

# Can your IT support a flexible work environment?



In today's business landscape, it's not a matter of "if" work environment flexibility will become conventional, it's a matter of "when." Even before the COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the need for reliable and secure remote work capabilities, flexible work environments were becoming a business imperative as populations in major U.S. cities decline and the workforce becomes more geographically dispersed.<sup>1</sup> It's important to keep in mind, however, that supporting a flexible work environment takes more than just a willingness to do so — it takes having the right tools and technologies.

Now is the time to start looking at your IT infrastructure to determine if you have the solutions in place — such as a virtual private network (VPN) and unified communications (UC) — to support mobility and enhanced collaboration, as well as the network architecture to ensure security and reliability throughout implementation.

Only by carefully addressing your organization's specific needs can you create a flexible workforce environment that is as reliable, collaborative and secure as your office environment.

### The right tools for a new way of working

A strategic approach to implementing a flexible work environment begins with understanding the technology needed to support it. Powerful solutions and tools exist that can help eliminate the risks to your business and enable your employees to maintain productivity as they embrace new ways of working.

#### Connect securely with a VPN

One of the main priorities when implementing a flexible work environment is mitigating the risks that come from employees working outside of the office. Much of it comes down to how your employees connect with resources on your company's private network or to the cloud. The problem is that anytime someone logs in through an unsecured network — including public WiFi in hotels or airports — their credentials can easily be stolen, putting your company at risk for a data breach, ransomware attack or even fraudulent wire transfers.

With a VPN connection, you can make it easy for employees to safely access company resources from anywhere. By providing a powerful combination of flexibility and security, remote user VPNs allow your teams to maintain productivity while traveling or operating remotely and without forcing you to invest in expensive routing hardware. And, most importantly, VPNs can do all of this without increasing security risk exposure to your organization, providing peace of mind for both you and your clients.

#### Bring your teams together with UC

A concern for many organizations seeking to drive greater workplace flexibility is that it will disrupt existing levels of collaboration. However, studies show that companies that promote collaboration are five times more likely to be high performing.<sup>2</sup> With the right technology, you can make sure that your organization's collaborative processes — and the resultant increase in productivity — remain in place.

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## Streamline your operations with managed services

Managed services from an IT solutions provider can make implementing a flexible work environment even easier. With external experts monitoring and managing your services 24/7/365, you can enjoy a range of benefits:

- Control costs by having a dedicated team that can manage your services more efficiently
- Reduce security risks by relying on network experts to keep your services up to date with the latest patches
- Prevent downtime with proactive monitoring and local technical expertise

With tools and applications for video calling, instant messaging, desktop sharing and more, you can help your teams stay engaged and connected so they can remain productive even from disparate locations. And with a cloud-based UC solution, you can bring it all together and give users a seamless and secure communication experience across platforms and devices. Additionally, when delivered as a fully managed service, UC can help you achieve all this without placing a heavy burden on your IT staff.

### Your network — the foundation for flexibility

Having the right solutions for work environment flexibility can only do so much in the absence of a network built to support them. That's why it's essential to make sure your network architecture is set up to securely and reliably connect employees from any device or location.

A good strategy starts with making sure your servers are protected by next-generation firewalls that are not only up to date, but installed and configured according to best practices. You can take steps to isolate business communications to either private networks over Ethernet, or VPN connections to your business network or cloud servers to prevent unauthorized access. Also, by ensuring you have dedicated bandwidth for both voice and data services, you can provide greater reliability for your employees and prevent intrusions from one network into the other.

By taking the time to address all your security and reliability concerns, you can move forward confidently with new ways to increase workplace flexibility.

### Move your business forward with the right partner

As flexible work environments become more essential, prioritizing your business's IT infrastructure will ensure you have the right foundation to support your workforce. By taking a strategic approach to implementation, with help from a dedicated IT partner, you can ensure a seamless transition to a flexible work environment and maximize the benefits that come with it.

At Spectrum Enterprise, we can help you better understand the technical requirements of work environment flexibility, as well as offer guidance and best practices for your network architecture. Visit our [website](#) to learn more about how our expertise and solutions can help you lay the foundation for success.

1. "Why Are America's Three Biggest Metros Shrinking?" The Atlantic, September 9, 2019, <https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2019/09/americas-three-biggest-metros-shrinking/597544>.
2. "Enhancing Team Collaboration Boosts Productivity, Innovation, and Engagement," SHEA Business Solutions, March 5, 2020, <https://sheaglobal.com/enhancing-team-collaboration>.

### About Spectrum Enterprise

Spectrum Enterprise, a part of Charter Communications, Inc., is a national provider of scalable, fiber technology solutions serving America's largest businesses and communications service providers. The broad Spectrum Enterprise portfolio includes networking and managed services solutions: Internet access, Ethernet access and networks, Voice and TV solutions. Spectrum Enterprise's industry-leading team of experts works closely with clients to achieve greater business success by providing solutions designed to meet their evolving needs. More information about Spectrum Enterprise can be found at [enterprise.spectrum.com](http://enterprise.spectrum.com).