These IT insights bring an edge to remote productivity conversations
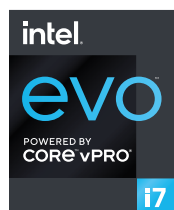
Hybrid work is happening. There's no way around it. Lenovo's global study of 4,000 information technology leaders, "The Future of Work and Digital Transformation," found that 83% of them expect post-pandemic work to be done outside the office at least half the time. Surveyed employees wholeheartedly agreed.

As organizations review whether their employees are more productive working remotely or in a traditional office, IT leaders may ask a better question:

How can an organization's tech "toolkit" of hardware, software, and support services meet the varying requirements of a work-from-anywhere workforce?

The following insights, based on findings from Lenovo's Future of Work study, can help IT pros sharpen their tech strategy, supporting greater productivity and taking their company's remote conversation — and business objectives — to the next level.

Maximize collaboration solutions to their full potential

Users don't want to "turn back the clock" on collaboration when they return to the office. Smart collaboration tools have measurably improved productivity, and these tools are now table stakes — 86% of IT leaders plan to invest in them this year.[1]

Collaboration solutions are about more than a unified communication (UC) platform. Users leverage them as individuals and as members of a team. Smart collaboration solutions built for a hybrid workplace should deliver:

Power up the productivity:

- **Have a plan for flexible solutions, ideal for a range of use cases, offering choices on multiple fronts: UC platform, room size, peripherals, mounting options, and accessories**

- **Simplify remote user support and create tool training videos or documentation**

- **Find unused features of your current software to better communicate employee availability**

Complete solutions
Combine hardware, software, and services to create end-to-end business solutions.

Flexibility and scalability
Look for platform choice and systems that scale for any room size.

Security
Protect sensitive data with systems offering robust security features.
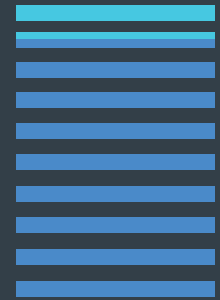
Manageability
Minimize costly IT support with solutions offering remote management tools.

Collaboration success can also positively impact productivity and retention. Gen Z and Millennial employees, who will comprise 58% of the US workforce by 2028, name collaboration as one of their top values.[2]

Still, these tools can't solve for everything — at least not yet. "One of the collaboration issues we face is knowing when someone is available/at the computer to ask quick questions," wrote one employee respondent to the Future of Work study. "Being unable to get answers to questions quickly reduces efficiency drastically."

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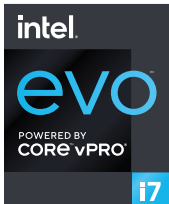
Collective brain power. Delivered by a single trusted source.

Lenovo partners with the industry's best to bring you joint solutions built specifically for collaboration in the new hybrid normal.

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How study respondents get smartphones:

33%
Employee wanted, company bought

22%
Company dictated usage and bought

16%
Company offered to buy if employee asked

23%
Employee asked but bought directly

7%
Employee didn't use or need

Get smarter about smartphones

The smartphone is being used for workplace communication more often than before the COVID-19 lockdowns. In fact, the majority of surveyed employees use a smartphone for work purposes, most frequently as a way to communicate with their colleagues. They also reach first for that smartphone for reading PDFs, scanning documents, and editing office documents.

And they're likely doing all of this on their personal device.
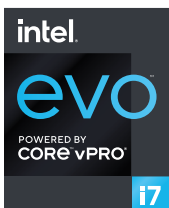
Of the 79% of Future of Work study respondents who said they use a smartphone for work, nearly half acquired the phone themselves. Indeed, according to IT leaders, of all the work-from-home tech that employees asked for but ended up buying themselves, smartphones held the highest percentage (followed by keyboard/mouse and headset).

Employees aged 18 to 34 are even more likely to use their personal smartphone for work. Interestingly, this employee demographic was also more likely to report a harder time striking an appropriate work-life balance.

Power up the productivity:

- Add smartphones to your tech kit and segment who gets one based on current usage

- Deploy a Device as a Service (DaaS) solution to bundle smartphones and prevent over-purchasing

- Suggest tech time management tools or smartphone strategies to improve work-life balance

Power up the productivity:

- **Update your tech kit with equipment that has built-in wins for the user, like monitors with higher resolution and curved screens**

- **Share tech tips with employees and highlight key features on devices they currently use**

- **Enlist a solution that enables 24/7 IT support to free up time for your team to strategize**

Let device features sweeten the experience

Good news: The majority of our study respondents reported that working from home during the pandemic did *not* bring an onslaught of new tech issues (e.g., can't access company intranets or specific software not working correctly). Any issues they had tended to be connection-based.

