


Top 10 Tips

For delivering a great digital experience for remote workers

With employees increasingly working remotely and completely dependent on digital tools for productivity and collaboration, ensuring a great digital experience has never been more critical.

Here are the top 10 tips for ensuring your remote workers have the best possible digital experience.





Delivering a great digital experience for remote workers.

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Manage the experience, independently of location

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Ready your digital foundation

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Introduction

Every day, employees across the world rely on their digital tools and devices to get their job done effectively. The daily interactions that employees have with their devices, applications, and IT support make up what is called the Digital Employee Experience (DEX). A great DEX serves as a critical driver for work satisfaction, productivity, and ultimately, business success.

Most IT managers find it challenging to deliver a great on-prem DEX, so expanding your support for remote work can seem like double the trouble.

The truth is remote work can pose serious threats and challenges to a company's IT department, business productivity, and security. The stakes become much higher: workers can feel more isolated, more dependent on collaboration tools and 3rd party networks, and along with IT, they can face multiple issues that ultimately weaken their company's security and productivity.

We would like to suggest that it doesn't have to be this way.

We've compiled 10 tips to help you optimize your remote work environment.

Use these examples, and our accompanying stories from real-life IT departments, to help your company deliver powerful remote work and on-prem experiences to employees and customers.



What's a great Digital Employee Experience look like?

- ✓ **Device** – your hardware should be functional, accessible and remote ready.
- ✓ **Business applications** – your remote users are productive and have undisrupted access to their critical business applications.
- ✓ **Web browsing** – your network quality and web access (both server and remote worker side) should be secure and fast.
- ✓ **Security** – you have a secure VPN and your corporate software compliance is maintained.
- ✓ **Productivity & Collaboration** – the tools your remote workers depend on function well and facilitate productivity and communication.
- ✓ **Employee satisfaction** – you can engage directly with remote workers, fix issues remotely with minimal interference, and collect timely, accurate sentiment feedback.

01 Manage the experience, independently of location

One of the key drivers of poor Digital Employee Experience (DEX) is a lack of IT visibility of the employee context. Traditional IT analysis will focus on how services are being provisioned but with less emphasis on how these services are being consumed by employees.

To truly know what your remote workers experience, you should consider comprehensive on-going measurement that calculates accurate, real-time data from your employee devices, web browsing, security, productivity & collaboration tools, business applications, and most importantly, includes employee sentiment data that complements your existing network data.

The ability to continually benchmark the success of technology roll outs, collaboration tools, communication efforts, and user perception will give your IT department a solid foundation to identify gaps and prioritize improvement programs.

02 Ready your digital foundation

Whether you are expanding part or transitioning all of your employees to remote work, it is critical that you get the basics right on your infrastructure.

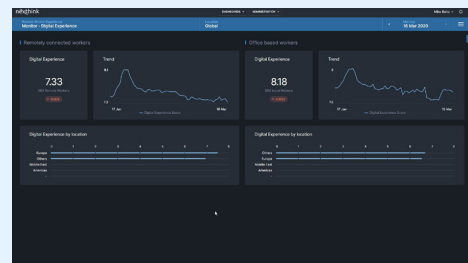
To set the stage, you should first check the status of your different device types, whether virtualized or local. Ensure key certificates (VPN, Office 365) are in place, and that all necessary end-user software and firewalls are up to date.

With a solid digital foundation set, your remote workforce can slide into their day without a dip in digital experience or productivity.

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Preparing for a remote workforce: experience scoring and checklists

Knowing that a large-scale remote working transition was coming up, this customer's IT department made full use of their remote working checklist dashboard to verify user and device readiness in each affected region. This included monitoring certificate availability and ensuring all collaboration tools, firewalls and VPNs were correctly installed and updated. IT's readiness checklists provided accurate visibility and control over their remote workforce once they transitioned off-site. Using a remote Digital Employee Experience Score, the IT team now continuously monitors and manages their remote employees' individual digital experiences and satisfaction.



03

Find and fix incidents as proactively as possible

The problem of slow resolution of endpoint IT incidents is only getting worse with increasingly complex network and application environments, and large remote workforces. IT service desk staff aren't equipped with accurate information and tools to quickly resolve the wide range of issues that arise, resulting in downtime, disruption and lost productivity.

IT departments must give sufficient time to addressing the quality of data being made available to support teams and the efficiency of incident evaluation and escalation processes. In addition, investment in the automation of incident resolution can greatly improve how IT can service their remote employees quickly and effectively, and maintain high levels of remote productivity.

