

Hire Gregg Mazel for your Video Production, Clio Billing, Xero Accounting and Box Cloud needs

Steps for Ramping Up Remote Work in the Cloud



Each day, the business world is more challenging and less forgiving than the last. This is due to a wide range of issues — financial, operational, technological, regulatory, competitive — that impact every industry across the globe. Technology leaders are experiencing challenges at an incredibly large scale and at an expediting speed, from workforce impact, to supply chain disruption, to decreased customer demand, to shifting financial goals. In a world of uncertainty and constant change, mandatory remote work is the current norm. And moving forward, a cloud-based, remote workforce will be the foundation of how organizations operate, compete, and succeed.

This new mandate forces today's companies to think about how work gets done, both inside and outside their walls. Organizations that want to amp up their success are now forced to develop new cloud-collaboration strategies to get the most out of their work-from-anywhere teams. Technology leaders and their business counterparts have to embrace the philosophy of work from anywhere, particularly when it comes to rethinking the core concepts of infrastructure, workplace productivity, and business processes.

Now, it's one thing to accept that IT ecosystems need to change so organizations can operate more effectively and better serve their customers. But turning that goal into a reality? That's another thing entirely. So we're here to help with 3 steps to ramp up remote work in the cloud.

1 Confirm core infrastructure and system capacity

The convergence of work-from-anywhere and in-office work has already happened for a lot of organizations, so they've handled the necessary technology and cultural changes that come with it. Other companies have designed their systems to support a small number of remote workers or remote work on an ad-hoc basis. But with all the emergency remote work policies recently put in place, organizations are faced with a capacity bottleneck. They have to handle a surge in remote users who are accessing infrastructure that was built for just a fraction of the load coming in.

When you enable remote work for your internal and external teams, you need to consider a number of factors, including infrastructure stress, system and bandwidth capacity, software licensing, physical capacity for VPN, and network capacity. Organizations that expect to initiate broad work-from-anywhere policies should focus on the following areas:

Make sure you have the VPN and bandwidth capacity to support remote work

At the core of remote work is the ability for employees on private networks to connect to applications and content via VPN. This requires network throughput capacity, VPN hardware, and enough user licenses to scale seamlessly. Plus, you'll want to make sure that you have enough VPN appliances spread out geographically — such as ZScaler, GlobalProtect from Palo Alto Networks, and AnyConnect from Cisco — to handle 100% of your workforce working remotely. These appliances should also be located in areas where you have large offices or a larger number of workers to minimize latency to resources they may be connecting to.

Ensure you have a highly available identity and access management (IAM) capability

Being able to authenticate users and assign them appropriate privileges and access to and within applications is a critical precursor to securely enabling remote work. Companies should consider an access management platform such as [Okta](#) or [Azure AD](#) to keep critical resources secure.

Exercise business continuity plans

Planning is essential for managing any crisis. Build a preventive framework to reduce and mitigate the likelihood of business disruption and identify potential risks associated with an adverse event (like COVID-19). This reduces the impact to operations, sustains shareholder value, and ensures continued service for your customers. Built correctly, a business continuity plan should be business as usual from an infrastructure and services standpoint. You should also confirm that third-party service providers, vendors, and partners that are critical for your business also have a business continuity plan in place, including the ability to rapidly implement secure remote work practices.

2 Implement the most immediate cloud workplace tools you need

Whether it's the way your organization works every day, or in response to an immediate business continuity risk, you have to deliver a virtual workplace that enables people to be productive on any device, from anywhere — securely. For organizations that haven't fully established their remote work capabilities, technology leaders need to identify core business use cases so they can implement short-term, interim solutions to satisfy the immediate need.

Determine the main set of software tools required

Videoconferencing, messaging, collaboration, and document sharing are just a few examples of technologies that enable remote work and are the backbone of the communications fabric you'll need. These systems should power efficient and easy collaboration so that they work across teams, geographies, and technology platforms. Here are the top categories of best-of-breed solutions to consider:

- **Team messaging tools:** To keep everyone in the loop, facilitate interactive discussions, and increase team responsiveness, look to leading messaging solutions like [Slack](#) and [Microsoft Teams](#).
- **Video conferencing tools:** People who are accustomed to working in the office may feel disengaged from the resources, information, or relationships they need to do their jobs well. Solutions like [Zoom](#), [Webex](#), and [Google Hangouts Meet](#) enable everyone to effectively conduct 1:1 meetings, team meetings, and phone calls.
- **Content collaboration platforms:** Solutions like [Box](#) make it easy to store, access, edit, and share critical files with anyone, from teammates to vendors to partners. And with security and compliance built in, you know your data is safe and secure, while teams stay productive and healthy.
- **Project management tools:** Working remotely will put a strain on your project collaboration, so tools like [Box Notes](#), [Asana](#), and [Trello from Atlassian](#) will keep teams on the same page and keep work moving smoothly.



- **Phones:** Cloud VoIP PBXs like [RingCentral](#) and [Zoom](#) allow your people to decouple themselves from a traditional hard desk-phone and instead work with a software dialer and headset from their laptops. Be sure to loop in your network team to ensure that best practices around [QoS](#) are configured.

