Putting Employees First and Elevating Your Company's Work from Home Model

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Lenovo continues to focus on the safety and well-being of our employees and communities during the COVID-19 crisis, and we want to help businesses adapting to these unprecedented times do the same. One concern in particular that we identified during discussions with businesses and partners over the last two months has been maintaining a positive employee experience during this time.

Since the dawn of the digital transformation, companies have increasingly made the transition to contemporary IT infrastructures characterized by remote workforces and flexible device management. While this has been a growing trend for several years now, the global pandemic has unfortunately thrust remote work models onto many companies before they were ready.

Diligent corporations and individuals are doing their part by staying home, and though this has been in place for several weeks now, many employees who were not accustomed to working remotely are still finding it difficult to stay focused and productive, especially if introduced to new company-owned devices and software programs. These tools are meant to facilitate remote collaboration and drive productivity. However, without access to the company's IT helpdesk that many employees often rely on, the opposite can ensue, and a small IT problem can result in a whole day's worth of downtime for that employee. Not to mention the psychological impact of employees who prefer working in an office and enjoy collaborating face-to-face with one another, as they may begin to feel unmotivated and out of touch with the organization and their colleagues.



Even as some businesses start to reopen their doors, there are many that are still encouraging employees to work from home, and as the days drag on, the employee experience is still an important aspect to manage during this time of uncertainty. I've been thinking through the challenges businesses are facing, and whether you've already made the transition or are just getting to the point where you can enable remote work, there are several things you can do for your employees to overcome the challenges and make a positive impression on their experience:

1. **Educate**. Over the last few weeks, many companies have secured new technology to better support their remote employees, but these new devices are unfamiliar to their workforce. One way you can be supportive here is by offering online courses to provide **virtual trainings** on new software programs or hardware that your employees have recently received, but be careful not to make it a one-size-fits-all course. Create various online trainings customized for a range of technical levels so that (1) those who are less technically savvy don't feel intimidated by advanced instructions, and (2) those who are more experienced can obtain tips and tricks that are geared more toward optimizing their experience and improving productivity.

2. **Support**. Most likely, your IT staff is working overtime to ensure your network is up and running, secure and capable of supporting users that are scattered around the city, country or world. They may not have time to help with routine IT problem-solving issues. So, to support your employees that need help with hardware or software queries, or any range of device issues they may encounter while working at home, consider

adding a premium support service to bolster your IT helpdesk capabilities both now and later. Partner with a provider that can offer 24×7 access to skilled technicians that will hand hold your employees through their IT challenges from start to finish, freeing up your internal IT staff to focus on strategic company initiatives. Also look at attributes like ease of troubleshooting, problem resolution rates, and online and phone technical support capabilities.

In a recent March 2020 study conducted by research firm Technology Business Research, Inc. (TBR) that reviewed the attributes of the PC support experience, Lenovo's Premier Support package exceeded customer satisfaction when compared against its peers in the areas of resolution on first contact and proactive support. Also, 85 percent of **Lenovo Premier Support** users who took part in the study felt the support package was helpful in guiding their decision to choose Lenovo over another PC company – further reinforcing the benefits of a quality, advanced-level tech support service. Ultimately how the service provider performs when it comes to customer satisfaction is key, as all of the related attributes have an effect on both employee experience and productivity.

3. **Engage**. It's been weeks since your employees have seen one another in person and most interactions have been all about business. Utilize **videoconferencing software** for more than just business meetings. Encourage team meetups that allow for actual face time with one another in a relaxed atmosphere. Coordinate team yoga classes, online dinner-and-a-movie sessions, department virtual happy hours, 15-minute coffee break meetups, employee walkathons, etc. Be creative and utilize the technology that's available to you to keep in touch with your staff, no matter the size of your company.

4. **Protect and Secure**. With a remote workforce, implementing security protocols is imperative. Employees are no longer reporting in to work where their devices are protected behind the company firewalls of the office. The use of unsecured networks and personal devices coupled with the increasing sophistication of phishing attacks open companies up to data breaches. To secure and manage endpoints, companies should look for next-gen solutions with AI-powered capabilities to predict cyberattacks and automatically self-heal devices. Many providers have special offers right now that are meant to support companies through this time. In this area, Lenovo is offering SentinelOne CORE and rapid deployment services, part of our ThinkShield security portfolio, free of charge through July 1.

   When it comes to protecting your devices, an added level of support Lenovo is offering right now is a global warranty extension for up to 75 days through May 31, 2020. This is applicable for all Lenovo/Motorola smartphones, consumer PCs, tablets, smart home devices, consumer augmented/virtual reality devices, monitors and accessories with warranties that would have come to an end between March 15 and April 30. For commercial PCs, employers may want to think about protecting their devices from the unexpected calamities that can occur at their employees' homes. Breakfast tables full of mugs of coffee, bowls of cereal and glasses of orange juice in many cases have become

the workstation for individuals working from home right now**.** Protecting devices with an **accidental damage warranty** can save time, money and effort in cases of spills, drops and falls, especially with no IT helpdesk nearby to attempt a repair.

5. **Reflect & Plan**. If remote work was a new concept for your company, you most likely experienced some hiccups in making the switch as quickly as it needed to be done. But now is the perfect time to take stock of the challenges you encountered. While it's fresh in your mind, take note of all the roadblocks you hit that prevented you from offering your workforce what you wanted and how you wanted to offer it. What could have gone smoother? What security measures do you wish you had implemented? What IT capabilities do you wish you had that would have solved some of those issues? There are many commercial tools and offerings that can be incorporated into businesses to not only support their devices, but **configure, deploy and manage them cost effectively**. So, dream of your perfect solution and dream big. With today's modern IT solutions, just about anything is possible, especially when you partner with a provider that is flexible enough and has the capacity to be able to tailor a solution to your specific needs.

I hope you find these suggestions useful, and to further support you and your employees, Lenovo Services has curated a list of Work from Home solutions that you may also find helpful as you continue to enable a remote workforce. These are just some of the things that I believe can help companies who are working through a recent transition to a work-from-home model, although many of them will continue to apply once companies open their doors again. Digital transformation is here and companies that use this time to implement initial tools and processes that move them closer in that direction, will be better positioned to make more concrete steps in the future when they're ready.