

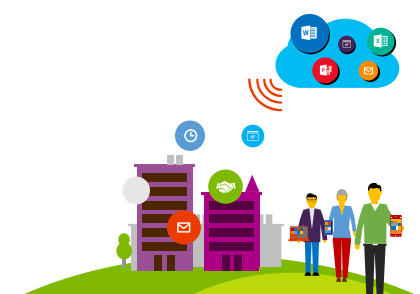
PACK UP AND GO

The SMB guide to working anywhere



We dedicated our fourth small-business mini summit to the challenges and opportunities of anywhere working.

There was a general consensus that anywhere working isn't just about technology: it's about productivity and people too.



Talking your language

As usual, we were in listening mode at our mini summit. So we invited some guest experts to articulate on anywhere working in between roundtable discussions with our 22 attendees.



[Steve Tassell](#), Head of Commercial Marketing Communications at Microsoft UK

With over 15 years' experience working for Microsoft, Steve now manages all aspects of B2B marketing, including strategy, planning and campaign management through social and web.

He works hard to understand and communicate our evolution towards anywhere working.



[Tony Margiotta](#), consultant and former general manager at [Central Working](#).

Tony has a varied background including 20 years in the Royal Marines, communications management with the 2012 Olympic Games, life coaching and charity volunteering.

Over the last three years Tony has been working with the hospitality brand, Central Working, which aims to help people work better through shared working spaces.



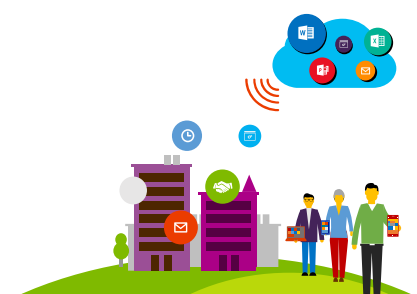
[Matthew Stibbe](#), CEO and writer-in-chief at [Articulate Marketing](#).

Matthew owns and runs a virtual small business, where all employees work remotely. He knows anywhere working inside out and, as a self-confessed geek, loves finding new tools and fixes to better support his team.



[David Weeks](#), Windows Product Marketing Manager for SMB and Education, Microsoft.

David has over 20 years' marketing experience and is currently on a mission to make small businesses aware of the benefits and possibilities of Microsoft's modern, mobile technology, such as the Surface Pro 3 and Windows 10.



The motivation to go mobile



Over half of SMBs (55 percent) support a mobile workforce and 43 percent of SMB employees work in more than one location, according to AMI. But why?

Attendees and guest speakers touched on several motivations for this shift, including employee morale, frustration, collaboration and cost. There are a lot of good reasons to untether your employees from their desks.

The evolving workplace

First and foremost, small businesses are embracing anywhere working because they can't afford not to. Nearly a third of SMB employees spend more than 60 minutes commuting to and from work each day, according to a 2015 Ipsos Mori survey. That's a lot of lost hours. It's also a big energy-suck for those employees who could be spending their time more productively.

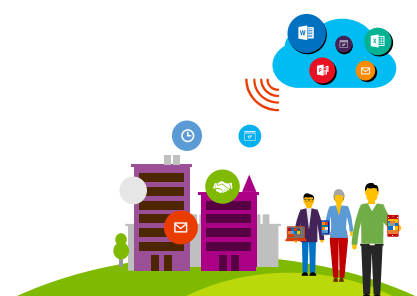
Businesses that fail to embrace flexibility force people into unhappy working patterns; just think about how much those businesses lose in sick days and poor retention because of the stress and frustration people feel being tethered to desks miles away from where they live.

Restricting anywhere working means keeping your business in the slow lane by restricting your responsiveness. The Boston Consulting Group found that a quarter of SMEs that use mobile services more intensively see their revenues growing up to two times faster and add jobs up to eight times faster than their peers.

Connections and serendipity

Of course, not all business benefits are so easily quantifiable. Many attendees at our event spoke of the importance of the connections you can make when you can work outside the office. 'You never know who you'll meet at the coffee shop,' says Beatriz Garcia-Martinez of [SecurelyBe](#).

Some attendees attend specific entrepreneur or small business meet ups to widen their network and learn from other expert professionals. Others find co-working hubs are a great way to meet people who can help them grow their business.



Tony Margiotta of Central Working told us about Jenny – a woman who had been struggling to get her business off the ground for over a year. It would take her three or four weeks just to get an interview with her bank manager when she needed to discuss a new idea. At Central Working, she ended up meeting the global head of operations for Barclays, who happily sat down with her for over an hour and gave her advice.

Thanks to anywhere working, people are able to take advantage of places like [Central Working](#), where they can work, get advice, learn and network all at the same time. Anywhere working means you never miss an opportunity.

