



How to manage productive remote teams



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Introduction

Working from home used to be a privilege only freelancers and a few lucky employees could enjoy. But as the world becomes increasingly more connected (and in light of recent events), feelings around remote work have changed drastically.

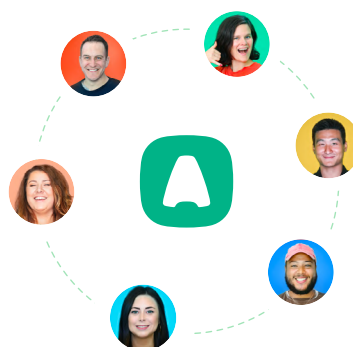
Companies around the world are now realizing the need to implement flexible remote work policies with the sudden spread of COVID-19 – and the global workforce is experiencing the many challenges and benefits of working remotely first-hand.

Beyond the immediate benefit of staying safe and maintaining operations during an emergency, the remote model offers the promise of much more.

- Having a flexible remote work policy can be a great competitive advantage for attracting the best talent.
- When done right, remote employees often enjoy greater work-life balance, helping them return to work each day with renewed enthusiasm.
- Better work-life balance usually translates to increased focus and productivity, **enabled by cloud-based tools** with remote-friendly features and workflows.

Remote work and cloud-based software are here to stay. Businesses must figure out how to shift to remote work without losing productivity in the process. For sales and support teams that traditionally rely on desk phones and on-premise software, the right resources are non-negotiable. What can managers (like you) do to provide employees with the best support and tools to work remotely?

At Aircall, we're learning how to work remotely everyday, just like everyone else. We're not experts, but we believe that remote work works. With this eBook and our flexible cloud phone solution designed to enable remote work, we aim to build a community of thriving work from home ambassadors.



Why work remote?

how more managers are realizing the benefits of remote work

Working remotely is now easier and more common than ever. This new reality is impacting more than just a few creative freelancers.

A study by **Global Workplace Analytics** reported that the number of Americans telecommuting and working remotely increased 115% between 2007 and 2017.

But even as technical hurdles fade away, strategic questions still weigh on managers' minds. Most notably: What are the benefits of remote work – for everyone involved?



1

More productivity

Remote work advantage

A recent poll of over 2,000 workers showed that the average person puts in **2 hours and 53 minutes** of work on the average day at the office. **91% of people** said that they were more productive.

While this could be a statement on how many modern workplaces are structured (looking at you, open floor plans), or the level of comfort people have in their offices, the data suggests productivity increases when employees are allowed to work from home.

Study after study shows that a healthier work-life balance results in increased productivity at work. But we also understand this intuitively. Employees are people, not machines. Treating them with trust makes them feel valued and inclined to do their best.

As a manager, leading a remote team includes proactively hiring people who can work independently. With a team of hard-working, capable people, your time as a manager is freed up to do more useful things.

2

A deeper talent pool

Remote work advantage

Companies headquartered in smaller cities can have a notoriously hard time attracting and recruiting great workers, even when they offer **competitive benefits**. Instead of being limited to a very small talent pool of people within commuting distance, they are now able to have access to top talent from anywhere. Better talent means better business.

These benefits don't just apply to businesses in small cities. The freedom to select workers outside of your commuter zone means that

employers have access to more diversity in terms of people, ideas, languages, mindsets, and problem-solving skills.

Studies show that diverse teams often outperform other teams in terms of productivity. These teams are better for your business, your employees, and your company culture.

3 Stronger employee retention

Remote work advantage

Remote work is also great for the bottom line. Interviewing, hiring, onboarding and ramping up employees is costly. A midsize company with about 150 full-time employees and a turnover rate of about 10% has to spend over **\$1.5 million** a year on training and onboarding alone.

Having a workplace that allows for flexible work options is vital to the modern workplace. With more women working than ever before, it's vital to have the flexibility to retain your staff. **A study by Forbes** recently showed that 70% of women who dropped out of the workplace would have opted to stay in their jobs offered flexibility.

Losing talented employees that you've spent time and energy training sucks. As does the **150% of their salary** that a company can lose when the person has to leave. Giving people the option to work remotely and have a flexible schedule can help decrease turnover while increasing employee **happiness and productivity**.

\$1.5 million

The amount of money a medium sized company spends on training and onboarding new employees every year

4 Better work-life balance

Remote work advantage

When done right, remote work supports an optimum work-life balance. This is great for business.

Imagine an employee who isn't feeling well. It's not bad enough to take a sick day, but disruptive enough that it will affect their ability to work comfortably in the office. Without a remote work policy, an employee might

be stressed about coming to work while not feeling well. They will certainly not perform at their best when there. They might arrive late or become easily irritated with coworkers or tasks.

However, at a company that values a flexible work environment, the employee will have their tools with them.

They can avoid the commute, work in a less stressful environment, and not contaminate the entire office. Since they're in a **comfortable environment**, they'll be able to focus more on their work, and ultimately return to work faster.

Aside from illness, telecommuting can reduce the stress surrounding child care and doctors

appointments, encourage flexibility and travel, eliminate long commutes that affect productivity, and can even decrease the amount of absences employees have.

Employees work best when they are healthy and feeling good. Acknowledging that people are not machines will help drive up the productivity (and profit) in your team.

5 More effective management

Remote work advantage

When implementing remote policies, having managers who are strong communicators is key.

A manager that leads a remote or distributed team has to learn to put a lot of trust in employees and treat them without suspicion. Micromanagement will not work well with remote employees. They are competent and productive workers who enjoy their freedom.

However, letting go of that control can be difficult, especially for managers. Having to learn how to communicate well will mean that managers have to level up.

Skating on bad habits like **weak communication** can work (barely) if you're in an office but will end up costing you in terms of decreased employee engagement, lowered employee satisfaction, and eventually, turnover.

Dealing with the lack of regular contact with employees can also be another source of strain on managers, especially when it comes to review time. It's important to make sure that you're setting goals with your employees and making sure that they are clear, measurable, and most importantly, understood by all parties involved.

Don't let the quarterly or annual review be the moment you and an employee find out that you're on totally different roads. Make sure to check in periodically, possibly more often than you otherwise would, to help employees feel comfortable reaching out to you when needed.