In order to resolve incidents efficiently and accurately, IT support teams need easy access to specific data for each phase of the incident management process.

04

Promote employee self-help

IT teams often have their hands full trying to manage both on-prem and remote employees. With the right engagement and automation tools, IT can offset their workload by establishing an easy-to-use employee self-help system.

Automatic device diagnostics can highlight issues such as network misconfiguration, unoptimized device settings and hard disk clean-up. IT should try to resolve issues with 1-click user-assisted remediations whenever possible. Giving employees early notification of such issues and providing them with the ability to fix their problems themselves helps remove the burden from IT, and empowers workers.

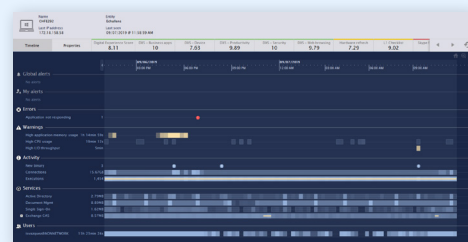
MULTI-NATIONAL CONSULTING FIRM

Investigation and automation: managing remote incidents

With an increasingly large remote workforce, this company noticed a sharp decrease in their overall remote DEX Score which, by drilling down into the Score, revealed their fall came from a common source: high CPU usage.

IT then filtered for all affected users and drilled down to view some of their individual devices. At this level, they noticed that most of these devices had hard drives filling up faster than usual. Instead of manually fixing each employee issue, they quickly set an automated engage campaign to notify these remote workers and gave them the option to clean their respective disk space in a single click.

Story goes, this entire project, from discovery to resolution, was done in under 2 hours!



05 Facilitate employee collaboration

One of the main disadvantages of remote working is the lack of direct communication employees have with their colleagues. Collaboration tools such as MS Teams and Zoom have gained considerable traction as enterprises attempt to scale their remote workforces.

Collaboration tools like MS Teams require substantial IT operations support to ensure their efficient implementation. Indeed, without the right IT visibility and support, migrating to a new collaboration tool can be more confusing than constructive for employees.

Challenges can be mitigated by a focus on pre-deployment readiness. Evaluate your devices and infrastructure capabilities before initiating any piloting and deployment monitoring. Once successfully implemented, IT should focus on sustaining high service quality by engaging with employees for continuous feedback.

06 Stay on top of critical services

A key contributor to a great DEX is being able to access the critical applications, files, and services that you need. For remote workers, a stable internet connection to access those critical services is their lifeline—without it, they lose all contact with their working environment.

IT should ensure they can continuously track key metrics like network response time, so that if quality drops, they can pinpoint whether it's from the employee or corporate side.

Unlocking this insight can be game-changing for any remediation effort. Focus on ongoing service and network performance, and on how that data can be shared amongst your different IT stakeholders.

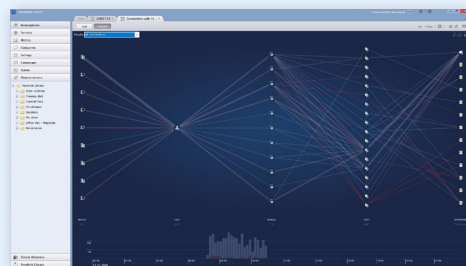
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Ensuring collaboration with a stable MS Teams connection

Allowing for both on-prem and remote work possibilities, this company wanted to ensure that all of their employees would be able to collaborate and stay productive, regardless of location.

Yet, IT noticed that an increasing amount of MS Teams related issues were impacting company communication and collaboration. Their first action was to initiate a worldwide MS Teams adoption project to drive usage, prevent shadow IT and ensure employee satisfaction.

From a single dashboard, IT closely monitored their MS Teams set up, and tracked a range of issues, from call quality to application versioning. From there, IT isolated all remote workers who were experiencing a low network response time. From an illustrative network view, they were able to quickly pinpoint if connectivity issues originated on the corporate network or on the employees' personal networks, and took action once they had their answer.



07 Stay current

One of IT's biggest fears when managing remote workers is the potential loss of visibility and control that they might have had in their on-prem environment. An up-to-date, current environment should be a top priority for IT in supporting large numbers of remote workers.

To actively enhance the user experience while also ensuring device performance and system security, companies need to know exactly what's installed, used, modified, patched and configured on their network (on a per-employee basis) all the time, whether it's on-prem or in the cloud. Here's why: without both clear endpoint data and active infrastructure monitoring, any attempt to streamline services or fix issues will be out of sync with remote employee experience, potentially causing more problems than it solves.

