

A photograph of a woman and a man in a professional setting. Both are wearing light blue surgical face masks. They are facing each other and bumping their fists in a gesture of greeting or agreement. The woman is on the left, wearing a white lace-trimmed top. The man is on the right, wearing a light-colored blazer over a dark blue shirt. The background shows a blurred office environment with large windows.

Sustaining Business in an Uncertain World

“The world of work cannot and should not look the same after this crisis.” That’s what the Secretary-General of the United Nations said recently. We all know the first chapter. When COVID-19 arrived, the business world had to pivot instantly and adopt remote working models to protect employees from risk of infection and to comply with shelter in place mandates. With the world starting to re-open, what happens now?

As the world begins a re-opening phase, the roll-out will take place at different rates of speed and with different regulations depending on the geography and local government. Until a vaccine is discovered, there is also no guarantee that trends won’t reverse themselves with shelter in place orders mandating immediate remote working models to deploy once again. For business, at least over the next 12-18 months, the only real certainty is that we’ll need to operate in an uncertain world.

WHAT IS THE ‘NEW NORMAL’ FOR BUSINESS?

Despite the ambiguity, business fundamentals have not changed. We still need to keep our employees safe, deliver value to customers, connect our supply chains and maintain business operations. What has changed is how we achieve those fundamentals.

Communication is key. Communication is what drives business. Whether service or sales reps are connecting with customers, or employees are collaborating together, lines of communication need to stay open for a business to operate effectively. The uncertainty lies in where all of the people in your business ecosystem will be located at any given time and whether they’ll be able to remain connected and moving business forward given the uncertain changes in social distancing directives.



ADOPT AGILE COMMUNICATIONS

Business success in the new normal depends on the ability to flex any communications channel to meet customers, employees, and partners wherever they happen to be at any given moment and then to do so again wherever they move to next. If the first shelter-in place exercise was any indicator, the number of days from initial warning to everyone working from home was abruptly short. If additional directives crop up, they are just as likely to require action in a similarly short timeframe. That means the choice between hosting a workforce in an office environment or remotely from home is now a non-sequitur, at least for the time-being. We now need to design for both location models or for any hybrid in between and be able to shift on a moment's notice.

PLAN FOR FLEXIBILITY ACROSS ALL CHANNELS AND DEVICES

The modern workforce relies on a combination of phone, email, chat, and video conferencing to stay in touch with each other throughout the day and there should be a variety of communications channels available that best meet the situational need, be it a team update conference call, a realtor sending a chat update to a client on a counter offer, a video conference call for a new business presentation, or the ability to quickly route and answer calls for a customer order or service appointment. It's not enough to design a communications model for just one channel – we need to support them all. Similarly, the workforce relies on any number of devices to conduct business and may change preference depending on the engagement. Whether office phones, mobile phones, tablets or desktop PCs, an agile communications platform must encompass all the common devices and allow them to work together seamlessly.

DON'T SKIMP ON SECURITY

In a period of uncertainty, it's unfortunate that bad-actors prey on confusion, but they do. Since the COVID-19 virus spread, the World Health Organization (WHO) has reported a 5X increase in cyber-attacks. The WHO urges vigilance and so do we. Wherever your employees happen to be, make sure you protect them with state-of-the-art security regardless of device, channel, or location. Additionally, be sure to keep your employee base up to date on new phishing and ransomware techniques to minimize employees unintentionally handing sensitive data over to malicious parties.

DON'T FRET ABOUT MAKING A THROW-AWAY INVESTMENT – IT'S NOT

A survey of leaders and owners of small and medium-sized businesses across the US cited 15% of their employee base as working remotely before the COVID-19 virus hit which then rocketed to 74% when the shelter in place protocols took effect in March. As they look ahead, 57% of the same business leaders forecast continuing-on with remote work options after this pandemic has passed. There are no throw-away investments. The new normal is here for good.

A CRAZY-SIMPLE COMMUNICATIONS PLATFORM

Our cloud-based communications platform enables any business to manage phones, video conferencing, chat, file sharing, email, and contact center functionality all from one single control panel. Our solutions are easy to set up, learn, and operate. Plus, no one has to go into the office to install it. We can deploy, train, and support our solutions 100% remotely.

THEY SAY, “CHANGE IS THE ONLY CONSTANT”... OR IS IT?

Change doesn't necessarily have to be a constant in your business. How your employees communicate both internally and externally and the communications tools they use can be the “constant” you need to limit the impact from the changes that are difficult to forecast.

With our solution, each employee is provided with a solution that combines their phone communications, instant messaging, online meetings, and file sharing in one mobile and/or desktop app. So, wherever employees work, they have all their communication tools with them, in one place and fully integrated.

Every day, businesses face new challenges and concerns. With some challenges we have no choice but to simply react. With other challenges, we can save a lot of stress and heartache by being proactive. As we have already entered a new era of uncertainty that is likely to last well into next year, if not beyond, now is the time to take at least one area of concern off your company's plate. Arm your business with an integrated, cloud-based communications platform that keeps your business humming no matter where your customers, partners, and employees happen to be at any given moment.

Contact us today to learn how we can help!