Getting your business off the ground



Being mobile from the start also makes it financially easier to get your business off the ground. Clare Findlay, for example, originally set up [Purple Demand](#) as an entirely virtual company. Primarily she wanted to offer her employees the greatest flexibility but it also meant she could grow the business a little before having to invest in a physical office.

It's not just rental costs that small businesses have to consider: there's also infrastructure, like internet and phone connections, maintenance and hardware to procure. Committing to those costs when you're just starting out can be a big risk. Anywhere working makes affordable growth more achievable.

Anywhere working also helps you hire the best talent. Not only are people looking for more flexibility in the way they work, but there are valuable, untapped talent pools such as new mothers and carers, who want to be part of the workforce but can't be physically present in an office five days a week. Anywhere working gives you access to that talent.

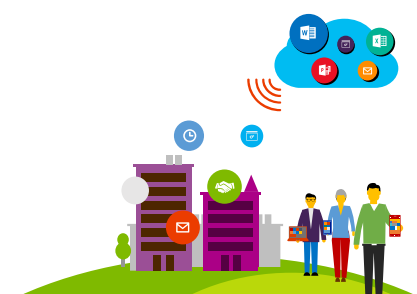
A better business state of mind



There are a lot of emotional and psychological benefits to anywhere working, both for business owner and employee.

Sally Pritchett, co-owner of [Something Big](#) spoke about how much she loves her work and how being able to stay connected in the evenings or on holiday is a positive thing for her. It stops work and life being at odds and helps them integrate instead. As [Stewart D. Friedman argues](#) in the Harvard Business Review:

Balance is bunk. It's a misguided notion that assumes we must always make trade-offs among the different aspects of our lives.



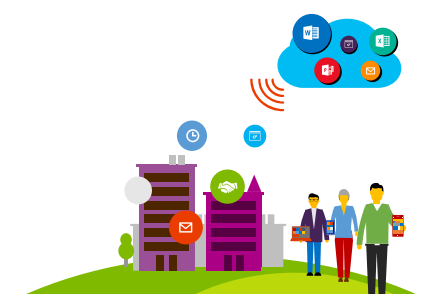
And, while colleagues and camaraderie are important for getting through a bad day or for putting your work into perspective, sometimes rivalries and over familiarity can get in the way of that support. And, for a business owner, it's nigh-on impossible to talk to employees about worries or concerns about the business.

Co-working hubs offer 'the people without the politics' as Niki Daly of [Gnot](#) said. Flexible environments mean you can find the right frame of mind, through conversation or isolation, to do your best work.

Speaker top tip

If you're having a bad day and feel stressed, you're likely to make emotional decisions, which aren't necessarily the best ones.

Central Working has teamed up with [One Thought](#) to offer access to practitioners who help you think more clearly and make better decisions. Think of it as free professional counselling.



What you need to be free



While [modern technology](#) has made anywhere working much easier to embrace, there's more to it than a shiny smartphone and an online email account.

To benefit from flexible working, you have to implement it right.

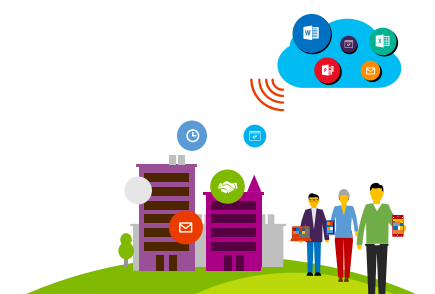
The right approach

'You need an open mind and you have to get it out of your head that people working from home will take the mick,' says Sally Pritchett, one of our attendees.

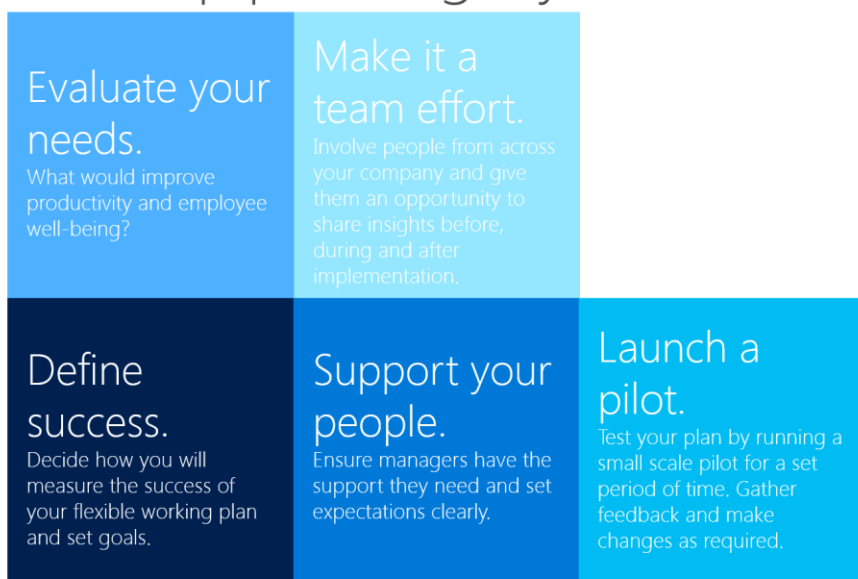
A successful transition to anywhere working is 10 percent technology, 40 percent culture and 50 percent leadership according to speaker, Steve Tassell. 'Leaders need to spearhead cultural and behavioural change within their organisations to nurture new thinking and innovation.' For example:

