

How Can IT Organizations Rise to the Occasion in the New World of Remote Work?



The coronavirus pandemic has fundamentally changed the nature of remote work as organizations throughout the United States abruptly had to close workplaces. Over a matter of days and weeks, organizations scrambled to accommodate millions of workers trying to connect and collaborate fulltime over remote connections.

The ability to communicate with remote sites, customers, partners, and suppliers is often taken for granted until interrupted.

Participants in a recent [IDG TechTalk](#) Twitter chat largely agreed that remote work platforms have proved crucial. But they're adamant that leaders need to act on the lessons to be learned from this crisis, particularly in making digital collaboration less of a slogan and more of a reality.



Ben Rothke @benrothke · Mar 26, 2020



Replying to @marthacisneros @MicrosoftTeams and 2 others

#IT solutions purchased as buzzwords end up as shelfware >90% of the time. Orgs buy them in droves, but do not consider these buzzword hardware & software products need significant design & engineering, & #infosec. Something the install wizard can't do. #IDGTECHtalk #COVID19



marthacisneros
@marthacisneros

Indeed, is not just plug-and-play there is an engineering part that needs to be adjusted to the needs of the organization and menaces of the cyberworld itself #IDGTECHTalk

12:35 PM · Mar 26, 2020



What Were You Doing When The...?

Major incidents inevitably create vivid, lifetime memories of what we were doing when, for example, the lights went out in New York City, a prominent government leader or celebrity died, New Orleans was ravaged in the wake of a hurricane, and so forth. Many IT leaders will undoubtedly remember what they were doing when they realized they had to remotely support not just part of a workforce, but perhaps most.

The Governance Guru @GovernanceGuru · Mar 26, 2020

A5. Businesses are finding out that they are not equipped to have their entire workforce working from home. Now it's giving them an idea of what they need in place should a situation like this happen again. This should make folks more proactive, rather than reactive. #IDGTechTalk

IDG TECHtalk @IDGTechTalk

Final Question! Q5: While unprecedented, is there any valuable hindsight to be gleaned from this crisis? #idgtechtalk

How can IT organizations rise to the occasion in the new world of remote work?

Q5 While unprecedented, is there any valuable hindsight to be gleaned from this crisis?

Thurs. 03/26 12pm ET #idgtechtalk

Sponsored By COMCAST BUSINESS

TECH(talk)

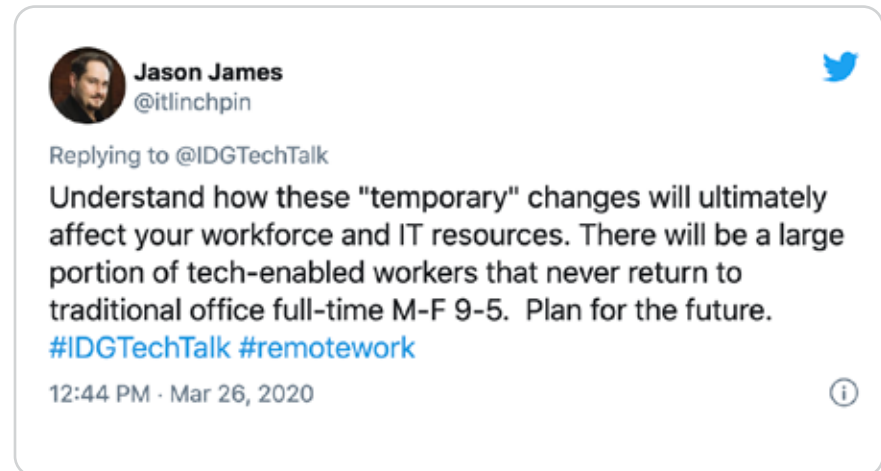
Ben Rothke @benrothke

They are finding that out very quickly. It is not just water & TP in short supply. But many #IT products, especially webcams, cables, modems & more. #IDGTECHtalk #COVID19


12:56 PM · Mar 26, 2020

The New Normal?

This sudden “before” and “after” scenario with regard to remote work undoubtedly has thrust many IT leaders into the forefront as organizations assess how they are responding and what comes next. IDG’s Clare Brown urged chat participants to “shift the mindset that this is ‘temporary’ — with schools closed for the rest of the year and other services on mandatory shut down, organizations should consider this a new normal and put their resources into making remote work seamless and effective.”



A screenshot of a Twitter post by Jason James (@itlinchpin). The post is a reply to @IDGTechTalk. The text of the tweet discusses the impact of temporary changes on the workforce and IT resources, suggesting that a significant portion of tech-enabled workers will not return to traditional office full-time M-F 9-5. The tweet includes the hashtags #IDGTechTalk and #remotework and is dated 12:44 PM on Mar 26, 2020.

