3 critical considerations for building a remote workforce

Empower your workforce with Office 365

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DELIVERING PROGRESS

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Introduction

The nature of globalized business is more dependent than ever on a mobile population of digitally enabled workers who desire the freedom to balance in-office responsibilities with remote communication.

Approximately 520.000 Belgian employees (14.1% of the labor force) already work from home two or more days per week, and rank "flexibility" as a primary incentive when searching for a job.

Between homes, separate offices, and a litany of "third places," a physical and philosophical migration of the workplace is underway. As a result, many employees work from a remote location, telecommute based on their role, or simply work from home a few days a week—testing the degree to which their jobs (that were traditionally conducted in a physical office space) can be performed from anywhere. These workers embody the strategic shift that many enterprises are preparing for via their investments in mobility.

Studies have found that through increased productivity, reduced facility costs, and lower employee turnover, employees in the U.S. who work remotely at least half of the time can save organizations thousands of euros per employee/per year.

One type of remote worker you might be familiar with is the "migrator." Working remotely, usually from a different time zone, migrators need to coordinate with team members who work from company headquarters or in other locations. Thus, their primary needs include seamless communication and server access anytime, anywhere—all without compromising security.

This e-book explores critical moments that occur every day between the migrators at your business and their coworkers. In it, you will learn how Office 365 can transform the obstacles of separation into a set of best practices that save your business time and money while improving teamwork across—and reducing the downside of—physical distance.
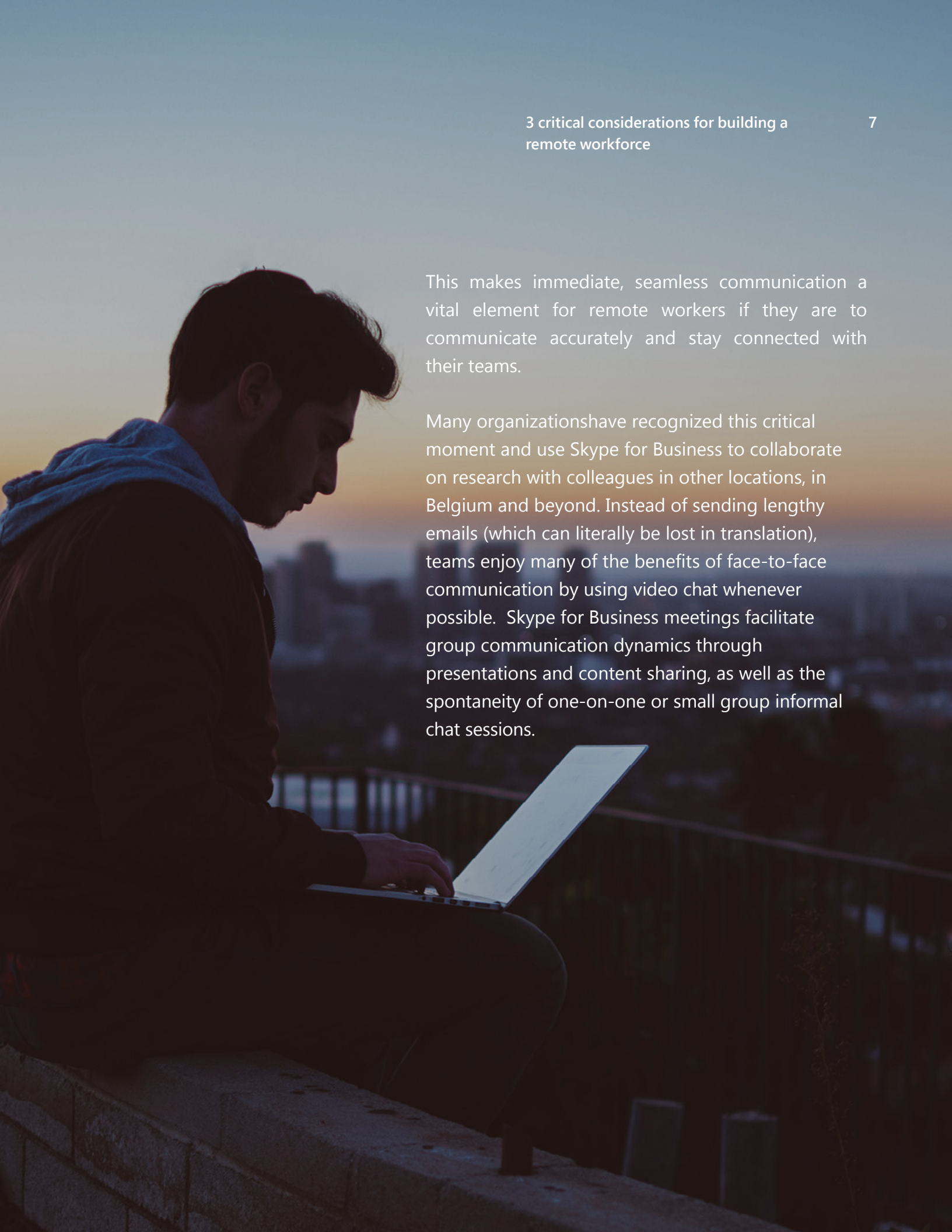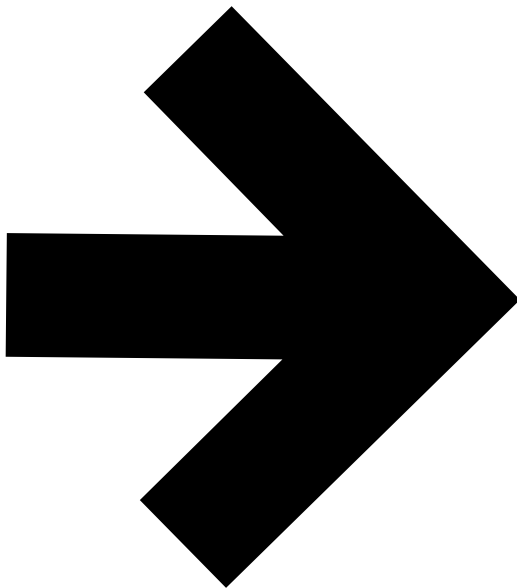
Critical moment 1: effective communication