Managers who can effectively lead remote employees will produce productive and autonomous teams than they could have otherwise.

Building a remote team

Changing your team's work environment can be exciting and refreshing, but it's also undeniably challenging. When that shift is to a remote environment, the challenge is even greater.

As you build a process that works best for your remote team, consider boosting morale and staying connected by:

- **Setting up regular check-ins with your staff.** Use virtual meeting software like Zoom or Google Hangouts to find out how your team is doing, what they're up to, and how you can best help as their manager.
- **Scheduling more informal get-togethers.** Consider hosting a virtual happy hour, trivia session, or even getting weird with a remote dance party. The more you can create excitement and comradery among teammates, the more productive and happy they'll be on the job.

- **Asking for feedback constantly!** Honest and transparent communication is essential for making sure you're not allowing any aspect of your team's remote environment to remain consistently negative. As a remote team manager, you should be asking for feedback more often than not.

Creating a virtual culture that resembles the dynamics of an in-person office for your existing employees is one thing, but onboarding new employees while remote...

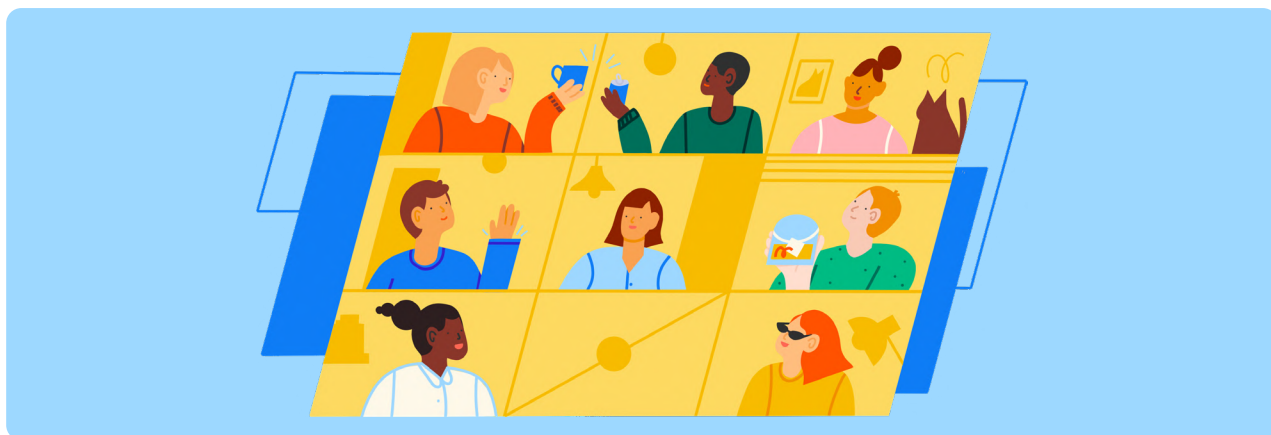
That's an entirely different can of worms.

In the next section, we'll provide some guidance around onboarding future remote teammates.



Onboarding remote workers

How to do it right



It's generally thought that onboarding remote workers is harder than onboarding an in-house workforce. The distance and lack of physical presence can make it hard to encourage and facilitate communication, which can quickly lead to misunderstandings and **low employee morale** if left unchecked.

The most crucial part of a remote employee's onboarding program is the ability to connect to their team, and, more importantly, their manager, as soon as possible. Doing so requires some preparation.

What to Do Before Day 1



Get Ahead of The Game

Your virtual employees might be working in a completely different city, time zone, or even country than you. These geographical barriers can impose some complicated logistical challenges ranging from simple scheduling issues to complex labor laws. Getting ahead of this means you won't have to stress out helping hunt down last minute paperwork.

Are there any other things they need to get started (laptop, headsets, phone, training manuals, etc.)? Having all that handy not only keeps you organized, but it also makes the entire process less stressful.

Assemble Their Toolbox

Every team has a different preference for the tools they use to get their daily tasks done. Be clear about the **tools your team is using**.

Which ones are collaborative and require consensus, and which can remote employees adopt at their own discretion?

Also, consider refreshing your team's habits. Adding a new team member is a great time to review and re-train veterans to make sure that you're all on the same page. Taking the time to do that will minimize the risk of passing on confusion and questionable practices which will leave your remote employee scratching their head.

Brush Up Your Processes

Make sure your processes are formal enough to teach by making sure they're repeatable. Take the extra time to set up systems and organize things so that remote employees can find a way around easily. It may feel like a lot of work initially but will save everyone time and headaches in the future.

The First 90 Days



Set Clear Expectations

The ability to see our colleagues is comforting to us—almost like you can feel the productivity seep through their fingers as they fire up their computer for the day.

Remote employees don't offer this luxury. When an in-office employee doesn't respond to your email, you can walk to their desk. When a remote employee goes silent, suddenly you might find yourself wondering if they're **slacking off for the day**.

While that's rarely true, clearer accountability will keep everyone at ease. If everyone agrees on working hours (and how flexible they are), availability, success metrics, deliverables, daily tasks, goals, response times, and deadlines, you'll avoid the frustrating miscommunications that can offset the **advantages of remote work**.

Focus on Connections

It's easy for managers to get overwhelmed with simultaneously hiring, onboarding, and training. As a result, it's also easy for nurturing a genuine relationship with a new remote employee to fall by the wayside.

Take the time to reach out regularly. Arrange introductions so they can start putting faces to names. Better yet, see if you can set them up with a buddy or mentor to **really help them learn the ropes**.

Consider hosting a Q&A session after a few days (and later, on a recurring schedule) to clarify confusion and solidify early learnings. Adding a personal touch to these interactions goes a long way towards building that much-needed trust between managers and remote staff. of work initially but will save everyone time and headaches in the future.

Agree on a Communication Cadence

Communication will make or break the relationship between a manager and an employee. While in-office colleagues can often touch base whenever they want, remote employees do better with formal arrangements.

You'll avoid a lot of awkward conversations down the line if you agree on the best schedule early on in the process. Set boundaries

on what feedback is needed and when. And don't forget what tools you want to use for communication.

