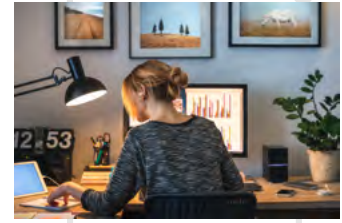


colt

A blueprint for connecting the hybrid workforce

**Your essential toolkit for
connecting, empowering and
securing teams at any location**

www.colt.net



Redrawing the plans: building infrastructure for the hybrid workplace

Rethinking the network to sustain your business into the future

Welcome back to the office.

The way we work has changed forever and the last two years have opened up our eyes to the potential of hybrid work. But businesses still haven't made the changes they need to the network, with a [CCS Insight Survey](#) finding that slow fixed networks in corporate offices are the biggest frustration.

The quick fixes put in place to accommodate remote working aren't sustainable for the longer term. A workplace that seamlessly blends the physical and the virtual needs solid foundations. Frost & Sullivan's Hybrid Workplace Insights [report](#) identified the three pillars required for a long-term, sustainable plan:

- Your **network** is the lifeblood of a hybrid work environment
- Your employees need **cloud-based collaboration and productivity tools**
- Leveraging corporate digital assets requires **end-to-end security**

Good office design creates a space that facilitates productive working. Now that your workplace is a hybrid of the virtual and the physical, the same principle applies. Wherever your people choose to be based, everyone should get the same consistent experience.

That's why it's essential to act now to future-proof your connectivity and a network that ensures productivity and agility without compromising on security. In this eBook, we'll show you the tools to build those solid foundations.

83% of IT decision-makers worldwide expect at least one-quarter of their employees will work remotely at least some time during 2022¹.

How to overcome challenges in designing for the hybrid workplace

From stumbling blocks to building blocks: removing the barriers to ensuring consistent communication and connectivity.

What's holding back your design for the hybrid workplace? Today, these obstacles might be:

- **How do you engage in a voice conversation with external parties, such as customers, suppliers or partners?** If you relied on desk phones connected to an on-premise PBX that solution won't work remotely. Should you be thinking about upgrading voice services to make them cloud-enabled?
- **As teams no longer occupy the same physical space, it's driving higher demand for collaboration tools.** Relying on the public internet can bring challenges with speed and reliability, impacting performance. Can your network deliver consistently for all users and integrate and manage new services as needed?
- **Can you fully enable a hybrid workforce today?** Is your current connectivity procurement model flexible and fast enough to cope with changes in bandwidth demand as your people move between office and remote sites?

55% of IT decision-makers were highly impacted by the lack of appropriate bandwidth and technology tools for remote workers².

Foundation 1: the network

Get your network ready for a hybrid approach.

A 60/40 split between office occupancy and working from home would drive a 50% increase in bandwidth requirements, based on Colt's analysis of its pre-pandemic network traffic and current application usage.

The first foundation in designing for your needs is the network. To understand what will work for your business, you need to ask:

- Do you know what your future traffic looks like?
- Could your network cope with spikes of several hundred Mbps of video?
- How flexible is your bandwidth?



Use our bandwidth calculator to assess how your network needs will change with a hybrid workforce

How much bandwidth will you require?

How many people are usually in your office?

2624

How many hours a day do people usually spend in meetings?

5

What percentage of those will have a virtual component?

50%

Calculate

Choose the right tools: connectivity that performs

On-demand, flexible connectivity is the bedrock of a virtual workplace. Ensure you have enough bandwidth to access unified communications applications from the office, even as video traffic surges and fluctuates, with [On Demand solutions](#) to connect your IT services faster and to prepare for the unpredictable.

You need network connectivity with service availability above 99.95%, that lets your workforce collaborate productively with jitter-free, high-quality video, and that lets you deliver IT services in minutes as needed.

With [SD WAN](#) advanced network analytics and traffic steering/prioritisation policies, you can cope with changing network architectures, and the explosion in bandwidth demand, by flexibly combining dedicated data connections with less expansive broadband links in their wide area network.

Your capacity needs may change: that's why you need to make sure your provider can let you quickly and easily add bandwidth, or scale it back down again. As technologies like SDN (Software Defined Networking) and NFV (Network Function Virtualisation) are disrupting network services at scale, you need to ensure you can [build your network solutions](#) with the future in mind.