As the word implies, "migrators" are on the move. They may be working from home one week, then on a business trip or at a regional office the next. They don't have the regular face-to-face encounters with colleagues that non-migrators take for granted.
So not only are they missing spontaneous opportunities to communicate, they are also cut off from critical nuances such as body language, intonation, and other nonverbal cues.

44% of employees surveyed said they work from two or more locations in an average week and have daily communication with more than 20 people (usually coworkers and clients).
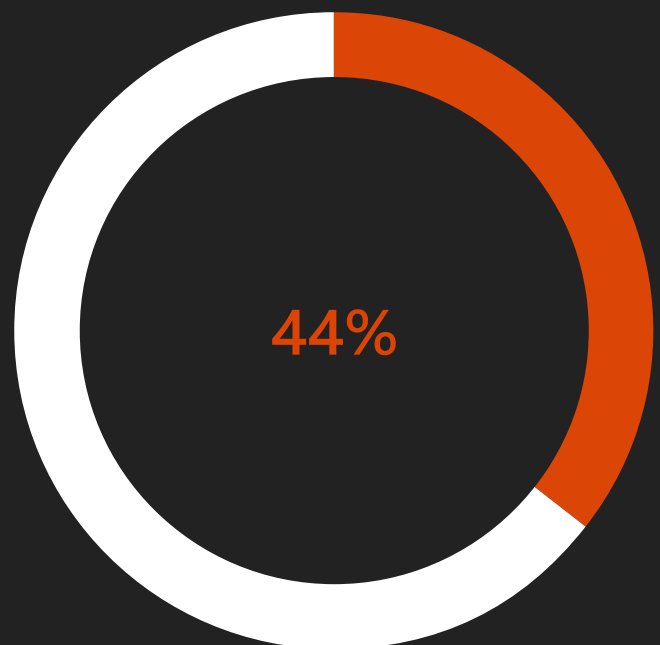
44%

This makes immediate, seamless communication a vital element for remote workers if they are to communicate accurately and stay connected with their teams.