 **Jason James**
@itlinchpin

Replying to @IDGTechTalk

Understand how these "temporary" changes will ultimately affect your workforce and IT resources. There will be a large portion of tech-enabled workers that never return to traditional office full-time M-F 9-5. Plan for the future.
[#IDGTechTalk](#) [#remotework](#)

12:44 PM · Mar 26, 2020



A screenshot of a Twitter post by Steven M. Prentice (@StevenPrentice). The post is a reply to @IDGTechTalk. The text of the tweet suggests establishing protocols around technologies to use, especially with regard to security, since people are using home-based tech to connect. The tweet includes the hashtag #IDGTechTalk and is dated 12:07 PM on Mar 26, 2020.

 **Steven M. Prentice**
@StevenPrentice

Steve (and one of my dogs) here.
A1. I would suggest they establish protocols around which technologies to use, especially with regard to security since people are using home-based tech to connect.
[#IDGTechTalk](#)

12:07 PM · Mar 26, 2020

Defining Business Resiliency

Business resiliency may have been an abstract concept for many planners that have never been subject to serious disruption. The COVID-19 pandemic is likely to bring disaster recovery and business continuity to the forefront of IT and corporate planning for years to come.



Jason James
@itlinchpin



Replying to @IDGTechTalk

No organization planned for this kind of sudden upheaval. Business continuity plans that listed "pandemic" were just a line item for an audit. IT Leaders must take the plans they have and update to best fit their workforce. The key is to work quickly and be flexible. #IDGTechtalk

12:28 PM · Mar 26, 2020





Donna Lambertucci
@DonnaLambertucc



Replying to @DonnaLambertucc @IDGTechTalk and 2 others

I wonder how many continuity plans involved a quarantine, or were more about outages, power failures, fires etc. This isn't about rebuilding, as it is enabling greater reach. This is infrastructure issue - and being agile enough to respond quickly #IDGtechtalk

12:31 PM · Mar 26, 2020



Back to the Drawing Board?

When the pandemic wanes, businesses will have to review how they responded and what cracks were exposed in their business continuity plans. IT leaders must find the resources to immediately shore up any glaring holes and rewrite their rule books for the future. #IDGTechTalk asked participants to weigh in on how to approach the upheaval.



Brent Kirkpatrick
@DrBKirkpatrick



Replying to @IDGTechTalk

A2: How about a "fail gracefully" approach? We will likely see more problems emerge. Nobody is perfectly positioned for this.

[#IDGTechTalk](#)

12:15 PM · Mar 26, 2020



BrainBlender 🤖🌐
@BrainBlenderTec



Replying to @IDGTechTalk and @DrBKirkpatrick

What we are now seeing is what has been talked about at every tech conference for last 3 yrs a model that many predicted would take till 2025 to implement is being implemented now from telehealth to complete Gig workforce & full automation 🌐🤖 #IDGTechTalk

12:28 PM · Mar 26, 2020



The Governance Guru
@GovernanceGuru



A5. Businesses are finding out that they are not equipped to have their entire workforce working from home. Now it's giving them an idea of what they need in place should a situation like this happen again. This should make folks more proactive, rather than reactive. #IDGTechTalk

12:55 PM · Mar 26, 2020



It's been almost 20 years since the 9/11 terrorist attack, which greatly elevated the concept of business resiliency. We're all more digitally capable, and digitally dependent, now. The pandemic is a different type of crisis, with shutdowns imposed by government to try and limit ("**flatten the curve**") a catastrophic impact on the U.S. healthcare system. Still, it's worth pondering whether the current crisis demonstrates that lessons learned from 9/11 have faded, and business resiliency investments have since been overtaken by other priorities.

There's little doubt we'll see renewed study of the impact of the remote workforce in a time of crisis. Undoubtedly IT has learned, and in the coming months will continue to learn, much about the performance of its networks and the tools it has deployed for workforce collaboration.

Certainly, much effort will be expended on trying to game out scenarios for unknown disasters of the future.



A screenshot of a Twitter post by Jack Gold (@jckgld). The post includes a profile picture of Jack Gold, his name, and his handle. The text of the tweet discusses the importance of flexibility and planning for future uncertainties. It includes a hashtag #IDGTECHtalk and a timestamp of 12:47 PM - Mar 26, 2020. There is an information icon in the bottom right corner.