Video chat can be great for delivering nuanced messages that can't be relayed via chat or email. However, apps like Slack encourage quick back and forth with easy access to shared documents.

Instill Company Culture



An often overlooked part of remote employee onboarding programs is helping newcomers get acclimated with the culture of the company. Placing a company handbook with the mission, vision, and values on top of a branded T-shirt is nice, but not enough.

Remote workers are sometimes (albeit accidentally) excluded from meaningful team activities or not invited to impromptu meetings and important conversations.

Regarding your remote employees like any other in-house staff member will help bridge that gap and keep everyone engaged. Take an active role in including them in meetings,

updates, and changes as they happen so everyone can feel they have a stake in shared success.

And this spirit shouldn't suddenly stop at the borders between business departments. Making cross-team introductions can help the remote workforce stay engaged with the greater workplace community.

Day 91 and Beyond



Review Goals Regularly

Every new job comes with unique challenges and milestones to overcome, which is why many new employees have anxiety around learning things quickly.

Clear checkpoints, milestones, and long-term ambitions can bring welcome structure and serenity to this period of adjustment. Here are some key ingredients that actually work for remote employees:

- **Use SMART goals** – Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound. All goals should be SMART.
- **Break goals into steps** – With smaller goals, new employees work with easily digestible pieces of information and ramp up faster as a result.
- **Personalize goals** – Make sure the goal is the right fit for the person. You can do this by simply having a conversation with your remote employee on which things you both agree are ambitious but attainable.
- **Check in periodically** – Don't wait until the end of the month or quarter to assess progress. Making sure you set aside time to monitor progress can help you avoid missed deadlines and broken promises.
- **Provide feedback** – If you feel like something could improve or that something is going well, tell them! Constructive criticism goes hand in hand with praise.

Don't Stop Training

Ninety percent of **what people learn at work** is the product of personal and shared experiences with their coworkers (aka social learning). This is obviously harder for staff who don't share a physical office environment.

As a manager, it's important to create spaces where remote employees can engage with others. An easy way to do this is through digital "water cooler" conversations that encourage camaraderie.

If you're using tools like Slack, invite them to channels that they can converse with other people and see what their coworkers are up to. Keep them in the loop, and soon they'll be casually and consistently learning from others.

“ 87% of remote workers get regular training, with 70% receiving it directly from their company. ”

– TalentLMS Study

Another good way to keep remote employees engaged is encouraging learning and development. If your business has some sort of educational stipend, encourage people to use it and keep growing in their role. A bit of outside knowledge is not only great for learning purposes, but can also provide a much-needed burst of creativity.

In the long run, all the efforts made to create a thoughtful onboarding experience for remote employees will be rewarded with higher engagement and productivity across your team.

Expert advice for sales leaders

by **Bryan Elsesser, Senior Director, Sales Development at Aircall**



I lead the Sales Development team for Aircall in North America, and I love the energy that comes with working in a team environment. Collaboration, camaraderie, and competition are inherent to the process.

But like most sales leaders, the current global health circumstances related to COVID-19 mean that my team has needed to adapt and move forward in a measured and clearheaded way.

My career has included a sustained period where I was working in virtual positions and leading a remote sales team. Before I entered the SaaS world, I was an outside sales rep for Yellow Pages and advanced into a sales manager role. I experienced three solid years of

working remotely without an office space or a traditional sales team environment.

While the situation was noticeably different, in many ways I've been able to pull out my old playbook to make sure my team today is managed in a thoughtful and productive manner.

If anything, I think my team is stronger than ever. We've been lucky to see consistent growth and meetings-set, but we are mindful to do so in a way that helps others through a really difficult time. As the new "normal" develops, best practices will need to change.

Here are a few recommendations for managing your remote sales team.

Set KPIs and clear expectations for remote workers

What are the expectations you have for your team? What expectations do you have for yourself?

In the modern sales environment, particularly in software and SaaS, we can tend to be office heavy. Our processes for communication or target setting aren't necessarily prepared for remote work. Now, this culture needs to shift.

If your sales team likes working in an office, there's a reason for that. As a sales manager, you need to recognize the core components of this mentality and do your best to replicate or artificially create this environment remotely.

A remote workforce still wants a sense of camaraderie, belonging, and accountability. They thrive in group/social settings. On the management side, it's easy to hold people accountable to metrics and give coaching feedback when you're sitting in the next row over, but when working remotely, there needs to be a more mindful eye.

One key piece of advice I've been giving to other sales leaders is to literally write out a specific go to market plan for a remote environment. What is expected of your individual



contributors on the day-to-day? What do you require from your SDRs and AEs in terms of hard numbers, and what are the KPIs that you look at every single day to determine success or failure?

The first step is to put everything out on the table and distribute these ideas to your team. Stay transparent and keep everyone in the loop, but keep in mind that a transition from in-person to fully remote will be more natural for some of your reps than others. A learning curve is expected, and it's your job as a sales leader to provide the individual attention where it's needed.

Keeping sales representative accountable when working remotely

Theoretically, when working at home, you should have fewer distractions and experience more success. This is possible for all your teams, but it will take a larger-than-normal effort on management's end to check in with individual contributors and ensure everything is on track.

I told my team the other day:

“ You may think some of my questions are micromanaging, but you know me well enough to know that’s not how I operate. But you should know that I’m going to ask you questions you might find difficult to answer. ”

More so than usual, I’m asking about the specifics of my SDRs’ business. I want more details about the deals they’re setting up, and I want to know specifics. **How many sales calls**

did you make yesterday? How many are you making today? If I ask you a question about your numbers, you should know. I need more employee engagement

My sales people need to be business owners more than ever. They are the startup in a closet that’s just launching. They need to operate as the CEOs of that startup. You have to hold yourself accountable and take successes personally.

Regular check-ins are vital for remote teams

While everyone needs to own their metrics as if they're personally trying to raise a round of venture capital, we're still a team. As a manager, you have to be even more dedicated to giving the group – and individuals – a solid chunk of your time.

Team check-ins

For starters, I'm conducting 9 AM and 4 PM Zoom meetings with my entire team. This is a carry-over tactic from our onsite playbook. Whereas we'd normally huddle around a conference table, now we're sitting in front of our MacBook cameras.