Many organizationshave recognized this critical moment and use Skype for Business to collaborate on research with colleagues in other locations, in Belgium and beyond. Instead of sending lengthy emails (which can literally be lost in translation), teams enjoy many of the benefits of face-to-face communication by using video chat whenever possible. Skype for Business meetings facilitate group communication dynamics through presentations and content sharing, as well as the spontaneity of one-on-one or small group informal chat sessions.

By providing as many of the benefits of in-person communication as possible, Skype for Business allows migrators not only to work and communicate more effectively, but also to feel more connected to their colleagues.

Critical moment 2: easier collaboration

Another challenge is limited access to information.

In a Forrester survey, 35% of workers cited a lack of consistency in data management as the main issue regarding information access, while 27% cited inconsistent collaboration policies for file organization.

If these issues exist for office-based workers, then other factors, such as time zone differences, only intensify them for remote workers.

In order to help its global teams address these issues, more and more organizations began relying on OneDrive for Business to integrate and manage collaboration. OneDrive allows employees to co-author documents and access critical project information in real time, from virtually anywhere. While employees not having OneDrive attach documents to emails, users with OneDrive *share* links, which reduces version control problems and creates more efficient inboxes.

OneDrive provides organization with a purpose-built, integrated application to address the critical moment of collaboration, giving mobile workforces a simple way to share files inside and outside the organization.

Critical moment 3: staying secure on the go

Between airports, flights, hotels, and restaurants, getting work done away from the office means migrators need to connect with company information alongside thousands of other remote workers each day.

Widespread dependence on public Wi-Fi has increased vulnerability to criminals and malware, as open networks don't require authentication.

In addition, many employees supplement their company's digital tools with personal hardware and software, which also makes them more susceptible to the kind of breach that puts businesses at risk.

However, 57% surveyed claim not to be worried about the security of the data/information they are accessing.

The communication and collaboration necessary for managing remote employees break down when security can't be guaranteed. Global business demands secure, regional data hosting, with encryption for data at rest and during transmission, as well as customizable privacy controls, "hard" password protection, and a company VPN for secure access to network resources.

To address these security-related critical moments, organizations rely on the Microsoft Enterprise Mobility Suite to safeguard their mobile strategy.

In particular, they incorporate Microsoft Exchange Online Advanced Threat Protection, a cloud-based email-filtering service that blocks threats before they can enter the system. In the event of a breach, Advanced Threat Protection detects and reports it instantly. This multilayer defense system covers the full range of identity-based security across the entire company.

The combined security capabilities of Office 365 give organizations the flexibility to meet the demands of today's mobile workforce and BYOD environment, while maintaining the security level their business requires.

Empower your remote workforce

Remote workers pose unique challenges in the fast-paced world of digital transformation, but cloud-based solutions can address many, if not all, of these challenges, while empowering remote workers without sacrificing security.

When decision makers understand the needs of their remote workforce, as well as which technologies address those needs and which don't, they can better determine the right cloud solutions to meet their unique accessibility, collaboration, and security demands and help employees work more effectively from any location.
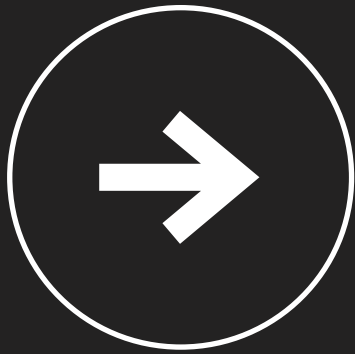
Protecting mobile workers is by far workload No. 1 of the Spikes CloudInfra team.

Get in touch with them now.