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The Biggest Headaches of Modern Working

Expert Insights & Solutions: LinkedIn Edition

*Top IT Innovations for Post-pandemic Success*

Contents

Introduction

We are thrilled with the response to a recent research poll about modern working experiences, which we launched on LinkedIn in April 2021.

Covid-19 has forced many of us to work from home, and over a year later this poll captures the reality many of us are still facing. It was designed to gather foundational insights regarding the challenges of the modern workplace post-pandemic and the results have helped cement the top technology priorities and innovations that organisations need to focus on as we start to build new and successful ways of working for 2021 and beyond.

The research is part of our '6 Challenges of the Modern Workplace' project; a collection of core resources being developed with the support of our industry innovators, including major players such as Masergy, Equinix, Zayo, and Vonage.

This series of interviews, papers and assets capture the tech reality of remote working and the challenges around poor quality connectivity, increased security risks and collaboration issues with colleagues and customers. They feature key trends and insights, interviews with leading vendors, combined with expert solution reviews and best in class advice to demonstrate how to overcome the challenges of remote working in this post pandemic world.
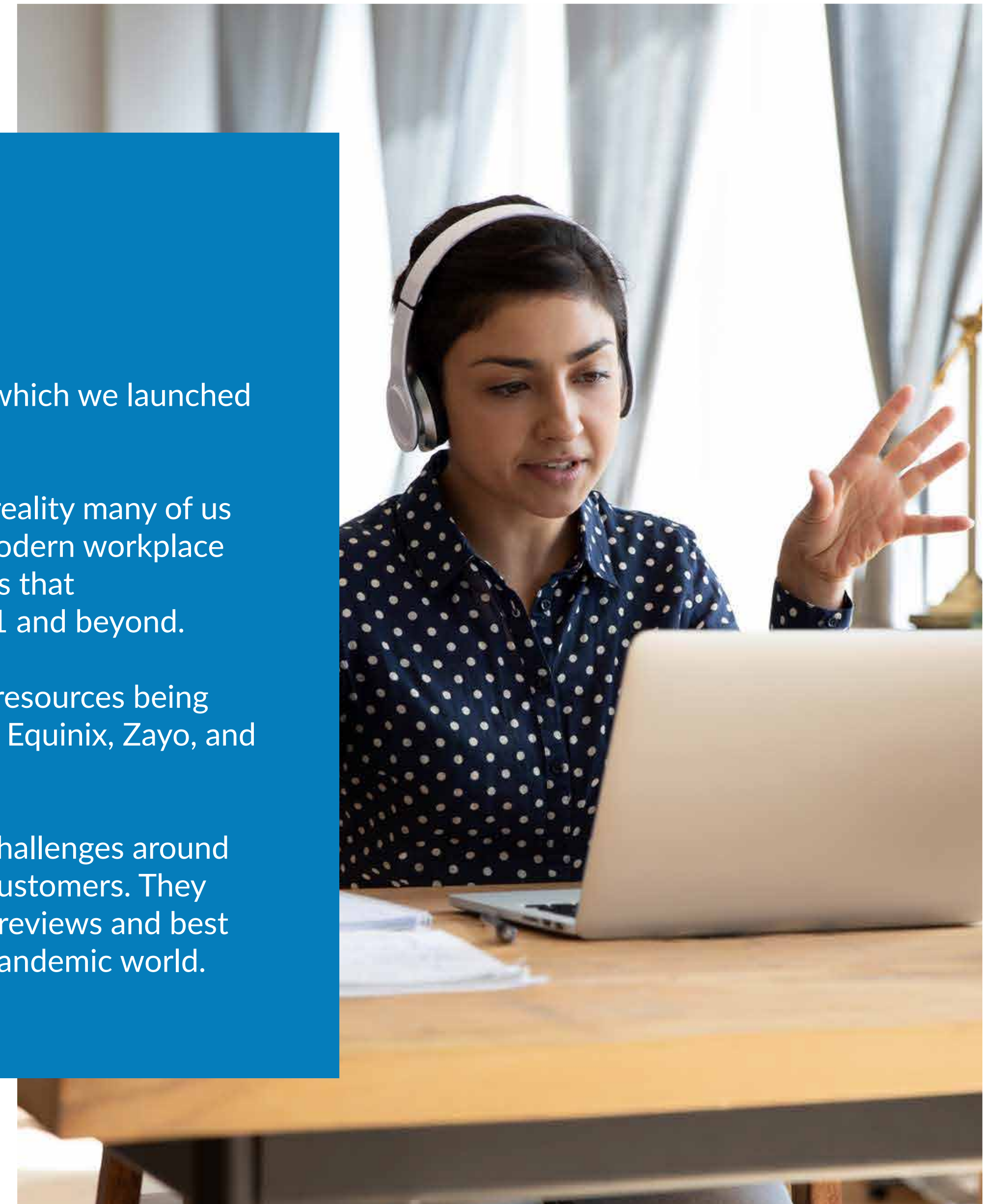
Methodology