And the cameras are on. As a manager, you need to see that everyone is present and paying attention. Just like an in-person meeting, you need to be able to gauge the energy levels and rally the troops if needed.

For instance, our 9 AM team meetings usually start with some music. Something corny and energetic to set the tone. I played bagpipes on St. Patrick's day. Keep it fun.

Individual check-ins

Even more important than boosting team morale and participation is encouraging your remote workers to do their best.

Make it a point to keep all one-to-one appointments. Furthermore, carve out half of each day to go deep into a single sales rep's business. During this block, I'll read all their emails. I'll listen to the call recordings of any "calls-of-substance" they've had, and I'll provide coaching feedback and actionable recommendations.

This process takes about 4 hours, and it's not something I would do if we were in the office. Under normal circumstances, I'd have a 1 hour floor review with each rep once per week and let them get back to their day, but in a completely remote work scenario, there needs to be this added level of accountability.

There's a thin line to walk, but this process doesn't mean micromanaging. After a 1:1 to go over what I discovered, I trust my remote sales reps will get back to business. They know they're responsible for implementing any changes or strategies we discuss, and it's the manager's obligation to not hover unnecessarily.

Keeping a regular schedule in a remote work environment

You wake up at a certain time to go to work. Even though they're saving commute time, I'm encouraging my team to continue waking up at the same time everyday. Keep the rhythm. Keep the habit. This is important, because it keeps your body and mind in the same pattern of productivity and work.

You don't need to use your "commute" to do more work. This time becomes yours in a way that wasn't possible before. Get a work out in. Read the news or a good book. Have conversations with loved ones. Take advantage of this time to create a healthy work-life balance.

Similarly, I'd prefer that my SDRs get dressed for the day as if they're coming into the office. When you put "outside" clothes on, you're putting your professional head on – starting your brain.

If you decide to stay in pajamas all day, you never leave the sleepy bed-state. Just because you're working from home doesn't mean it's a home environment. You have to create the work environment artificially at first until it becomes a habit.



A special note on competition vs. social awareness

Sales, to a certain extent, is inherently competitive. It's why we create numerical goals for individual reps, and it's why results are updated on a team scoreboard as they come in.

In a remote environment, this urgency and competitive spirit needs to be maintained. We do this through various motivating factors, like competitions and with prizes, etc.

However, it's important to remember that we're going through a very difficult time as a society right now. The COVID-19 pandemic has upended business performance and lives in general. People are worried and people are scared.

So while competition is still important for attaining targets, it's important to remind ourselves that business has in many ways become less of a life-priority. In a sense, corporate competition has lost some of its appeal.

As salespeople, we have to remember – even though it's often dismissed as cliché – that we aim to help our clients. We want to see them succeed in business and in life. So please, continue your outreach at the same volume and with the same passion as before, but be aware of the delicate situation we're in.

Ask how your prospects are doing, but moreover, avoid gaffs that make you seem ignorant to the world around you. Don't ask "Have you received the gift I sent you?" when nobody's going into the office. Consider skipping or editing the emails in your cadence that mention live events or setting up an in-person meeting. Mention the difficulties of scheduling and family life when trying to arrange demos and payment processing.

A few final thoughts

Remote work is not sustainable for a long period of time if it's not fun. In many ways, it's a company's responsibility to keep the remote employees engaged, but it's easier for individual contributors to recognize what they need to stay focused.

Personally, I can't work in an environment without background noise. I'm a creature of habit, and a decade in the sales profession has made me crave the sound of human voices. Knowing this, I have a second computer next to me that plays movies in the background all day. I know this wouldn't work for a lot of people, but I also know how my brain works. If I had to sit alone in a quiet room all day I'd go crazy.

But beyond the circumstances that brought us to this point, I'm interested to see how this period of remote work changes our perceptions toward traditional work environments. The advice I've provided is a start, but many sales

managers and directors will find new and innovative ways to keep their teams together while they're apart. What tools will they use? Does it open up remote hiring possibilities? How will sustained remote work influence the new hire onboarding processes?

I'm still learning with everyone else.

– Bryan



12 tools to help your team work from home

Working from home is no longer a luxury for the modern business. Whether by choice (to attract talent) or necessity (responding to a global pandemic), businesses across the globe are quickly adopting flexible remote work policies for their employees.

For companies that have already embraced collaborative technology to connect their em-

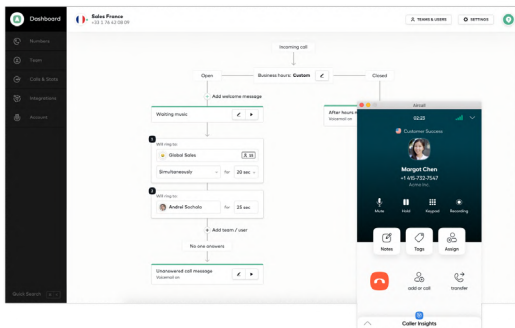
ployees and customers, shifting to a remote work environment should be a breeze.

For those that haven't, here's a list of the best work from home productivity tools.



Communication

Ease and efficiency of internal communication is the main hurdle for remote teams. If your team can't talk to one another, people will step on each others' toes or lose touch altogether.



Aircall is a VoIP phone system and **virtual call center software** for both sales and support teams. Just install the software, and within minutes Aircall will be operational – whether you're using our desktop or browser-based app. Since it's so easy to set up, your remote team members will be reachable easily even if they work from home; all they'll need is a laptop.

Our nimble and functional software will let your team field calls (both internal and to and from customers) easily, with no infrastructural hurdles or time restrictions. Since **Aircall integrates** with various other business tools (such as CRMs, Helpdesks, and more) no important phone call will slip through the cracks. Aircall keeps you connected to your team and your customers.



Slack is a communication management app well-suited to remote work. You can create team channels for every department, and send direct messages. Slack lets you drag-and-drop files, bookmark messages, and pin documents for quick reference. This app cuts down on internal emails since it's quicker, more efficient, and more user-friendly.

For remote teams, Slack can serve as a virtual water cooler, letting team members bond or blow off steam. It gives your remote team members a hub where they can gather for both professional and team-building purpose.