If that's the case for your organization, too, it could now be worth focusing on the user experience by getting strategic about smart device features. Employees across all business sizes reported that they're interested in tech that supports privacy, noise reduction, eye protection, and device cooling. Among the smart features they said would be most helpful to their workflow:

AI-based noise cancellation

Webcam privacy shutter
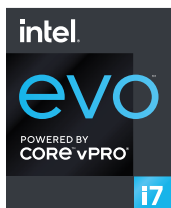
Eye care mode

Fingerprint reader and power button

Intelligent cooling

Keep in mind additional remote realities that influence how users experience these coveted smart features, like whether their devices can work as long as they do — or even longer. With Intel® Evo™ vPro® PCs, for example, which have verified all-day battery life, IT leaders can help further enhance the user experience and contribute to bigger business goals.

Employee satisfaction with tech has the biggest impact on a positive overall experience, and according to Forrester, IT investments in user experience can lead to a 5x return in productivity.[1]

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Improve your tech toolkit for hybrid productivity

Tomorrow's offices will be co-creation spaces where employees meet to collaborate — some in person, some from remote locations. There will be a range of room types and sizes for multiple use cases spanning individual deep work to informal interaction to structured team meetings. Lenovo provides technology that optimizes collaboration in every setting, from solo remote to groups.

Improving your tech toolkit for hybrid productivity can be as simple as packing portable batteries to accompany headsets, or as involved as developing a customized DaaS plan with the latest devices.
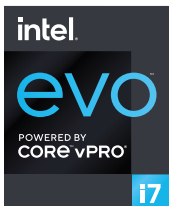
Sources

1 Forrester Thought Leadership Paper: "Invest in Employee Experience (EX) to Drive Your Bottom Line Growth," intel.com, October 2020

2 Upwork, "How Millennials and Gen Z are Reshaping the Future of Work: The Future Workforce Report," March 2019

Get solutions for your future of work

Lenovo is here to help with modern solutions running Microsoft Windows 10 Pro and powered by the Intel® Evo™ vPro® platform, built for what IT needs and users want. Contact your Lenovo Account Representative or local Business Partner.

Visit **www.lenovo.com/PursueTheNew** for more digital transformation strategies.

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Build a better WFA toolkit

To stay productive in any work-from-anywhere (WFA) scenario, here are questions to guide modifications to your tech toolkit and prepare the business's entire hierarchy for the new hybrid work world.

Is your tech toolkit enhancing the user experience?

☐ **Ease.** Ask employees what they're missing. A lot has changed in the past year. What do they need now?

☐ **Appeal.** Does your technology look at home in a modern home office? Could you highlight undiscovered features on tech employees already use?

☐ **Comfort.** Will ergonomic adjustments support employee health? What add-ons, like a supplemental monitor or wireless mouse, could ease the physical burden of work?

Is it supporting your IT team?

☐ **Ready.** Are employees empowered to help themselves? Improving your tech toolkit could be as simple as packing batteries or a short manual.

☐ **Manageable.** Where are the remote management pain points? Helping users in real time, monitoring video calls, rebooting from a distance, detecting emerging problems?

☐ **Trustworthy.** Have you selected partners who have industry expertise? Can they offer SME support in person, around the world, or on a call 24/7?
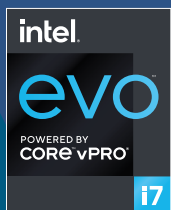
Does it meet the enterprise needs?

☐ **Cost-effective.** Is your fleet scalable? State of the art? Can you dispose of obsolete tech easily and inexpensively? Device as a Service (DaaS) does all the above.

☐ **Secure.** Is your ecosystem of hardware, software, services, and processes engaged with a customizable security platform to keep you protected? Where do you need more support?

☐ **Innovative.** Remote technologies like 5G and AR/VR are changing the way we work. Are your partners leading the change or trying to catch up to it?

Configure the best kit with expert support

How your team responds to the future of work will differentiate your company from competitors. Lenovo is here to help with modern solutions running Microsoft Windows 10 Pro and powered by the Intel® Evo™ vPro® platform, built for what IT needs and users want.

Contact your Lenovo Account Representative or local Business Partner to review your current toolkit and pinpoint where to optimize. Visit www.lenovo.com/PursueTheNew for more hybrid workplace strategies.

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