Our LinkedIn survey generated 626 members sharing their challenges with us.

The Poll: What is the biggest headache of modern working?

Home Connectivity:	50%
Network Security:	11%
Teams Collaboration:	37%
Access to SaaS Applications:	3%

We hope that this report provides you with some actionable insights and impactful innovations you can implement in your future strategies for post-pandemic enterprise success.

2021 will undoubtedly be a year of innovation. We very much look forward to working together and embracing innovation to address the tech reality of remote working in a post-pandemic world.

Best regards,

Ray Bricknell

CEO, Behind Every Cloud

2021 Modern Working: The New Reality

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Technologies Trending in the Pandemic

1. Home Connectivity Experience / Speed

2. Networking Security

3. Teams Collaboration

4. Access to SaaS Applications

We have witnessed a mindset shift over the last 12 months on how we think about work. Remote working is no longer just an option, it has become in many cases the best or only way to work and will continue to be a mainstream operating model. It has been a necessity with Covid-19 for many of us to work from home, with this came benefits and headaches which we need to consider as we move forward to create the most effective technology and wellbeing structures for employees to work successfully.

The response to our poll captures how intensely everyone has been impacted by home working, with over 600 responses in 48 hours, sharing their feelings and headaches.

Our poll reveals over 50% of respondents found network issues and slow connections were putting pressure on productivity and additional stress on employees.

The four headaches highlight the need for all organisations to have a fast, digital infrastructure in place that is secure, collaborative and scalable.

Home Connectivity: Overview

With more of us suddenly embracing remote working (60% of us from our own homes jostling with other family members and the whole street from streaming data and gaming at the same time*) UK broadband and mobile remote connectivity often delivers an unreliable and poor-quality experience. 62% of remote workers feel that their employer should provide them with better technology in order to stay connected to their colleagues*, and half have reported problems with bandwidth.^

There is an urgent need to invest in the right networking technology, right now, to deliver:

- Better network speed
- More reliable network connectivity
- Increased business productivity
- Network optimisation, prioritising types of business traffic

This is confirmed up by our survey respondents, with an overwhelming majority stating that connectivity and speed is the biggest headache that needs to be addressed when working from home.

The Poll Results: What is the biggest headache of modern working?
Home Connectivity and Speed: 50%

* Analysis conducted by finder.com/uk
^ https://uktechnews.co.uk/2020/07/13/half-of-uk-organisations-question-the-relevance-of-sd-wan-in-a-covid-19-remote-workplace/

Home Connectivity: Expert Insights

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"Personally, I think business should be providing separate broadbands for those working from home so they take responsibility for all issues - from speed, reliability and security. But the core issue in the debate surely has to be the human contact and comradery lost when you work from home. Covid and home working is a great excuse for poor service though! Those companies who continue to deliver poor customer service will ultimately pay the price."

