfied will help individuals be more engaged and productive when working remotely. **Surveying your workforce to understand how many of the different workstyles you have in your organization is a fast and simple process that can help you plan accordingly.**

Find more information about the 6 most common worker personas and their needs. 

UNDERSTANDING SPACES

Remote work takes place today in all kinds of spaces—from dedicated and elegantly appointed home offices to the back of an airport shuttle bus. There are three main categories of remote spaces, each with different conditions that can make or break a great communications experience.



HOME

A typical home has open areas where people congregate, such as the kitchen and living room, and spaces for more private work, such as offices, dens, and bedrooms. IT needs to keep in mind that not all employees have the same opportunities for privacy at home and may therefore need different communication and collaboration equipment.

OPEN AREAS

such as the kitchen table or the living room couch, are often susceptible to impromptu noise from other family members playing or working, the doorbell ringing, the dog barking, or people working outside. This can distract both the worker and everyone else on the call. Because these workspaces are temporary by nature, people who use them need equipment that can be set up, put away, and stored easily.

Great communication solutions for open areas at home include noise-canceling and noise-blocking headsets and small, professional-grade video cameras that can be easily attached to laptop computers.

CLOSED AREAS

such as a bedroom or a private office, offer greater privacy and present more opportunities to dedicate and optimize the space for virtual collaboration. While noise can still be an issue, these more protected areas are great opportunities for collaboration without a headset. Some solutions include AI features that let the camera track you while moving and create noise-blocking zones to manage background distractions.

Solutions for private home offices include options like speaker phones or video bars that let you speak and be heard clearly without the use of a headset.





TEMPORARY OR THIRD SPACES

Employer-provided temporary offices, and other rented environments, also known as “third spaces,” often include hoteling and hot desk set ups for employees and guests. Similar to working from home, third spaces can have both open and private work areas, however they’re not set up for permanent use. Therefore, workers who rely on these spaces need portable, plug and play technology that’s fast and easy to set up and use. In addition, they need to be able to focus and block nearby discussions from disrupting them and everyone else on the call.

Solutions for open Third Spaces include comfortable headsets with noise blocking in combination with compact, portable HD video cameras that can offset poor lighting. Portable speakerphones make excellent additions in closed areas.

ON-THE-GO

Frequent travelers require lightweight, portable devices that are easy to carry and use, along with great battery life. In some locations, they’re able to use video, but in others, it’s audio only. That makes it important for technology to switch seamlessly between mobile phones, tablets, and laptops.

Noise management is a must for collaboration in noisy, on-the-go environments like cars, airports, trains, and coffee shops.

Solutions for On-The-Go Spaces include pro-grade wireless headsets with noise-blocking technology, which can easily move between a mobile phone, tablet, and laptop. Portable battery-operated speaker phones make a great option when a hands-free or group call is required.

GIVING PEOPLE THE TECHNOLOGY THEY NEED

The typical devices people use to work remotely include laptop or desktop PCs, tablets, and mobile phones. Many of these devices have built-in microphones, speakers, and cameras, but these consumer-grade components don't deliver the crystal-clear audio and video associated with professional-grade video conferencing. In addition, the mix of standard-issue and consumer grade devices in use by remote workers is difficult for IT to monitor and maintain. Here are three critical considerations for the technology and gear you are going to use.

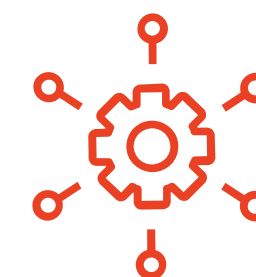


REMEMBER IT'S A TWO-WAY STREET

For remote workers to truly feel like an equal participant in a virtual meeting, they must be seen and heard clearly while also seeing and hearing others clearly. It's important to realize that both the near and far ends of the call are critical to a remote professional's virtual meeting experience. Strange as it sounds, remote workers are directly impacted by the technology decisions you make for your in-office conference rooms.

For the remote worker, professional-grade headsets, webcams, video bars, and speakerphones make a huge difference in how those on the far-end hear, see, and engage with you in a virtual meeting.

In the office, today's leading technology solutions feature HD audio microphones and speakers, seamless content sharing between devices, and HD tracking cameras that can use facial recognition technology to automatically follow and frame the speaker. This helps remote participants pick up subtle audio and video cues and engage just as deeply as the people around the table.



