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What You Need to Know to Manage a Remote Workforce

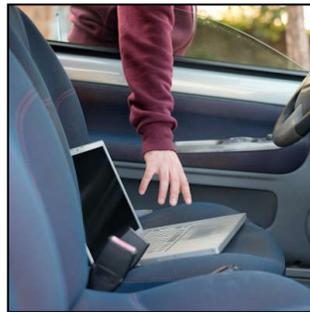


There are many reasons that your team may want (or need) to work from home, and there are many reasons to allow them to do so. A 2019 survey by OwlLabs indicated that 71 percent of remote workers are happy with their job (as compared to 55 percent of on-site workers); remote workers responded that they are 13 percent more likely than onsite workers to stay in their current job for five more years than onsite workers will; and when respondents claimed to be working longer than 40 hours per week, on-site workers were doing so out of...



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Protect Your Laptop from Theft



We talk about cybersecurity a lot. We talk about protecting your data from the illusive threat that hackers and cybercriminals bring. We don't often talk about the more obvious type of security - preventing the physical theft of your data. I think it's time.

How to Physically Secure Your Laptop

Many (not all) laptops have a built-in feature that makes it easy to physically protect it from theft. It's actually pretty likely to get confused for a port on the side of the device.

Here's what it usually looks like:



Typically on the side or front base of the laptop, this little port is called a Kensington Security Slot. It's designed to work with a Kensington Lock/Cable to physically secure the device to an anchor point.

Invest in a Kensington cable and lock and you can chain your device to a table or anything else that isn't going to move easily. Think of it like a bicycle lock.

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Disaster Recovery Practices You Need to Implement



The Novel Coronavirus has made its way around the world and it has certainly changed the way a lot of businesses do things. Some businesses have put in some type of disaster recovery platform. This is basically a plan for returning to continuity after some type of disaster, but we are seeing that many business continuity plans were not broad enough to take on a worldwide pandemic. Sadly, many of these businesses won't open again.

What Disaster Recovery Is

Disaster recovery is one of the most important aspects of a business continuity plan. It is the assignment of disaster-related tasks, the coordination of the business to respond to a disaster, and ultimately, the plan that dictates how operations will continue as the event passes. In turn, there is a lot of planning that is needed to successfully keep continuity after a disaster.

Here are a list of disasters you should be cognizant of:

- **Natural disaster** - Flood, hurricane, tornado, wildfire, electrical storm, worldwide pandemic; the list goes on and on.
- **Human error** - Accidental, negligent, or deliberate situation an employee puts the

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Calming the Anxiety Surrounding Remote Work



People are defined by what they do. The first question they are asked by someone they haven't

seen in some time isn't about their health or their emotions, it is about what they do for a living. With the COVID-19 outbreak, tens of millions of people are out of work and just as many are working from home. For the business owner, this may not be an ideal situation, but if you are able to keep an open mind, you will find that there is a lot of good that could come from having your workers out of the office. This month, we will discuss the benefits of remote work, the gig economy, and some tools that you can use to ensure that remote workers are keeping up their productivity.

Benefits of Remote Work

If you were to look at the prevailing sentiment of business owners, they

would want their people to work from a consistent place of their choosing and pay a hefty price to make this so. The brick and mortar and utility costs alone are typically thousands of dollars a month. The first benefit to a business is that those costs can be mitigated or even eliminated by moving to a remote-first workforce. Sure, you will still have to pay for centralized computing infrastructure and software licenses, but even those can be had for a discount nowadays. Basically, your business' up-front costs are slashed considerably by using remote workers.

Another major benefit is that the people that work for you tend to do better work and work faster if they are able to set themselves up from home. There are different metrics at work here, but basically the more flexibility that the modern worker has, the more productive he/she tends to be. Sure, there are some people that can't organize themselves well enough to be trusted to work full time remotely, but you will find that, by-in-large, remote workers get their work done, the work is better,

and the employee is more content because they don't have to deal with all the things people have to deal with when they are forced to commute back and forth each day.

Lastly, and this cannot be underestimated, you will see better employee morale, higher retention rates, and even better health from remote workers. The metrics are pretty clear: If an employee can do a job from home, they will be grateful and will take that responsibility more seriously. This results in a better output, more for the sales team to work with, and ultimately a better product coming to market.