Eric Toll, Founder & Managing Director, 123 Telecom Ltd

"Great discussion point/can of worms. Security is the headache that is probably only being addressed with the head in the sand approach while home connectivity is slapping many around the face. The good news is that 99.x% of home connectivity issues can be resolved with business quality connectivity (fixed line or 4/5G) and properly configured Wi-Fi. Sadly, a few remain off grid. Employers need to step up and pay for business grade connectivity (which they can also secure) rather than rely on a consumer set up which focusses on cheap TV subscriptions. No point subsidising an existing home connection as that's a taxable benefit!"

Andy Duncan, IT Interface Manager, Spitfire Network Services

Home Connectivity: Expert Insights

"I think it actually morphs between all four of them depending on the work we are doing/delivering... I've experienced issues with all of these at some time or other but I do have to plum connectivity/speed as without that I'm dead in the water... Wasn't 5G or Starlink supposed to sort all this out for us? :)"

Heath Groves, Chief Executive Officer, Sundown Solutions

"For me, my Vodafone home Wi-Fi sucks and I frequently have to switch onto my Vodafone mobile to maintain calls... thank God I don't have to do that while dealing with a VPN."

Philip Griffiths, VP and GM of Europe, Middle East and Africa at NetFoundry

Network Security: Overview

The pandemic has created a new working environment. With more of us working from home using a variety of shared and BYO devices to access the corporate network, the number of entry points for viruses, hackers and ransomware increases. A large proportion of remote workers believe that cybersecurity is crucial even more so now than before the pandemic. Many organisations are experiencing an ever-increasing blurring of their security boundaries, with 39% of UK decision-makers admitting that the Coronavirus pandemic has uncovered gaps and weak points in their cybersecurity strategy.*

And with more applications, workloads, and sensitive corporate data moving to the cloud, which saved over half of UK companies during lockdown according to UK business leaders, we are seeing a shift away from the data centre and an increased focus on the network and security of user identity and their devices.
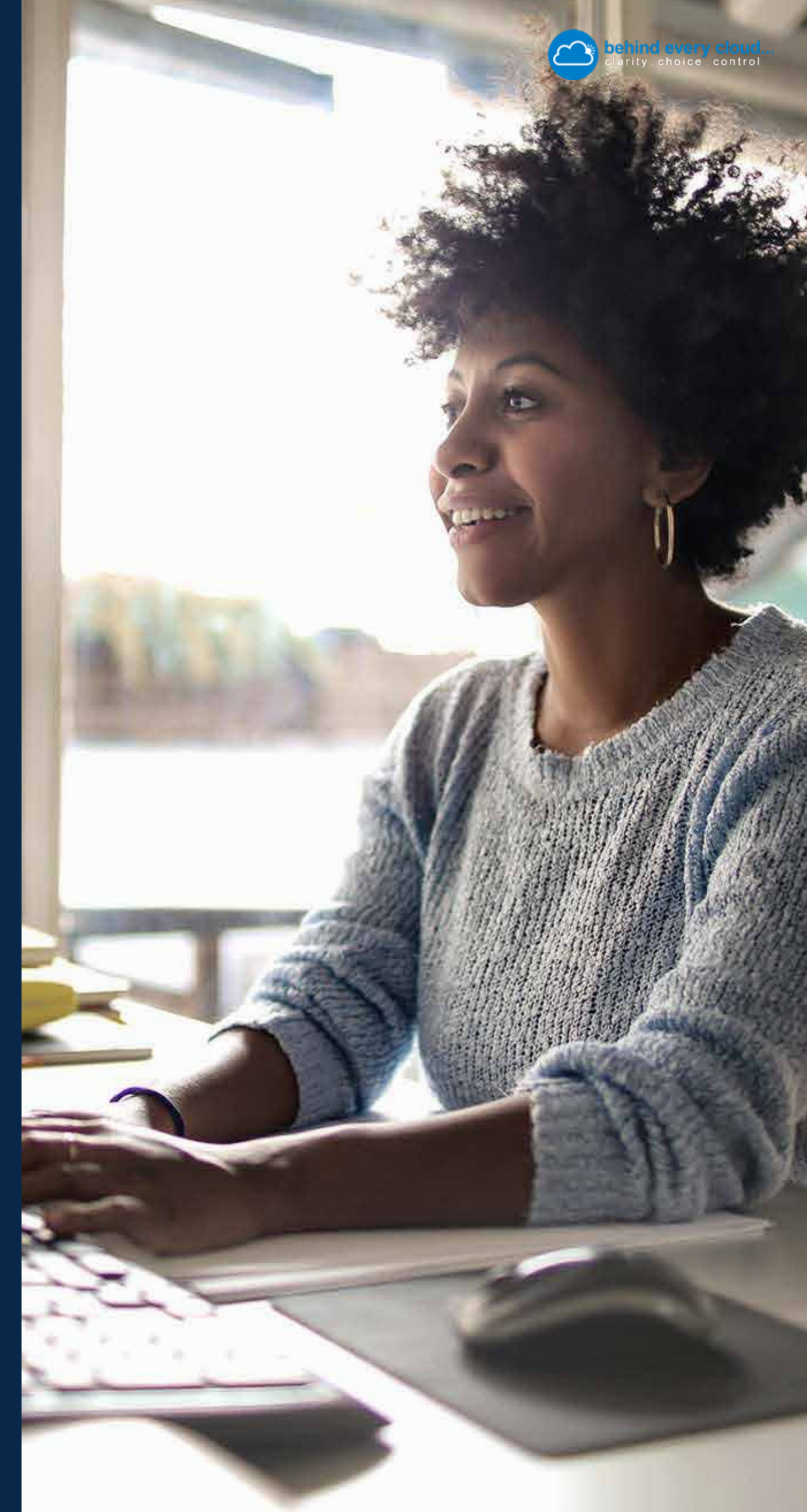
There is an urgent need to invest in robust network security, right now, to:

- Protect the business from cyber threats
- Prevent data loss
- Control users and verify identities
- Reduce complexities of cloud-based services
- Securely connect every individual and device to the company's digital infrastructure

The majority of remote workers are working off unsecured devices with weak security internet connections. However, of the four top challenges faced by individuals since the start of the pandemic, network security was surprisingly in third position, with just 11% of poll respondents claiming this represented their biggest headache when it came to succeeding in the modern workplace. This is a hidden threat that we need to be more aware of.

The Poll Results: What is the biggest headache of modern working?
Network Security: 11%

https://www2.deloitte.com/uk/en/pages/technology-media-and-telecommunications/articles/tmt-predictions.html

Network Security: Expert Insights

"I agree with Adam Edwards that security is as important, if not more important than network latency. Companies are finally realizing that they need a long term strategy to solve for both security and network issues. I saw recently that 1 in 3 employees will quit if they have to go back to the office full time. Now that is an issue for employers!"

Vicki Patten, Global Partner Manager, Rackspace Technology

"While many of us feel the immediate impact of connectivity issues from home, I have to wonder if security isn't the bigger problem and we're simply not aware yet."

Adam Edwards, CEO, Telarus

Network Security: Expert Insights

"Went with the majority but recognise that security is the biggie. Here we are in 2021, with the headache of connectivity/speed and the future is calling."

Frank Bennett, Co-founder, Digi-Board Ltd

Collaboration: Overview

Successful personal productivity and teamwork is now dependant on finding new ways to collaborate, we need technology to replicate the chat over coffee.

To drive operational efficiencies, profitability and productivity, employees need to stay connected with colleagues and customers. With 62% of companies using three or more video calling platforms, the critical need for collaboration is clear.*

In fact, video calling is fast becoming the default standard for group and one-on-one communications for both internal teams and external stakeholders. The pressing need to invest in the right collaboration, voice and video solutions can be seen with Zoom's daily user base growing from ten million people to 200 million in three months, and Slack's paying customers doubling.

This fact was echoed by just over a third of respondents to our recent poll, who confirmed that team collaboration challenges were the biggest headache of modern working – putting it in second position after connectivity.