 Zoom

Zoom is the swiss army knife of **video conferencing**. Combining HD video with increasingly important features like screen sharing, content sharing, and local recording make it an obvious choice for organizations in need of an end-to-end conferencing solution.

For starters, Zoom makes meetings more accessible. Only one person needs to download it—everyone else can click the meeting link to jump in from their phone, desktop, or tablet.

Zoom can also enhance collaboration during meetings. Whether toggling between participants to share screens, or making use of shared touch screens with whiteboarding, Zoom offers more ways for participants to exchange ideas than most video platforms on the market.

Sharing information

No matter how many people choose to work from home, everyone will need ways to stay on the same page. These tools will help you share important information with your team, no matter where they are.



Front solves the problem of emailing about email. By combining help desk tickets with internal email, messages, and apps, customer service reps who use Front benefit from a centralized and intuitive communication hub.

For teams that leverage Front's integration with Aircall, this includes the ability to make and receive calls, and access crucial contextual information about them all in one place.

With relevant information about customers readily available, your agents can forget busy work in favor of meaningful conversations – and they'll accelerate productivity in the process.



Zapier lets you automate workflows by bridging the gap between your many other tools. Busy team members dislike having to switch between apps, so Zapier makes sure that all of your customer and team information is synchronized between platforms. Facilitate the integration of your other tools, and keep your whole team in the loop while saving everyone valuable time.

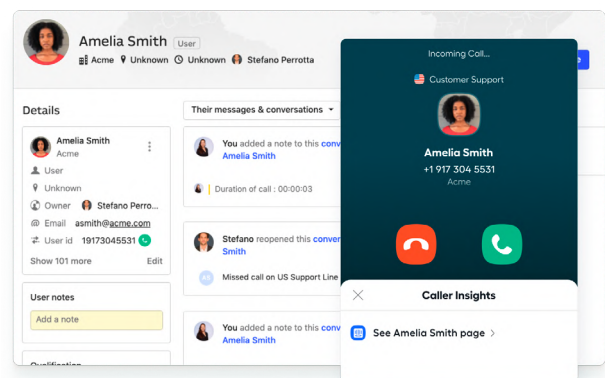
Task Management

If your team isn't in a single location, it can be difficult to assign and follow up on tasks. Everyone could use a little help to stay on top of priorities and work assignments. Without the proper tools, your team will risk running in circles and missing important deadlines.



Monday describes itself as The Work Operating System. We'd describe it as a powerful project management platform that helps teams of all types track, manage, and execute various tasks and initiatives.

To do so, Monday combines a slick and intuitive UI with automation capabilities that make it a breeze to use. Like Aircall, Monday integrates with many of your favorite business tools – an essential feature for modern teams.



Intercom is a messaging app that enables businesses to **stay in touch with their customers**. Its primary function is accompanying the transition from website visitor to paying customer. However, Intercom boasts many useful features for teams that work from home.

Intercom can keep track of every customer interaction in a unified dashboard, and the group inbox lets your team all stay on the same page while annotating client files. Managers can also assign follow-up tasks. Intercom integrates with many other tools, allowing remote employees to monitor client engagement as a cohesive team.

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Trello

Trello lets your whole team create, design, and assign tasks in a straightforward visual interface. You can create cards for every task, and sort them by department, assignee, or department. As the resolution of a task progresses, team members can slide the relevant card from one category to the next. Trello's collaborative tool lets your whole team stay informed on the progress of various tasks, in a way more engaging than emails or memos.

Productivity and reporting

These tools will help boost your team's productivity, and help you keep track of everyone's progress. If you can manage to have a clear indicator of performance and success, your remote team will work from home like a well-oiled machine.



Klaus

For some managers, allowing agents to work from home can raise concerns about performance. With quality assurance tools like Klaus, customer service managers won't miss a beat.

Klaus empowers support managers to digitally audit and rate their team's interactions with customers across channels. When integrated with Aircall, you can easily find and review calls, leave constructive feedback for agents, and score agent performance from the comfort of one interface.



Avoma

Avoma is an intelligent assistant that helps sales and customer success teams transcribe and analyze customer-facing calls to get summarized notes and actionable insights from every conversation.

For sales and success teams, it offers searchable transcripts, AI summarized notes, and auto-sync to your CRM. Conversational intelligence features like speaker and topic identification, custom keyword trends, and talk insights help to surface critical information for managers.

Avoma also powers cross-functional collaboration with searchable recordings, centralized notes, and snippet and playlist sharing.

With [Avoma's integration with Aircall](#), a business can analyze conversations across teams without doing manual work and use these insights to close more deals and delight customers.

For developers

These tools will help boost your team's productivity, and help you keep track of everyone's progress. If you can manage to have a clear indicator of performance and success, your remote team will work from home like a well-oiled machine.



Pivotal Tracker

Pivotal tracker lets your technical team work together by logging bug reports, feature requests, and to-do lists in a single interface. This gives you a top-down view of what your team is working on, allows you to set priorities, and lets you plan your schedule week-to-week. If your developers are scattered and work from home, Pivotal Tracker is an easy way to stay a cohesive unit.



Github

Github lets your developers share code. You can ask for feedback, comment on each other's code, and work on projects collaboratively. Plus, with Github's Slack integration, code reviews and pair programming are even easier.

Communicate, communicate, communicate

The tools listed above are a great way to start, but it's up to you to make the most of them.

The lack of close proximity gives remote workers more freedom and accountability, but it also makes the little acts of day-to-day communication more difficult. While working remotely especially, make team meetings a valuable time to share insights so you don't waste time. Take every opportunity to make sure

everyone is on the same page – and resist the temptation to avoid or delay acting on issues so they don't balloon into bigger problems.

Virtual Call Center Software

As mentioned in the previous section, there are several tools designed to help teams working remotely. For customer support and sales reps, making and taking several calls per day, perhaps the most important work from home tool they'll need is a cloud-based phone system or virtual call center software.

This is especially true for companies that are looking to offer their employees flexibility to work from anywhere, but currently rely on desk phones and other on-premise phone systems. Here's everything you need to know about making the switch.

A virtual call center is a contact center whose customer support agents or sales reps work remotely.

