

## 3Kites Consulting Limited

# Considerations for a laptop deployment project

With lockdown restrictions lifted firms are adopting new practices in relation to working locations, with a blend of home and office working becoming the norm. For many firms this involves a change in the IT devices supplied to staff (the hardware) with a number of firms adopting a laptop for all policy (regardless of role) replacing the traditional desktop PCs, to allow seamless working whether at home, in the office, or when travelling. New applications and software solutions are also being introduced to make working remotely more effective whilst ensuring security. Whilst each firm will have its own requirements to expand on the items below, we have created a list of steps and suggestions to consider when rolling out laptops in your firm:

### What equipment will you be deploying:

- Usually, firms will not just be supplying a laptop. Are you supplying additional monitors, keyboards, mice, docking stations, bags?
- Consideration needs to be given to the home setup. Will this be the same as the office, what will you expect people to transport between home and the office (e.g. headsets) and what will you expect staff to supply themselves?
- Lead times are currently extremely long and expected to be so well into 2022. You may need to consider alternative brands/models to those you would usually purchase and set realistic dates for deployment allowing for delays in hardware deliveries.
- Third-party suppliers work directly with the various laptop suppliers and will be able to help manage the procurement process and potentially provide improved delivery timescales. By way of example, on one project working with a third-party supplier we were able to identify an opportunity to switch model (with a slight hardware change) and reduce lead time from as much as 12 weeks to eight to six weeks. The third-party supplier continued to chase which resulted in a waiting just two weeks for the laptops to be delivered.

### Device management:

- How are you going to build and configure the new equipment? IT teams are usually set-up to handle deploying new IT hardware in small numbers, a sudden delivery of even 10 to 20 laptops could take several weeks for a team to build and deploy to users without prior planning. A few points to consider:
  - Can you build a base image for the majority of your software/setup needs?
  - Could a third party install the software for you?
  - Can a software tool be used to automatically deploy the software?
  - Could a firm-based app store be setup so users can install the required software themselves?
  - Will software installs need to take place in an office or can they be completed remotely?
- Would previous approaches to providing devices for offsite use work for a permanent solution? Consider updates, remote support and security.
- A process is needed for asset tagging and managing what equipment is allocated to whom. Whether managing in-house or using a third party to manage a “white glove” build and deploy service, be sure to have a robust process to capture and update the asset information.

- Bespoke software needs for certain teams or individuals will add time to the process, make sure you understand all requirements before starting to deploy hardware.

#### **New Technology:**

- PCs within an office have not always been encrypted, with a change to laptops encryption is becoming the norm.
- Are you going to implement multi factor authentication (MFA) to gain access to systems? You will need to consider the impact this could have on all applications your user base accesses.
- New software applications. How will these be deployed to remote workers, will equipment need to be onsite to receive new solutions or updates to existing technology?
- Not all applications may work remotely, do you need to consider use of thin client technology.
- New technology should come with as much training prior to rolling out of new devices as possible to enable people to be self-sufficient as they can be. Consider basic training courses on using laptops as it may be the first time they have used one. Also consider a short mandatory training session as part of collecting new equipment.

#### **Expected issues:**

- Many people have wi-fi, but the connection speeds will differ. Help manage expectations for the set-up, share expected upload and download speeds to allow people to work remotely. Consider training on home WIFI setups including how to configure, testing performance, using an ethernet cable if slow, how connection speed can differ depending on distance from home router, thickness of walls and other family members streaming or gaming.
- Manage new laptop setup expectations: timings from receipt of laptop to being operational could be as short as 10 minutes up to a couple of hours depending on the required configuration and networking capabilities.
- Wi-fi printing. Whilst printing in the office can be easily configured, home printing (if allowed) can be a considerable drain on an IT Team to support.
- If you have users who rarely attend the office how do you make sure their machine is patched with all required software updates.
- Delays in providing support. Your IT Support Team may need to grow/change, or third-party support may be required. Traditionally IT Teams are setup to manage the PCs on desks in the firm's office. With home office setups there are now potentially double the desks and it is unlikely any one home office setup will be the same.
- Consider levels of IT competence: whilst some people are familiar using a laptop, it may be others first time and connecting to wireless devices and external monitors may be a completely new experience.
- Existing policies may need updating or new policies created to ensure the correct use of new equipment is understood. Areas such as printing, keeping devices secure, saving documents need to be considered.
- It may sound obvious but if sending laptop to users' houses, check the addresses laptops are sent to, HR systems are not always up to date and staff may be staying at a temporary location.

Above all allow time: this will take time and there will be delays, rushing a solution out could lead to users unable to work and increased stress for all involved.

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