The Poll Results: What is the biggest headache of modern working?
Team Collaboration: 37%

*Forbes Insight

Collaboration: Expert Insights

"I am also seeing collaboration and company loyalty falling rapidly as a result of WFH employment. Some candidates have never met their colleagues and hence have no bond to the employer at all and rather limited loyalty to the brand or company goals too. Could be an interesting 12 months ahead indeed."

Lorne Lee, Director, Mind Recruitment & Mind Executive

"I'd say everybody using different platforms for conference calls!"

Ruth Morford, VP of Partner Engagement, Telarus

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Collaboration: Expert Insights

"All very valid key issues, biggest headache of "workers" at home probably speed and Collaboration. Wouldn't be surprise if the CSO states "security" is a headache and CIOs is SaaS. Apps/Games bandwidth only on the increase, so lack of decent bandwidth is going to be more of a challenge in the future too."

**Nick Ashby, Channel Sales Director, Zayo Group**

Access to SaaS Applications: Overview

The pandemic has accelerated digital transformation. More and more businesses are adopting hosted SaaS solutions, such as SalesForce, ZenDesk and Microsoft 365. At the same time, we are seeing an increase in the migration of corporate applications from on premises into public cloud platforms such as Microsoft Azure and Amazon Web Services (AWS).

Despite these rapid changes, out of the four headaches of the modern workplace, access to SaaS applications features at the bottom of the results, recording just 3% of votes.

The Poll Results: What is the biggest headache of modern working?
Access to SaaS applications: 3%
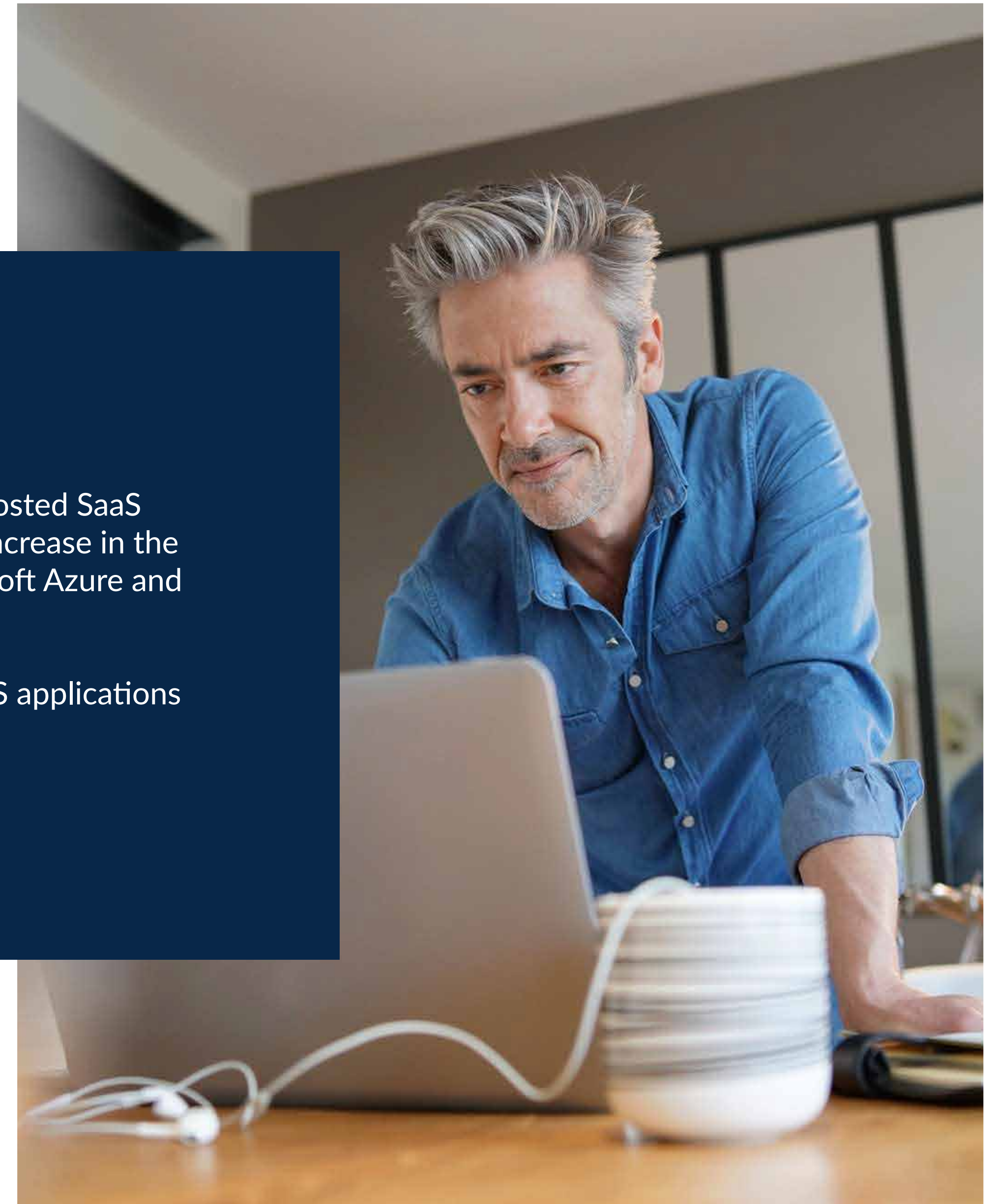
Access to SaaS applications: Expert Insights