The Gig Economy

Even before COVID-19 forced businesses to attempt this grand experiment, there were millions of people from all over the world who work remotely, on contract. This is what is referred to in the news media as the "Gig economy" ...



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<https://dti.io/calmwork>

Protect Your Laptop from Theft

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It's a simple, yet effective anti-theft solution that doesn't cost much, and many laptops have the slot built in. When buying laptops, you can check with the manufacturer or work with Directive to make sure they have Kensington slots.

What To Do If Your Laptop Is Stolen?

If your laptop gets lost or stolen, there are some steps you need to take right away.

Report It

If it is a work laptop, or is used for work in any way, you need to tell your employer. If you own the device, you'll want to alert the authorities. It really helps to have a serial number handy (also displayed as an IMEI, usually on the back or underside of the device). Of course, most cases don't see a return of the stolen device, but you never know.

Disable Browser Sync

This is a useful feature many people might not even know they are using. If you are logged in to Chrome or Firefox, you can sync passwords and bookmarks and other settings when logging into the browser on another device. This means anything on your desktop could just get synchronized over to your missing laptop even after you change your password.

In Chrome, look in settings for Show Advanced Settings and click Choose what to sync. In the dropdown menu, uncheck everything. Then select Encrypt all synced data with your own sync passphrase and create a strong, unique password to prevent anyone else from getting it.

Change Your Passwords

Now you need to change your passwords. All of them. If that laptop was

used to log into your bank, your email, your Facebook, etc., you need to plan on changing all of your passwords. That includes your work passwords. Everything. Every single password. We can't stress that enough.

Each and every one.

Change Your Bank Cards

If you use the device for any sort of online shopping or have paid your bills on it, you likely need to do this. Some sites will store your credit card information, and if you are still logged in to any of these sites, the thief can get access (it doesn't matter if you've shut down the laptop or closed your browser, you can still be logged in). You'll...



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Disaster Recovery Practices You Need to Implement

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business in which causes a disaster-like result.

- **Cyberattack** - Data breaches can be some of the worst, especially when people's sensitive information is involved.
- **Failing Hardware** - If the right component goes out at the right time it can have devastating effects on your business.

Regardless of what ails your business, getting back up and running as quick as possible ensures that you aren't going to be in trouble. Even the most forward-thinking business can only sustain operational integrity for a short period of time when revenue is obstructed. That's why you need to have a plan to enact in case your business deals with any of the above problems.

How Managed IT Can Save You Money



For the small business, times are increasingly tough. Many businesses have been forced to close down

until after the coronavirus outbreak has been mitigated, but for those businesses who are still at it, you must be looking to save some money. Outsourcing your IT to a managed service provider may be just the thing you are looking for in order to get the comprehensive IT support your business needs, while also strategically cutting organizational outlay for IT support and services.

Most business decision makers know what a Managed Service Provider (MSP) is. For those who don't, an MSP is an organization that employs business consultants and IT technicians for the express purpose of selling a comprehensive managed IT services platform to your business. This service has many potential benefits, but none so direct as the amount of money you will save and the productivity you will gain over the

DR From the Beginning

Many pundits are suggesting that the Coronavirus outbreak will result in better business continuity and disaster recovery strategies. As mentioned briefly above, lots of businesses didn't have a disaster recovery plan in place for the suspension of business; and, while there is going to be a lot of money invested to help businesses that didn't have a great plan, for some businesses this thing has blind-sided them into oblivion.

Let's start at the beginning. A disaster recovery platform is necessary because it's not if you are going to need it, but when. When the time comes, a comprehensive plan will put you in a very positive minority. Three-out-of-five businesses that experience a prolonged system outage will be out of business

other methods of IT support. Today, we'll take a look at some of the most important services that Directive provides.

Remote Monitoring and Management

When your technology breaks, how do you go about getting it fixed or replaced? Do you use the local computer guy? Or, do you already pay a team of dedicated IT technicians to be administrators? Whichever route you've chosen to go, managed IT services can provide a better situation. Firstly, using our state-of-the-art remote monitoring and management (RMM) software, we are able to monitor your business' entire IT infrastructure and, if we find some inconsistencies or irregularities, we can fix them inside of the RMM platform. This ensures that your company's IT is up and running effectively, mitigating the accrued costs found in downtime.