 **Jack Gold**
@jckgld

The biggest lesson learned - you don't know what tomorrow will bring. Be as flexible as possible and understand that things will come along that drastically affect your biz - both in #IT and people-wise. Plan for that and don't be rigid...
[#IDGTECHtalk](#)

12:47 PM · Mar 26, 2020



A screenshot of a Twitter post by Will Kelly (@willkelly). The post includes a profile picture of Will Kelly, his name, and his handle. The text of the tweet discusses scaling up remote access and chat/collaboration tools, and content management gaps. It includes a hashtag #IDGTECHtalk and a timestamp of 12:41 PM - Mar 26, 2020. There is an information icon in the bottom right corner.

 **Will Kelly**
@willkelly

A4) Scaling up remote access and chat/collaboration tools top my list of lessons. Content management gaps are also going to rear their ugly head for some organizations and offer lessons (not everybody may take heed the content management lessons though). The [#IDGTECHtalk](#)

12:41 PM · Mar 26, 2020

We'll all be reading many success stories, and probably a few less successful stories about the performance of key collaboration tools.



Steven M. Prentice
@StevenPrentice

A1. It's a great opportunity to demonstrate the power of conversational tools like Slack that allow for the same types of casual conversation as you would have in the office. Video is great for meetings but "chat" is best for "chat."
[#IDGTechTalk](#)

12:10 PM · Mar 26, 2020



Ben Rothke
@benrothke

Replying to @IDGTechTalk and @zoom_us

In just a few weeks, [#Zoom](#) is a brand that has become a verb.
[fastcompany.com/3004901/google...](https://www.fastcompany.com/3004901/google...)
[#IDGTECHtalk](#) [#COVID19](#)



Google This: What It Means When A Brand Becomes A Verb
TiVo. FedEx. Taser. Velcro. Superglue. Sometimes consumers latch onto a brand and make it a verb—the question is whether it helps or hurts a ...
[fastcompany.com](https://www.fastcompany.com)

12:20 PM · Mar 26, 2020

Are We Finally Ready for Remote Work for All?

Business has been making progress toward fostering a more flexible workspace. According to the [International Workplace Group 2019 Global Workplace Study](#), 50% of employees globally work outside of their main office for 2.5 days a week or more and 74% of Americans consider flexible working to be the norm. That type of environment is increasingly crucial to attract and retain talent and has proven to increase productivity and help businesses better manage risk. Will the pandemic provide the spark to make remote work as much the norm?

**CIO.com**
@CIOonline 

Replying to @IDGTechTalk

A1 - From what we've heard from IT leaders, it's about having strong organization -- what collaboration tools are best? Should you have a remote team leader who reports to the CIO? Create a co-ordinated plan for addressing issues.

[#idgtechtalk](#)

12:08 PM · Mar 26, 2020 

**Rob Vaughan**
@rvukit 

I agree also. The issues, limitations and opportunities around remote working will be surfaced now and well tested. Once the dust has settled, but before it becomes the new norm, it's ideal time to consider long term solutions.

**CIO.com** @CIOonline
Agreed #idgtechtalk twitter.com/jckgld/status/...

12:23 PM · Mar 26, 2020 

Leaders to the Front of the Line!

The virus presumably has a limited lifespan, but its lessons should live on and provide IT leaders with ample evidence to boost remote work as businesses prepare to resume normal activities. The lockdowns and shelter-in-place advisories crimped the movement of workers, but it's just as likely to shine a spotlight on leaders to illustrate those who stepped up in a crisis, and those who struggled.

**Jason James**
@itlinchpin 

Replying to @IDGTechTalk

This crisis will reveal and create leaders within organizations. Forget their current title. Those that step up to keep operations going, comfort their coworkers, and deliver results in spite of incredible uncertainty will our future leaders. #IDGTechTalk

12:54 PM · Mar 26, 2020 

**Clare Brown**
@ClareBrownIDG 

A4: Be prepared to pivot — and pivot dramatically. Don't try to fit your old tactics into your new normal. Trust that your employees can handle change. Lead but don't micromanage. #idgtechtalk

12:42 PM · Mar 26, 2020 

Undoubtedly many of today's leaders will have to adjust their thinking about remote work.

**Will Kelly**
@willkelly 

A5) Corporate attitudes about remote work, cloud #collaboration tools, and mobile devices need to change. #IDGTechTalk

12:46 PM · Mar 26, 2020 

Managers must learn to trust in their remote workers. But they need the tools to keep on top of productivity and customer service to ensure that remote work furthers the goals of the organization.



At the same time, managers have to learn new skills in supervising the remote workforce, learning how to communicate and how to mentor from afar. Collaboration platforms will get us part of the way there, but the human element is still crucial. Speaking of that human element, let's not forget to provide a pat on the back of those who kept us remotely working:



And, as one participant noted, don't forget to pace yourself. And stay safe!