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"More than speed...it's application consistency of performance. Fast one hour slow the next."

Andi Willmott, Channel Enablement, Hortium

"Whilst most people appear stating connectivity speed as the main problem; access to SaaS applications via the optimal route (e.g. modern WAN design, cloud on-ramps, remote access, CASB, & NGFW) would actually fix most of the symptoms we are all experiencing!"

Paul Boyd, Principal Consultant, Behind Every Cloud

Another Headache: The Human Factor

But it's not all about technology. With more of us working at home, typically alone, the new modern way of working has also created other challenges – we're only human after all!

> "It is the unofficial meetings in the canteen or at the water cooler that I miss the most. These interactions would be with people from across the company and be shop-talk or a chat about what happened over the weekend - both IMO led to better team working."

Jonathan Robinson, Principal Technical Architect, Arqiva

> "Is there an option for children or my partner's constant home shopping deliveries?"

Paul Jennings, Head of Channel - dynabook Toshiba Northern Europe

Another Headache: The Human Factor

"The biggest challenge for me is occasional interruptions that didn't happen in the office. A delivery that needs to be signed for. An elderly parent needing help. A pet that is suddenly out of control. That kind of thing."

Rob Swan, Alliance Marketing Manager at Masergy

Conclusion

Modern working is here to stay and work has been redefined in the post-pandemic world with around 45% of employees expect to spend three days or more per week working from remote locations.*

Moving forward, in the next two to three years, around three in ten organisations expect more than 70% of their employees to work remotely.**

There is an urgent need for organisations to adopt a strategic approach to remote working and invest in the right Technology, now.