Instead of working from an on-site business location, virtual agents help customers from a different third-party location, or even from their own homes. Virtual call center software allows teams to work from dispersed locations while remaining a cohesive unit and performing with ease and efficiency.

Cloud technology has **democratized the service and sales industry in many ways.**

Since virtual call centers are location-agnostic, they usually leverage **VoIP or cloud-based software**. These remote solutions use cloud-based software so that at-home agents can be active and effective anywhere with a reliable internet connection.

But a cloud contact center creates a very different work environment than a traditional contact center. Given their rising popularity, virtual solutions may even improve worker efficiency.

Here's why.



Call center software

Going virtual or keeping it onsite?

The adoption of virtual call center software has several advantages compared to remaining tethered to a conventional model. Let's look at how it can benefit your business.

No geographical limitations

A virtual call center allows you to hire agents from across the globe. This drastically widens your available hiring pool, enabling you to select the best people for the job, not just those within commuting distance.

Being able to rely on customer support representatives in different time zones will also greatly benefit your customer service. You could dramatically extend your office hours, or go all the way and provide a 24/7 inbound or outbound call center.

Plus, the number of overseas call centers is decreasing now that domestic agents for small and mid size businesses can work from home. Local service can, in many ways, lead to a more pleasurable customer experience and increase empathy all around.

Lower upfront costs

Another reason outsourced call centers are waning in popularity is their original purpose, reduced costs, is increasingly irrelevant. The most cited upside to a virtual call center is its relative inexpensiveness, even compared to outsourcing.

It's no secret that the costs associated with starting an onsite contact center can be prohibitive. You need to acquire IT resources which will be costly upfront and whose value will only decrease over time. Furthermore, purchasing hosting servers, a PBX, and phone terminals is just the first level of expenses. If you are running a traditional inbound call center, you must also provide all of your employees with desks, chairs, and amenities. If you are relying on an outsourced call center, the cost of service will absolutely reflect those expenses.

Virtual call center software eliminates the need for almost all hardware, as well as the

costs associated with onsite employees. As a rule of thumb, cloud-based software is billed as a per user, per month subscription. This reduces costs and allows for seasonality with no adverse effects on your staff or the happiness of your customers.

Mobility and reduced turnover

Remote call center software allows your agents to work from anywhere. If they are working from home, they won't need to commute. This would eliminate the potential for lost time or lateness, and most of all, lowers overall stress level.

Studies show, work-related triggers rank higher than any other cause for stress. The call center industry especially is known for its high employee turnover and attrition rate. A relaxed, stress free staff is a more efficient one. Your customers' perception of your business will improve immediately. A virtual call center can reduce your employee turnover, boost morale, and make for improved customer service.

Environmental benefits of remote teams

Having an offsite remote call center might not just be the smartest option your business,

it could also be the greenest. Eliminating daily commutes, physical offices, and hardware doesn't just improve your bottom line, it also creates a smaller carbon footprint.

Virtual call center software operates on the cloud, which has a number of positive effects on the environment. The dematerialization of data and software, the elimination of hardware and paper products, and the corresponding energy savings are all beneficial to both your business and our planet.



Tips & best practices for setting up your virtual call center software

Virtual call center software has a lot to offer your business. Nevertheless, you must adequately prepare for any change in direction your business plans to undertake.

- **Empower your workforce.** At least a portion of your agents will be working remotely. Therefore, you will need to take special care to motivate them to give their best performance. Make sure to **hire great agents**, and give them a thorough **onboarding experience**. Thankfully, good virtual call center software makes it easy to stay in touch and work together, even in a remote situation.
- **Be present as a manager.** Managing a remote team requires a slightly different set of skills than an onsite one. Remote call center software enables you to stay close to your team by monitoring performance, giving feedback, and allowing you to make modifications to your process in real-time.
- **Shop around.** There are many business phone providers out there, and while they may seem similar at first, be sure to compare them. Perhaps take advantage of some free trials. Make sure you're getting the best service. This means a phone system that offers training for your team and technical support through the setup phases and beyond.
- **Consider your needs.** What are your team's unique requirements? Is your activity seasonal? Do you need to operate in a certain language, or from a certain area? Consider what you want to get out of the arrangement, and then do not hesitate to get in touch with a provider. They will be able to advise you, and help you every step of the way. It's also a good idea to inquire about SLA's in terms of service. This ensures your phone system is as committed to success as you are.

If you decide to move your company toward using a virtual call center, you need to make sure you are using the right software.

Virtual call center software

Which one to pick?

Now that you know more about call center software, you can consider what you want out of such a solution. That's why we put together this list of ways that virtual call center software, like Aircall, can benefit your business. Aircall is a cloud-based, VOIP business phone system which caters to in person and remote contact centers. We strive for excellence, and the qualities detailed below represent what we value in our own product.

Quick setup

From the get-go, opting for a virtual call center will save you stress and time. Setting up an onsite contact center requires configuring hardware, setting up physical work stations, and organizing literal miles of wiring.

However, the process of installing a complete virtual call center service is usually no more complex than downloading an app. The whole installation could take as little as a few minutes, and the software is functional immediately.

Greater flexibility

It can be a financial drain to keep your onsite call center running if you find yourself constantly juggling a surplus or deficit of hardware. Your workforce will naturally expand or contract with seasonal changes in business and demand.

Virtual call center software is easy to scale, even on short notice. Adding or removing users is as simple as adjusting a toggle in the admin dashboard.

Simple to use, in real time

Traditional call centers lose efficiency because their communication tools aren't built with the customer in mind. One upside to virtual call software is the unified, intuitive, and modern interface. Even with remote agents, you'll be able to expedite **onboarding and training**, and work as a more cohesive team because of the simple, well-designed application.

In addition to this, virtual call center software allows you to survey **performance analytics**, and react accordingly. You can decide which KPIs you want to track, since not all indicators are equally valuable to monitor. This affords you immediate feedback on how your team is doing.

A complete package

Just because a virtual call center system is easy to install and easy to use doesn't mean its **features** are limited. A quality solution will offer the same level of service as a traditional model if not more.

One of the differences between a virtual phone business system and an onsite one is that the former is constantly being updated and optimized by its developers. Cloud-based platforms are continually making sure that their software is user-friendly and powerful. They are working to present you, and by extension your customers, with the highest quality of service.