A **60/40** split between office occupancy and working from home would drive a **50% increase in bandwidth requirements**⁴.

Foundation 2: cloud-based collaboration and productivity tools

Enable optimal experiences for your hybrid teams

Did you know?

74% of IT decision-makers say it's critical for frontline workers to be able to work collaboratively with teammates and customers⁵.

Gaining operational efficiency (36%) and enhancing worker productivity (30%) are two key benefits IT decision-makers expect from being able to support cloud-based Unified Communications and Collaboration (UCC) solutions.

After your flexible network, the next foundation to add are the tools and applications your workforce will need. You need to ask:

- Is voice enabled on collaboration tools?
- Can the network deliver the applications to help teams stay productive?
- Can your connectivity handle distributed customer service teams?



Find out how an Intelligent Communications approach can map to your needs.



Choose the right tools: a better cloud experience

Connecting to the cloud is only part of the journey. Collaboration and efficient working are the cornerstones of the hybrid workplace. Your applications need to be reliable and available consistently, giving your teams everything they need to be productive, from any location.

With [Intelligent Communications](#), you can combine Microsoft's cloud productivity tools such as Office365, Teams and Skype for Business, so you get fully integrated applications, reliable connectivity, and cost-effective voice calls.

Deliver a better user experience, with prioritised access to cloud-based apps like Microsoft Teams and Office 365, using [IP Access with Cloud Prioritisation](#).

[A Cloud SBC](#) lets your remote workers make or receive external calls, without needing to connect Teams to the public network. While the [Contact Centre as a Service \(CCaaS\)](#) model meets the needs of customer service teams needing the capabilities to work from anywhere.

74% of ITDMs say it's critical for frontline workers to work collaboratively with teammates and customers⁶.

Foundation 3: end-to-end security

Protect your critical data

Did you know?

75% of businesses have a strategic goal to rely more on data analytics/AI to make decisions and improve operations⁷.

But with ever-increasing reliance on data comes increased risk. The average cost of a data breach rose from \$3.86 million to \$4.24 million in 2021. With the average cost an additional \$1.07 million higher in breaches where remote work was a factor.

When growing numbers of employees are outside the company network, you need a new approach to protecting critical data and ensuring your business meets its regulatory compliance obligations. You need to ask:

- Do you have visibility across remote workers?
- How secure is your data?
- Are you moving critical systems and data to the cloud?



Check how secure your network is today and identify any weak points.



Choose the right tools: how to prioritise protecting your people and data

Effective security relies on multiple layers of defence at the edge and the core of the network, and along the network path. Now that critical data is travelling over disparate systems, you need to take a holistic approach to IT security strategy, and guard for potential vulnerabilities at all points.

This approach extends to your partnerships, which is why you need a network provider that can work together with specialist security vendors to deliver the protection you need.

Monitor, detect, and protect your data, network and IT infrastructure from cyber threats and security incidents with [cybersecurity services](#) that help you manage your risk.

Provide secure, managed access to critical services, without impacting the user experience, with SD WAN Remote Access for Secure Access Service Edge (SASE). This concept is a simpler form of wide area networking and security by delivering both as a cloud service, that lets organisations apply secure access regardless of where the users, applications or devices are located.

To mitigate the emerging security risks with a distributed workforce, you can build a multi-layered defence with a combination of [managed firewall](#), [DDoS protection](#), [network encryption](#), and [secure network gateway](#).

75% of businesses have a strategic goal to rely more on data analytics/ AI to make decisions and improve operations⁸.

Remodelled. Renovated. Resilient.

Ensure the foundations of your new hybrid workspace are built to last

Every building needs solid foundations. Now that the [hybrid workforce](#) is here to stay, the network is a critical part of designing and creating a virtual workspace where your people can collaborate and stay productive, whether remote or at an office.

Colt empowers organisations with intelligent, adaptive solutions that provide high-quality connectivity, layered with secure remote access to the tools your people need to be at their best, from anywhere. With Colt as your partner you can design for the future, today.

Contact your Colt sales representative.
See www.colt.net/contact-us