To succeed, we have identified that businesses need to focus on four significant areas to alleviate the remote working headache:
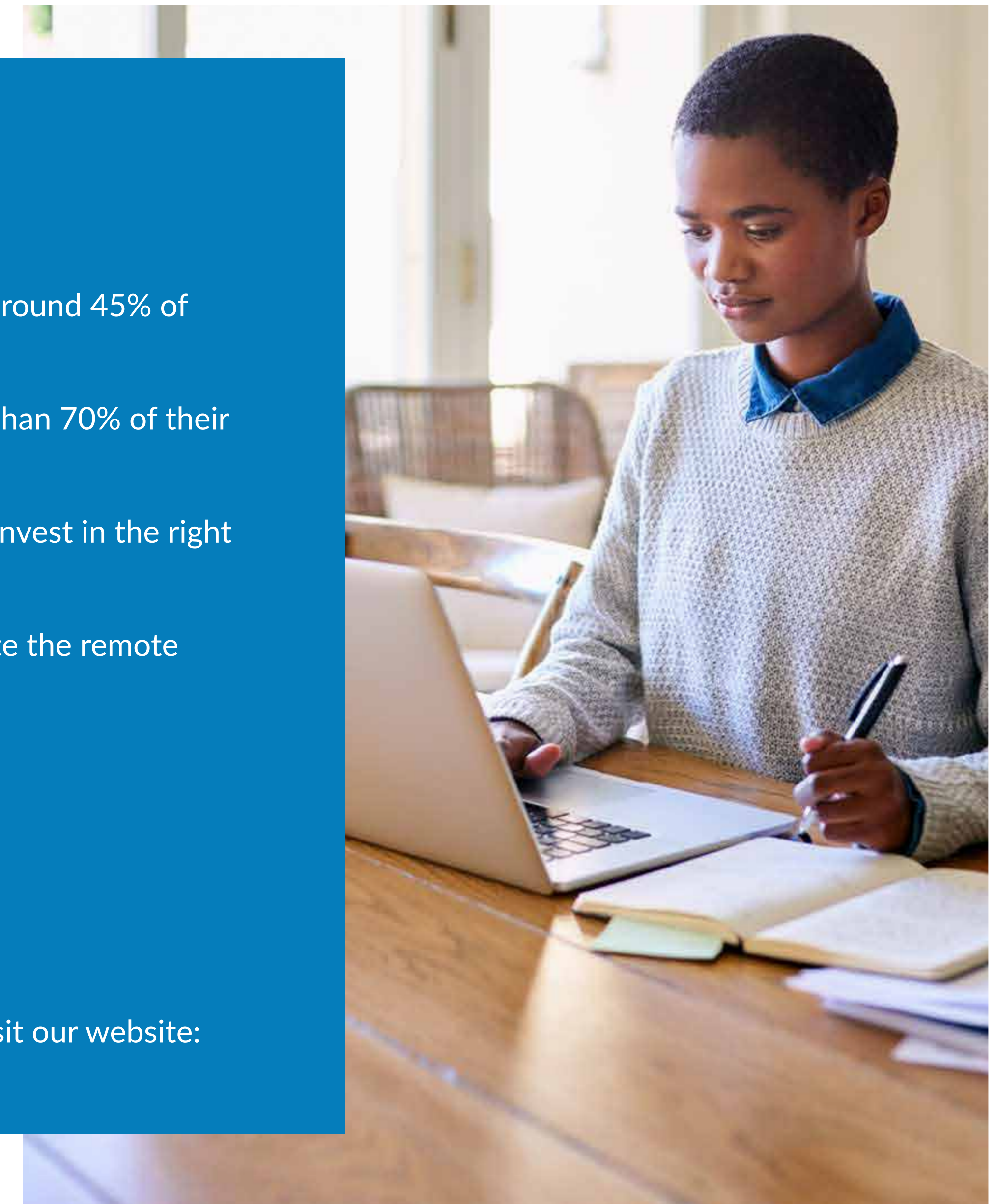
1. **Better network speed**
2. **Stronger IT security**
3. **Improved collaboration**
4. **Reliable access to Cloud & apps**

Get Ready for a New Way of Working.

For more key insights and results around the '6 Challenges of the Modern Workplace' project visit our website:

Find out more >

* https://www.capgemini.com/gb-en/news/report-the-future-of-work/
** Cap Gemini

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The BEC Value Add

Our goal at Behind Every Cloud is simple: to help our clients select the right partner for their needs. Our philosophy helps us achieve this by matching a client's culture and technical requirements to a vendor's culture and ability to execute. We can reduce a crowded marketplace to the best fit option for you, focusing on excellence, consistency, and high customer satisfaction.

Our Core Values:

Trusted Advisors	**Cutting down on the noise**	**Transparency**	**Innovative**
Experience-based and tailored advice	**Vertical market focus**	**Truly independent with no favourites!**	**Customer Centric**

Our consultants have industry experience. We have sat in your seat and done your job, so we're in the best place to advise you on what would work for you and your business.

Meet The Team:

Visit the website >

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