Some features are just what you'd expect from a standard setup: interactive voice response (IVR), programmable open/closed hours, custom voicemail greetings, click-to-call...

Others build on that and make handling calls even simpler: desktop notifications, advanced transfer features, custom hold music, and more.

Some features allow your agents to handle an influx of calls as one cohesive team at every stage of customer interaction: flexible call distribution, shared inbox, shared contacts, etc.

And others still allow you, the manager, to stay closely involved in the process of your call center: setting priorities, call routing, real-time monitoring, and call recording preferences.

A host of integrations

In addition to these features, virtual call center software will **integrate with other cloud-based software tools** in order to provide you with a streamlined process. Rather than expecting your team to master several programs, all with differing (and sometimes overlapping) functions, you can let your virtual call center software integrate with the rest of your tools. For example, Aircall integrates seamlessly with Salesforce, Intercom, Zendesk, HubSpot, and Slack, to name a few.

Much like with the call center software itself, you don't have to stay on top of potential integration updates. The software provider is always working to supply new ways to make your work day easier.

Security

Once you modernize your call center, it will operate through the cloud. Your data will be dematerialized, and the servers used to store it and to power your applications will be decentralized.

Cloud computing has many ins and outs. However, it can be an excellent disaster recovery safeguard for your call center. On top of its productivity features, a virtual call center is an excellent way to keep sensitive customer information safe.

Now that you've seen how a virtual call center can improve on an onsite model and you know how to pick the right software, you're ready to make a change for the better.

Aircall provides you a dedicated onboarding manager to make the switch and set-up even more smoothly.



4 ways Aircall can support remote teams

Whether remote work is a regularly accepted part of your business or is making a mandatory appearance, it's essential that you're prepared. This means having ample resources, good communication, and access to the right tools.

While the transition to remote work might take some getting used to, the modern workplace is well-equipped to handle the challenge.

There's a wide range of tools on the market built to help teams facilitate better communication and improved productivity.

Aircall's virtual call center software helps teams maintain their agility and stay connected—even when everyone's apart.

Here's how.



1 Establish work-life balance

Remote work can often erode our personal digital borders, especially if you're new to it. When our office and our homes are one and the same, it's hard to know where work ends and personal life begins. This can cause unwarranted stress, confusion, and even burn-out for newly remote employees.

Aircall can help teams stay on track and help managers keep their teams from work fa-

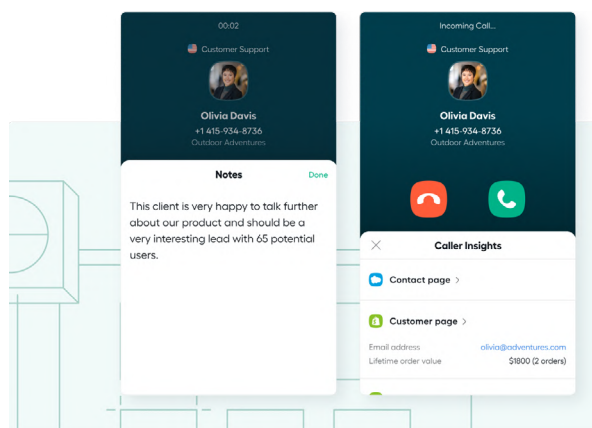
tigue using the **Business Hours feature**. You can easily adjust team members' availability as needed so that shifts are covered without people feeling stressed. Additionally, because you can customize settings for each number, you can be sure that everyone is aligned, accountable, and positioned for success.

2 Collaborate across teams

It's easy to reach out to a coworker at the office and ask for help when on the phone with a tough customer. But when you're remote, keeping that conversation going is challenging. Separate workflows and non-traditional working hours can also mean that people feel left behind.

Aircall lets teams keep the collaboration going through features like shared inboxes, tags, and comments. Having a shared inbox reduces the risk of repeating questions or overlapping workflows. Tags and comments help with communication between team members

giving critical information about a call before it's picked up.



3 Boost visibility

One of the biggest **remote working fears** that managers have is visibility. Keeping people accountable is key to long term success, and that is especially critical for remote teams where managers can't provide in-person support.

Aircall's **Live Feed** feature helps managers gain deeper visibility into their calling processes. You have a full view of who is currently on a call, who is available, and even how long customers have been waiting to speak to someone. This visibility gives managers key insights

that can help them make the decisions that will help support their team better. For example, If you see an agent struggling with their customer calls, you can provide extra coaching and support.

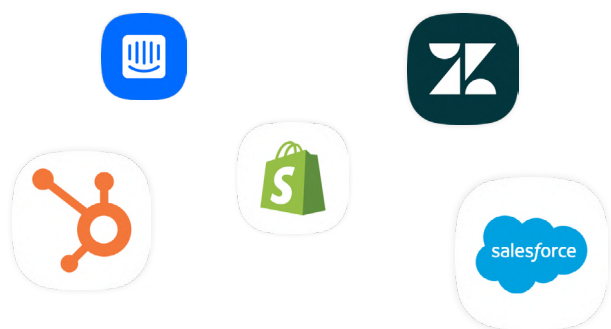
Training new remote team members? **Onboarding a remote employee** is even easier with Aircall. You can add users, create teams, and set up flows without being in the office – or see how well they're doing with onboarding and help get them up to speed.

4 Keep workflows connected

The last important aspect of having a well functioning remote team is making sure your tools are connected. From your CRM to your Helpdesk, having your tools connected keeps your information in one place and your team on the same page.

Aircall can help streamline team workflows through its large **app marketplace**. With over 60 integrations and growing, you can connect

your phone to any of your other important business tools.



Remote work case studies

Several companies use Aircall to manage remote teams and keep their agents connected to customers and prospects from home.

Here are a few of our favorites.





Who they are

Since 1987, AirTreks has been planning complex international travel for everyone. Their **TripPlanner tool** makes it easy to find unique airfare routes and expert advice from travel consultants and local guides.

How Aircall enables remote work

As a completely remote company, they needed a reliable and technologically integrated phone solution that connects employees and customers in every corner of the world.