Deliver workplace technology securely

A key aspect of delivering a modern, cloud-based workspace is keeping remote work both secure and compliant. Just because you're responding to a crisis doesn't mean security threats or compliance risks are any less pernicious and pervasive. Here are a few ways to power a distributed, remote workplace:

- **Manage user devices:** As your people are working from home, make sure they're working on devices that have the appropriate levels of security. Endpoint management tools like [JAMF](#), [Microsoft Intune](#), and [Workspace One from VMware](#) will allow you to securely manage remote devices. Also, consider restricting people from downloading sensitive content or data on personal devices. And ensure your content management and sharing systems offer the necessary level of security controls in these environments – especially since the usage volume of these services will significantly increase in a work-from-anywhere scenario.
- **Prevent data leakage:** Enabling a remote workforce while preventing sensitive information from being leaked should go hand in hand. Cloud access security brokers from [McAfee](#) and [Netskope](#) can help you monitor cloud applications for data leakage. Alternatively, advanced threat detection and monitoring technologies like [Box Shield](#) will enable internal and external collaboration and educate employees on internal security policies, all while preventing data leakage.
- **Monitor user activity and security events:** Gaining visibility into the risks and threats to your distributed workforce is a brand-new challenge, and you'll need to implement cloud-based SIEM tools like [Splunk](#) and [SumoLogic](#) to address these needs. In addition, [Box Shield](#) enables native sharing, collaboration, and download controls while helping identify abnormal user interactions with sensitive content.
- **Meet compliance and data privacy requirements:** Early on, consider the compliance and privacy implications of remote, distributed work. Compliance obligations like HIPAA, FINRA, and CCPA or GDPR don't go away in a remote work world; they only get harder. Confirm that your remote work technology stack offers these types of protections built into their tools. Information governance technologies like [Box Governance](#) provide centralized content lifecycle management, including robust retention policies and legal holds.

Consider the needs of your suppliers and partners

It's especially important to consider the availability of critical cloud infrastructure for your overall value network. Being able to seamlessly and securely work with mission-critical partners, contractors, and contingent workers is often the biggest challenge IT organizations face when dealing with remote work. You must leverage workplace technology that meets the needs of your entire business, and supports identity, security, and licensing models for a distributed workforce.

3 Put the right business processes in place

As events like COVID-19 occur, businesses will ask more people to work from home. While you can speed up some things, speeding up the work-from-anywhere culture can be difficult. Some of your people just aren't used to open, social, and collaborative types of working. Plus, the cultural aspects of how a company works may not match a work-from-anywhere situation. Below, we've outlined some steps that technology leaders can take to make sure people have the systems they need to stay productive, and to help ease the transition.

Create a distributed work culture

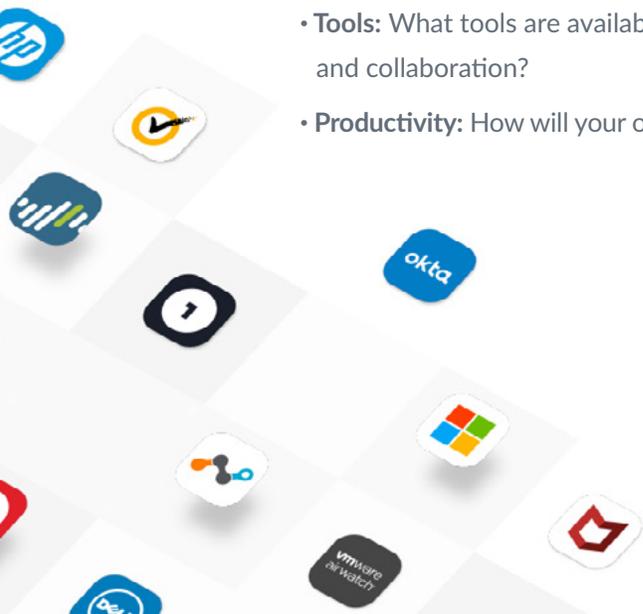
The best remote work cultures don't just digitally replicate traditional business processes and work styles. They fundamentally leverage new work styles to execute and build a sense of community in the process. Here are a few tips and tricks to power a remote work organization that's collaborative and fast-moving:

- **Agile work:** Remote work is often smoothest with agile teams that come together in virtual workspaces like Box, Slack, Teams, and Zoom. Consider doing daily virtual "stand-ups" over video where you can share project plans, goals, and other critical content within Box shared spaces to coordinate work.
- **Virtual all-hands:** Large-scale virtual internal events and "webinars" are often the easiest ways to communicate en-masse to employees and partners. You can also easily add audience and group participation with capabilities like polls, real-time content editing, and curation for agenda setting.
- **Home office hours:** Consider having open video call times between managers and team members to pop in and ask questions of managers or other teammates.
- **Over-communicate:** This is the most important thing you can do when working remotely. People have a natural tendency to forget to communicate – especially the small things – if they don't see your face every day. Don't be afraid to Slack call coworkers (equivalent to tapping them on the shoulder in the office) or launch a video call just to see how they're doing.

Define policies around remote work

While remote work policies will vary from company to company, a general remote policy should at least outline the following:

- **Availability:** Does the team need to be online during specific business hours or will they be able to set their own schedules?
- **Tools:** What tools are available for your organization to use for messaging, conferencing, and collaboration?
- **Productivity:** How will your organization track progress on projects and measure results?



Start ramping up remote work

When it comes to remote work, commitment is key. You need a deliberate remote work plan that aligns technology systems with the way work gets done — across locations, roles, applications, and devices. And ensuring you have the right infrastructure, workplace technology, and business processes is critical to delivering a productive remote workplace. As far as business efficiency and outcomes are concerned, a cohesive strategy like the one we've outlined will help you get your business to where you want it to be.

A crucial element of this strategy is a cloud-based content management platform like [Box](#). Enabling secure access, sharing, and collaboration around mission-critical content is fundamental to keeping your business humming, and we're here to help. To learn more about Box for remote work, or to talk to one of our experts about your remote work strategy, please visit www.box.com/remote or call 1.877.729.4269.

