

# The Future of Work

NOVEMBER 2023





**The workplace is in the midst of an industrial revolution. The one-two punch of the pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis triggered global economic and societal changes that continue to pervade the world of work. The legacy of the Great Resignation, an ageing workforce, and quiet quitting are adding to the woes of global skills shortages, while new attitudes to the very concept of work are forcing an about-turn on hiring strategies.**

**A swift uptake of new technologies to support remote working was the antidote to ensuring workplace productivity during the pandemic. But in its wake, working away from the office has lit a new path for how we work and created new expectations.**

**How can businesses meet the collective demands of 'humans' and embrace pivotal new technologies with advancing capabilities? How will AI color the way we work and what communications technology will be the remedy for continued success in the office of the future?**

**While there are no dead certs on the future of working environments, businesses do have some agency on the strategies they create now, and the technologies they adopt to both meet the needs of customers and satisfy a more discerning and diverse workforce. Let's explore the many factors that will influence the workforce landscape of the future, and how businesses can prepare for tomorrow's world.**

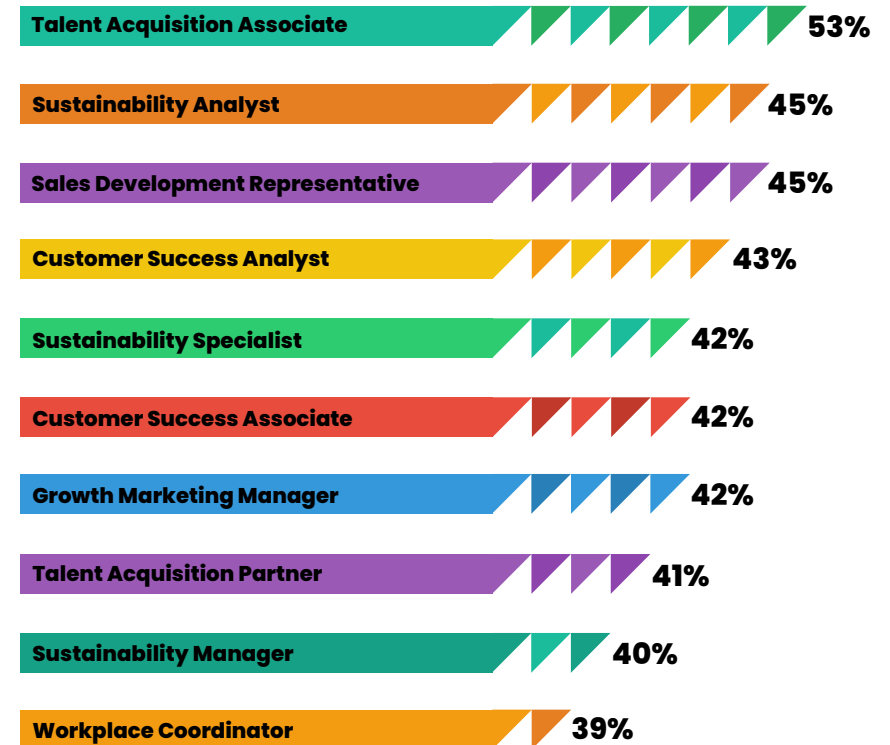
# Humans

While economic growth is forecast to slow on a global level, technology and AI are set to accelerate. According to the [World Economic Forum](#), 85 million 'human' jobs will be displaced because of automation, and 97 million new AI-related positions will be created. Add to the mix the aftershock of recent geopolitical events, the drive for more remote working and shifting employee expectations and it begs the question of exactly how humans will feature in the workplace's future.

## A new job role landscape

With the rise in automated technologies already underway, it's reasonable to assume a wider introduction of AI and tech-related roles such as AI and Machine Learning specialists, cyber security specialists and cloud computing experts in the workforce. According to [Quixy](#), by the end of 2023, AI will generate 2.3 million jobs, while the [WEF](#) forecasts large-scale job growth in education, agriculture, and growth of around 4 million digitally-enabled roles such as E-Commerce, Digital Transformation and Digital Marketing specialists. It also points to a big slide in demand for admin roles, traditional security, factory and commerce positions. All of this means that workers of the future are likely to spend less time on predictable tasks in the workplace, and more time applying soft skills such as managing people, communicating effectively and bringing their expertise.