TECHNOLOGY THAT JUST WORKS

Remote workers are usually on their own and can't walk down the hall to ask IT how to install or troubleshoot a piece of equipment. They can't afford to waste the first five minutes of any call to deal with their equipment. And neither do you have time and resources to deal with constant support calls.

Most remote users aren't experts on communications gear. Everything has to be straightforward and easy to use. Automated features, such as speaker tracking, noise blocking, and audio and visual cues that tell you when doing things like talking on mute, are helpful and increase user confidence.

It follows that remote workers need equipment that works with their existing hardware and software. This is especially true when it comes to popular communication and collaboration platforms.





EASY FOR I.T. TO SUPPORT AND MAINTAIN

What really sets professional-grade communications gear apart is the ability for IT to monitor and manage it remotely. With users working anywhere with all kinds of equipment, keeping an eye on hundreds or even thousands of devices can be incredibly difficult and time consuming. Think about it: How much time and money might you save if you could update, track, and troubleshoot your employees' equipment as they work at home or on the go?

When quality of service is so crucial, remote management tools give IT the visibility and control to keep workers connected and satisfied. This includes:

- Tighter security through consistent updates
- Faster troubleshooting with remote monitoring
- Better decision support with full estate analytics and reporting





MAKE VIRTUAL MEETINGS GREAT FOR EVERYBODY

Working remotely is here to stay. To keep and attract the best talent, your organization must be able to ensure your remote workers feel plugged in, that they are seen and heard by peers and managers, that they don't struggle with technology, and that they aren't too distracted by their environment to feel connected and part of the team. You can let your workers find solutions on their own, or you can ensure your remote workforce has the right equipment to look and sound their best so they can fully engage and participate wherever they're working.

"EMPLOYEES ARE NOT ONLY REQUESTING THAT THERE IS AN ADJUSTMENT TO THE RETURN-TO-THE-OFFICE POLICY, BUT THEY'RE ALSO RESIGNING."⁴

Tsedal Neeley

Harvard Business School Professor

WHY POLY?

Poly, established in 2018 from the merger of veteran audio and video experts Plantronics and Polycom, has a long history of expertise in audio and video solutions, consulting, device management, and industry-specific grants assistance.

Whether your employees are in the office, on-the-go, at home, or a combination of all three, we can help you create a successful hybrid work environment that helps employees connect, collaborate, and perform at their best, from anywhere, which isn't just good for them, it's good for your business.

[VIEW POLY SOLUTIONS GUIDE
FOR REMOTE WORKING >](#)

[VISIT OUR WEBSITE >](#)

1: Gartner, Gartner Survey Reveals 82% of Company Leaders Plan to Allow Employees to Work Remotely Some of the Time, July 14, 2020
2: Gallup, Remote Work Persisting and Trending Permanent, October 13, 2021
3: The Atlantic, Why Managers Fear a Remote-Work Future, July 29, 2021
4: The Boston Globe, Workers are resisting being called back to the office—and some employers are scrapping their plans, November 18, 2021



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KEY DIFFERENTIATORS WORKING WITH POLY

01 YOUR HEADSET, VIDEO, AND PHONE NEEDS IN ONE PLACE.
Extensive portfolio of headset, video, and phone solutions to meet all your needs for remote workers, office workers, workspaces and conference spaces. We'll help you find the right device without the need to juggle multiple contracts, services, hardware, and support.

02 SUPPORT FOR YOUR PREFERRED PLATFORMS.
Poly solutions are compatible with a wide range of UC platforms. Never again worry about having to replace hardware if you change platforms.

03 QUALITY THAT'S SECOND TO NONE.
Professional-grade HD cameras and audio devices look great and feel natural for all-day use. This makes team meetings productive while improving the quality of client communications.

04 FUTURE-PROOF COMMUNICATION.
Our strong relationships with key UC platforms mean Poly technology stays up with—and often leads—the next workforce trend or innovation.

05 CENTRALIZED DEVICE MANAGEMENT.
Centrally manage, deploy, and monitor your audio and video devices or let Poly manage them for you—remotely or on-site.

06 LOCAL SUPPORT. AROUND THE WORLD.
No matter where you and your remote employees work, you'll be backed by Poly experts and Preferred Channel Partners in your home market, language, and time zone.