On the other hand, since comprehensive managed IT services can cover the support needs of almost any business, retaining a team of IT technicians becomes a large, redundant cost. In lean times, making a decision that can save your business thousands of dollars a

month makes sense if you can get comparable or better coverage for your IT. An MSP like Directive offers you just that.

within two years of the event. That means that even if you are able to pick up the pieces and begin to operate, it will never be normal and your business has a 60 percent chance of failing.

Knowing that, it's a bit ironic that the first suggestion after a disaster is that you need to stay calm. You are going to want to act fast, but if you are the kind of person that makes impulsive moves without following a plan, it could actually keep your plan from working at all. Take a minute to take a look at where all the variables are in relation to normal to get your bearings and you can start from there. Level heads make better decisions...



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<https://dti.io/drneeds>

month makes sense if you can get comparable or better coverage for your IT. An MSP like Directive offers you just that.

Computer Repair

If hardware does break, how can your business get the malfunctioning IT fixed and back up and running quickly? As stated before, Directive can use their RMM to fix a lot of the problems you have, but if you need boots on the ground, our technicians will come to your business to fix the problem for you quickly and competently.

Additionally, we feature an around-the-clock help desk that you can call to get support. Technicians can then use the RMM tool to help any member of your staff fix the issue they need fixed, fast.

IT Procurement & Setup

Technology components degrade as they get older. While our RMM strategy will pick up many failing components...



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Remote Productivity Tips



The COVID-19 outbreak has caused many businesses to enact a

work-from-home policy. With so many people working from home, we thought it would be a good idea to write up some simple tips to follow to give yourself the best chance of being productive.

Establish Your Workspace

The very first thing you need to do is set aside a workspace. It's hard to focus on your job if you are on a laptop in the living room in front of your entertainment center, or if the only place you have is your bedroom. One of the most distracting elements of being home are the modern comforts you've outfitted the place with. Find a place where you can be productive and use it.

Don't Burnout

There is the tendency for workers that normally work in an office, but are forced to work from home, to overdo it. The theory is that most people would love the flexibility to work from home on occasion and when they get the opportunity, they spend more time than they should working. This can have negative effects on both their ability to focus and on the business'

payroll. If you are home working, work as you would at the office and walk away when it's time.

If You Are Going Casual, Don't Go TOO Casual

As a part of your normal work routine, you probably need to wash yourself and get dressed. At the very least you need to put on pants. When working from home, many people neglect to do that and it actually has an effect on their work. As a part of your pre-work routine you should wash up and dress yourself as if you were going to the office. You'll feel, and likely perform better.

2. Encourage Co-working Make Collaboration the Standard

With collaboration fueling a lot of businesses, when people work from home it is essential that there is solid communication going on. This will ensure that people are working on the things they need to, they are on the same page, and that they have an outlet from being stuck inside their house for days (or weeks) on end.

Stay Connected and Communicate Constantly

Following the same line of thought, to avoid falling into a non-productive routine, you should reach out to people in

your company to gain some perspective on what they are working on. The more knowledge you can gain about your contemporaries' priorities, the better you can be at filling in the gaps.

3. Commit to Working Productively

Schedule to Your Advantage

Working from home brings some additional flexibility. You may be expected to work your normal business hours, but if you find yourself falling into some bad habits or being complacent in the middle of the work day, figure out the times that you work most effectively. If you aren't on the same schedule, you'll likely get more done when you feel like working than working when you are distracted.

Don't Get Distracted

Speaking of distractions, your home is filled with them. Sometimes it's hard to make the transition to working in the main place you go to relax. There are all types of distractions from family to media to simple household chores. Commit to work when you work and you will find that you will likely get more done in that time than any time you spend at your office.

We partner with many types of businesses in the area, and strive to eliminate IT issues before they cause expensive downtime, so you can continue to drive your business forward. Our dedicated staff loves seeing our clients succeed. Your success is our success, and as you grow, we grow.



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