- Stop managing through presenteeism – results rather than physical presence should be rewarded
- Respect employees' boundaries – just because they're available at home doesn't mean they're available 24/7
- Demonstrate what it means to manage your time responsibly – discourage unintended, unpaid overtime. Just because you can access work any time, doesn't always mean you should
- Make virtual meetings the norm and make the effort to include people who aren't always in the same office or time zone as other employees

Steve suggests a five-step plan to get you off to a flying start:



Five-step plan to get you off to a flying start



The right tools

While technology might only make up a small part of the transition to anywhere working, it's a pretty important part. The right tools can make the difference between seamless synchronisation and isolated frustration.

Sharing files and keeping track of your notes and ideas were the top priorities of our attendees with many recommending [OneNote](#), [OneDrive](#) and [SharePoint](#) as top tools for anywhere working. And of course, [Office 365](#) gives you access to all the familiar Office tools like Word and Excel while you're on the go as well as access to your email (along with lots of other connected features).

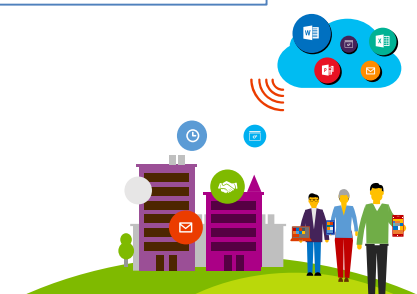
When it comes to technology though, the most important thing is to make it as simple as possible for employees. Understand the benefits of any software or service you decide to use and communicate it to employees clearly and enthusiastically

Anywhere magic: [Surface Pro 3](#)

With the Microsoft Surface, the aim has always been to make people as productive as possible. It's designed to be a hybrid between a laptop and a tablet so you only have to carry one device.

For that reason, it meets four key criteria:

- You can use any app you would regularly, completely seamlessly
- It has a great screen that's big enough for multitasking and has the most colour-accurate display on the market
- A great keyboard, with a bigger trackpad than previous models
- A flexible kickstand and detachable keyboard make it a device you can use wherever you want to work



Alongside your basic devices and services, there were a few other suggestions that came up at our summit to make anywhere working, work a little better:

- Connectivity. Lots of locations now have free Wi-Fi, but if you're outside of London or you just want a good backup, there are a few other options. Wi-Fi tethering basically means turning your smartphone into a hotspot, but be sure you have a large-enough data allowance and your contract doesn't restrict tethering. BT hotspots are all over the place and offer pay-as-you-go internet access while [Boingo](#) offers a membership-based alternative.
- Communication. Setting up a VoIP phone or Skype landline number allows you to take office calls wherever you are and means you present a professional appearance even if your office is actually in your backpack.
- Essential accessories. Either take your charger with you or invest in a mini charger for emergencies. And while OneNote and other online notebooks are great, sometimes an [old-fashioned pencil](#) and [notebook](#) can be just what you need on the go.

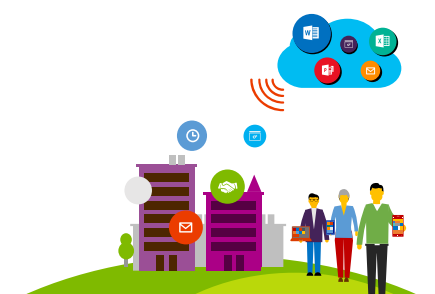
The right places

Anywhere working means being able to work anywhere but that doesn't remove the need for somewhere to actually work and collaborate.

We've mentioned work hubs like Central Working, which, in the words of one attendee, allow you to 'have objectivity around you.'

There are also libraries and coffee shops where you can meet up with other local entrepreneurs and business owners or just see who you bump into. Beatriz Garcia-Martinez has a particular brand of coffee chain that is only ever for working in – never socialising – to help her stay in the right frame of mind.

