

Relook at remote working for your workforce

With the [coronavirus pandemic declared a national disaster in South Africa](#), businesses need to consider how they are going to maintain normal operations if employees are quarantined, or asked to stay home for whatever reason.



John Woollam, CEO of Euphoria Telecom

Amidst fears of possible food shortages and the like, businesses are considering more urgent things - like who will answer the office phone if we are all asked to stay home for a few weeks? And how will my call centre keep operating if no-one is allowed into it?

Technology can help, in a number of ways, says John Woollam, CEO of Euphoria Telecom.

“Remote and/or mobile working are well understood but have not been adopted widely in South Africa to date,” he says.

“Aside from providing an option for companies looking to manage the impact of Coronavirus, mobile/remote working also offers opportunities to keep employees off congested roads during peak hours, provide them with flexible work hours that enable higher quality of life, and reduce expensive office space costs by moving some workers home permanently.”

Here’s how you can do this for your business:

- If you have an analogue phone system your landline number is tied to your physical location. If you have a cloud-based PBX, however, it isn’t. Which means your provider will give you a virtual number that is accessible from anywhere the cloud can reach - you just have to set your call forwarding options in your management console.
- Cloud-based telephony means employees can literally pick up their handsets from the office and connect to their

ADSL/fibre line at home to work normally as if they were at their desks. For office staff and call centres, this is a business continuity option that is both easy and cost-effective.

- If your cloud telephony solution comes with a mobile app, you can turn your mobile phone into your office phone and work wherever you are - at home, on the go, in a remote location, wherever you need to be.
- Power continues to be an issue across the country but you can take advantage of solar power solutions, as well as inverters, to keep home offices running. Where these are not viable, employees should keep an eye on load shedding schedules and plan to charge devices and batteries when they can to keep them as connected as possible during outages.
- Connectivity - mobile networks provide LTE connectivity, which is adequate for day to day business use, for employees who do not have fibre or ADSL at home. Dongles with dedicated data SIMs can also be purchased and issued to keep employees' personal and business use separated and manage costs.

Managing a remote/mobile workforce is no longer the daunting task it was ten years ago. With modern technology, many companies elect to work virtually - only ever meeting online or for a quarterly or annual get together.

For more traditional organisations this could be an opportunity to explore more flexible work hours, to meet the needs of the employees and work around ongoing considerations like load shedding and high traffic volumes.

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