Before Aircall, AirTreks struggled to share customer data and conversational context between their communication platforms. They knew they needed to find a phone solution that would support rapid growth, which meant integrating their tools and streamlining workflows

“ The setup and configuration of Aircall is a dream. It’s so easy to create new numbers, set up IVRs, and change people around to different teams if needed. ”

**– Sara Habib, General Manager
at AirTreks**



Aircall’s integration with **Front** and **open API** allowed Airtreks to connect their phone and in-house CRM, which made a big impact on Airtrek’s business. Their team reports a higher level of satisfaction with Aircall’s easy-to-use interface, and managers are saving time by making changes on the fly.

“ Because Aircall and Front both offer APIs...the information (reps need) is automatically displayed right in the screen they are already using. This has been incredibly helpful and a great time-saver. Our productivity has definitely increased because of this ease-of-use. ”

– Sara Habib

Real-time call analytics have also been a welcome improvement to Airtreks workflows, allowing managers to easily monitor remote employees’ daily activity.



Who they are

Birdies makes a stylish flat that's secretly a slipper. Their signature shoe has seven layers of comfort technology and they've been updating their inventory with new colors and silhouettes as their e-commerce business skyrockets.

How Aircall enables remote work

When Birdies anticipated a spike in holiday sales, they needed a phone solution that could scale based on seasonality and growth. After some research on leading VoIP software options, they decided that Aircall was the right solution.

“ I liked the desktop notifications, and all the features were initially attractive. As our first phone system, it's been really good so far and helpful as the company scales. ”

– Danielle Murphy, Manager of Customer Experience at Birdies

Since implementing Aircall, Birdies has built an in-house and remote support team to ensure they can thrive during peak periods. With



additional support in place and a new voice solution, Birdies is well-positioned to manage the holiday rush.

As their business evolved, Birdies also needed a way to centralize as much of their tech stack as possible. That's why they use Aircall's **integration with Shopify** to help manage customer orders.

“ When the customer calls in using the same number they placed the order with, the order number pops up right away. That's super helpful for agents – to click into the Shopify page and see the full customer history. ”

– Danielle Murphy

As Birdies endured an incredibly busy peak season with a batch of new remote employees, it became apparent that they would need

deeper insights than what they were currently getting. Birdies realized that seeing data at the agent level, counting open tickets, and seeing call volume by hour and by day would be very helpful.

Aircall's analytics dashboard lets Birdies filter by a number of fields, such as tags, phone

lines, call dates, SLA, and call evolution. Access to a number of new, customizable dashboards enables a much stronger grasp of exactly what's going on with customers.



Who they are

Infinityn International takes a human-centered approach to building dedicated teams to generate sales-qualified pipelines. As a globally-focused operation, Infinityn provides clients with a steady pipeline of sales qualified enterprise leads.

How Aircall enables remote work

Infinityn's sales team does a significant amount of outbound prospecting on behalf of their clients, which is why they needed a phone solution that would make outreach not only easy, but possible in the first place.



“ When we first started out, we were just starting to utilize the cloud more, and working in a virtual office environment with only a few people at the time. We needed a professional cloud-based solution to reach our prospects at the global level ”

– Robert Bukits, Managing Director at Infinityn International

Though based in Budapest, Infinity International's operations allow for a flexible work environment, with employees frequently working from home, the office, or even abroad.

Reliability is essential for their internal workforce and global clientele. Aircall offered a tool that would suit both. Crucially, the ability to use Aircall over the computer, from smartphones and from tablets was an attractive feature for a team on-the-go.

How Aircall enables remote work

Infinity's sales team does a significant amount of outbound prospecting on behalf of their clients, which is why they needed a phone solution that would make outreach not only easy, but possible in the first place.

“ We need to make calls to the Americas, EMEA, APAC and other regional markets on a daily basis and we knew the only solution for us would be an IP-based service-provider like Aircall. It gives us the necessary flexibility and quality we were looking for. It's really a core part of our business ”

– Robert Bukits

Being able to involve several stakeholders even in **different parts of the world** via Aircall's **conference call feature** is a valuable addition to their operations. Infinity International's SDRs greatly appreciate the ability to connect their client's account executives with their prospects, sometimes even mid-conversation.

Infinity International defines success by the results they deliver to clients: number of sales-qualified leads delivered, meetings facilitated, and the number of conversations conducted. The ability to pull call analytics from Aircall helps Infinity understand internal performance and allows them to share metrics as evidence of their clients' success, too.

Final thoughts

Modern companies that need to attract the best talent, encourage productivity, and offer flexibility to employees during extenuating circumstances must implement remote work policies and prepare to keep their teams connected.

But the shift to remote work requires companies to alter their way of communicating, collaborating, and delivering results as a team.

For most businesses, this shift is impossible without making resources available to employees in the cloud. Teams that rely on desk phones, such as sales and support staff, will suffer if businesses aren't able to adapt their workflows to meet the demands of their virtual environment (i.e. they won't be able to do their jobs).

Cloud-based software, such as virtual call center software, makes it possible for sales and support staff to not only keep doing their jobs, but thrive in a virtual setting. Teams en-

abled with connected tools to collaborate and communicate easily, with colleagues, customers, and prospects, can work from anywhere.

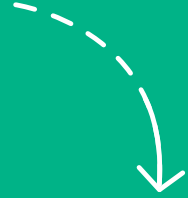
Whether you're working from home out of necessity, or just offering more flexibility to your sales or support staff to encourage productivity, we hope that this guide was helpful. As always, Aircall is here to help you transition to remote work if you need it.

– Aircall Team





The flexible phone solution for remote work



Aircall's cloud-based phone system allows businesses to accommodate remote work without the need for hardware. By seamlessly integrating with the most popular CRM and helpdesk tools, Aircall helps sales and support teams communicate clearly and efficiently. Admins can instantly add numbers from 100+ countries, scale their teams according to seasonality, and gain deep insights through real time analytics.

[Learn more](#)

aircall.io

Incoming Call...

 Customer Support



Olivia Davis
+1 415-934-8736
Outdoor Adventures

Caller Insights

CRM >

Email address	olivia@adventures.com
Owner	Benjamin Davis

e-Commerce >

Lifetime order value	\$1800 (2 orders)
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