If you're struggling to find local groups or hubs try looking on LinkedIn, [MeetUp](#) or even your local authority website. Failing that – why not set up your own?



Warning: potential pitfalls



We wouldn't be giving you a proper guide to anywhere working if we didn't also mention a few pitfalls to watch for. They're important to consider if you want to make your adoption a success, but easy to avoid with a bit of planning.

How people feel

There's a big risk of isolation with anywhere working, especially if you have no central office location at all. New employees can struggle to understand company culture and politics and young people may lose out on learning about the business environment.

Many attendees were at pains to point out that mobile working doesn't mean the abolition of the traditional desk. In fact, from an ergonomic perspective alone, a good desktop can be important for people spending a lot of time in front of a screen. Beyond that though, as Clare Findlay found out from her employees, a 100 percent virtual company can make people feel lonely and disconnected.

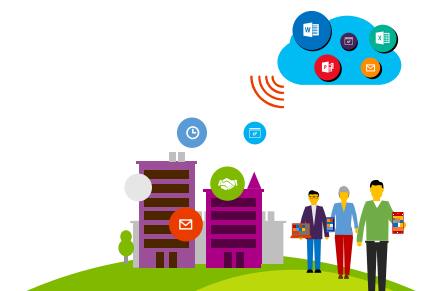
Rather than an all-or-nothing approach, enable flexibility, so as to cater for as many working habits as you can. Online applications like Yammer can recreate 'the watercooler experience' and keep people talking even if they are working remotely. Also consider introducing habits, such as regular huddles, to keep everyone connected and engaged. Get everyone on [Lync](#) or Skype every day or week and have everyone run through:

1. Any good news from the previous day/ week? (Can be work related or personal)
2. What's your focus for the day/ week?
3. Are you stuck on anything? Is there a specific barrier to what you want to achieve?

Access to applications

If you build mobility in from the beginning that's one thing, but if you're going to transition to anywhere working you're going to need to plan and test first. You'll likely need to alter your IT infrastructure so as to allow access to the applications employees need.

If you already host some line-of-business applications onsite, or use heavy-duty systems like SAP, it may be best to bring in an IT expert to sort out secure and reliable remote access.

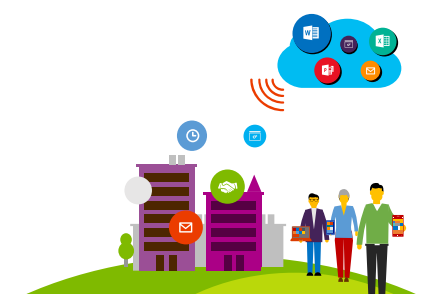


Security

Finding the balance between [security](#) and flexibility isn't always easy. Become too restrictive and employees will just find their own workaround, which you'll have no control over.

Of course data protection is important, both to protect your business and reassure clients, but a few key considerations can make you a lot safer without much sacrifice to flexibility:

- Encryption. Make sure your data is encrypted both when stored and when in transit, especially if you and your employees are using public Wi-Fi hotspots where criminals could eavesdrop.
- Device management. Do you need to containerise work apps on your employees devices? Or is data protection built in to your device or software, as with Windows 10? And, obviously, make sure you deploy endpoint security.
- Data classification. How do you keep control of where your data is and how do you manage hierarchical access to sensitive data? Using cloud storage prevents data having to be stored on individual devices, but be sure to combine that with device management to control access to your cloud storage.
- Passwords. Both for devices and services, two-factor authentication is best. This would be, for example, a password and texted code. Don't use the same password across all services. One attendee suggested memorising a poem and using lines from that as passwords to ensure they are long and difficult to hack.



How Windows 10 helps you work anywhere

Microsoft has lots of services and software, like [Office365](#), to help you work anywhere, but Windows 10 makes it easier than ever to stay synchronised across devices and places.

Windows 10 is familiar for you to use but is actually designed in a totally different way. It's Windows-as-a-service, meaning updates are automatic. It's an operating that's built to compete in the hybrid IT ecosystem that most businesses and individuals now use.

Windows 10 is ideal for anywhere working because it's:

- The best platform for modern business. It's simple to use, with universal applications and integrates the cloud with your PC.
- Available on a wide range of affordable and innovative devices. Windows 10 is designed for long battery life, quick boot and responsiveness.
- Simple to set up and manage. You can upgrade existing devices in-place – no wiping and starting from scratch. There's built-in cloud storage and you can set up your own business applications portal.
- Making enterprise security available to SMBs. Windows 10 provides trusted boot, Windows Defender, BitLocker data protection, next generation credentials and more.

To find out more and download the Windows 10 Tech Preview, visit the [Windows Insider Program](#).



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