08 Shine a light on shadow IT

Shadow IT is alive and well. Third-party applications are easy to access, easy to maintain, and easy to deploy. Ensuring a safe and compliant experience is one of the hardest challenges for IT, and this is especially the case when supporting remote workers.

So how does IT take back control without alienating shadow IT users and driving them further underground? Start with an amnesty. Ask other departments to come clean about what they're using, what they've agreed to and any problems they encounter. Offer service desk support and look for ways to streamline and secure end-user experiences.

Look to deliver a real-time view of how employees are using technology along with any issues they encounter. Engage with employees to understand the underlying reasons for non-standard adoption, and work with them over time to adopt a more standardized approach.

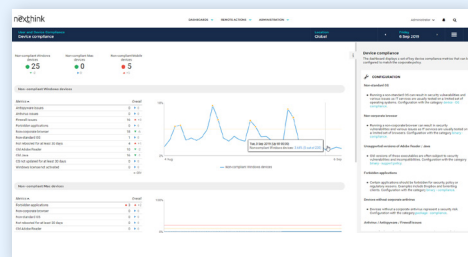
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Detecting and taking direct action against remote shadow IT

Worried about security issues within their new remote workforce, this IT team was able to identify their employees that didn't have a VPN by listing every device in their infrastructure that wasn't on the company's corporate VPN or office network.

IT then sent this subgroup of remote workers targeted messages asking them to turn on, update or install a VPN and they offered assistance to those who might need it.

Unfortunately, having a working VPN did not deter some of their remote workers from using their own personal devices and non-sanctioned company applications for work. Seeing the vulnerability unfold before their eyes, the IT team quickly set up a shadow IT dashboard to track these non-compliant users. They then communicated with and trained these workers to use their company-approved devices and apps.



09

Reach out directly to employees at anytime

A significant concern for IT is the potential isolation of remote workers, and the ability of IT to deliver the right levels of support directly to them. Remote workers can very quickly start to feel stranded. With their access to physical IT support now severed, IT needs to show their remote employees that the opposite is true: support is with them every step of the way.

IT should keep the communication lines open with employees, whether to provide direct help with IT issues, or just to check-in to make sure they are doing fine. Even subtle communication efforts provide employees with a better remote DEX—it makes them feel looked after, protected, and part of the same team.

10

Get accurate, real-time employee sentiment

A continuous dialogue with employees also offers significant opportunities to gather feedback. Traditional email surveys do not tend to deliver high response rates, and only provide moment-in-time feedback.

IT departments should look to create more innovative ways for employees to provide comprehensive feedback, and to do this on an ongoing basis. Building a less intrusive communication method into daily work practices, and combining requests for feedback with regular information updates, can provide IT with a rich source of contextual feedback. Combining this feedback with IT's existing network data can provide a holistic view of employee sentiment at any time, independently of whether they are working remotely or on-prem.

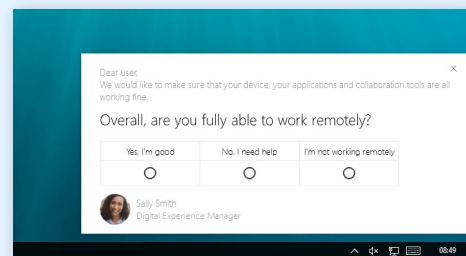
U.S. PHARMACEUTICAL FIRM

Throwing remote workers a digital lifeline

A significant concern for this customer was that their remote workers would feel isolated outside of the office. Their dependence on digital tools would not only stress IT's system but make the workers themselves feel stranded.

IT used unique communication campaigns to proactively reach out to their employees. This allowed IT to notify employees about the importance of things like VPN compliance, and also share remote work strategies and corporate announcements.

In addition, these campaigns provided IT with a wealth of sentiment data to help provide a real-time employee-centric view of infrastructure and remote worker support.





Managing DEX is not easy. And managing remote DEX is even harder.

IT plays a massive role in helping employees enjoy their work experience, independent of where they work from.

As the leading DEX management company, Nextthink is here to ensure that every remote worker around the world is able to stay productive, collaborate with their colleagues, receive timely IT support and most importantly, have a great digital work experience.

Beyond Nextthink's usual capabilities, we also have an out-of-the-box "**Remote Worker Experience**" **Library pack** to help IT teams monitor and manage their remote digital work experiences.

Want to find out more?

Schedule a Demo

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