The Future of Jobs Report 2023 from the World Economic Forum highlights the following fastest growing LinkedIn job postings from 2018 – 2023.



Source: [WEF\\_Future\\_of\\_Jobs\\_2023.pdf \(weforum.org\)](#) (stats on page 19)

# A rise in remote working

COVID-19 recalibrated our working environments in almost an instant. It proved firsthand how people can adapt to new working environments and brought to life the hidden skills of workforces. It also prompted a shift in attitudes and loyalty towards work, particularly for the increasing number of workers born post-1996. Many Gen Z and Millennial workers do not view work as central to their lives or place high value in job security. They want a strong work/life balance, purpose, opportunities to grow and flexible working patterns.

A 2023 Gen Z and Millennial Survey found that work/life balance was a key issue for the younger generations. Surveying over 22,000 Gen Zs and Millennials across 44 countries, out of a possible five traits, balancing work and life came out as the top priority, before the need to live their life on their own terms, learn new skills, and be willing to continuously reinvent themselves and their passion for work.

Similarly, a 2022 Statista report assessing 'working from home' opinions due to the pandemic finds:

- >> Almost 80% of US employees say they are content working from home, with 42% stating they would work from home forever.
- >> In the UK, 34% say they love working from home.
- >> 7% of US employees and 22% of UK employees stated that they like working from home but it has some challenges with resources, space and other people.
- >> These statistics indicate that businesses need to look at those resources more closely, for instance, the communications technology they use.

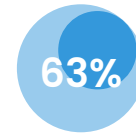


## 'Human' skills at a premium

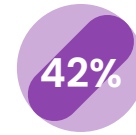
According to the UK's National Foundation for Educational Research's [Skills Imperative report 2035](#), new technological developments alongside demographic and environmental shifts will transform employment over the next few decades. NFER researchers believe these changes will make way for more creative, critical thinking, problem solving and teamwork skills. It makes sense that as AI and tech dominance build, we will hand over the heavy lifting of routine tasks to technology. But to reason, judge and take action on what the technology is telling us, we need those imperative soft skills only humans can offer.

Although the future capabilities of AI may someday undermine the uniqueness of human intelligence, for the moment, cognitive abilities are a key differentiator for humans. Many companies are already ahead of the game, recognizing the importance of transferable skills such as emotional intelligence and critical thinking. But some are not, and according to [People Management](#), the UK is losing £22bn a year through lack of soft skills training investments. Similarly, in the US, a survey by [The Society for Human Resource Management](#) shows that 64% of hiring managers believe the process of finding graduates with critical thinking skills is difficult. And 55% said the process of finding qualified applicants with interpersonal skills was also difficult.

Reinforcing the need to invest in soft skills training for the future, a study by Deloitte revealed the following:



Soft skill intensive jobs will make up 63% of all jobs by 2030



42% of businesses need leadership skill development for the digital future



Soft skill intensive jobs will grow 2.5 x faster than other jobs

Source: PJ54338 - Deakin Digital ([deloitte.com](#)) ( page 2)

A 2023 study from the [Institute of Business Value](#) also discovered that executives predict 40% of their workforce will need to reskill due to AI technology within the next three years, with many respondents highlighting the need for upskilling as a 'top talent issue'. The study also revealed:

- >> CEOs believe generative AI will have the biggest consequences for entry level employees, with 18% believing this would have an extreme impact.
- >> Only 6% stated an extreme impact of AGI on executive/ senior managers.
- >> Only 3% of CEOs believe mid-management positions would be extremely impacted by generative AI.

## More age-diversity

With an ageing population and potential new legislation that will increase the retirement age in both the UK and the US in the future, the number of older workers is set to increase. According to the [Bureau of Labor Statistics](#), in the US, the labor force of people aged 75 years and older is forecast to grow by 96.5% in the next 10 years, and is the only group whose participation rate is set to rise. Conversely, a work participation rate decline from 53.9% in 2020, to 49.6% in 2030 is expected from those aged between 16-24 years.

A wider pool of talent looks possible for the future but according to research from the [Chartered Institute of People Development](#), only one fifth of employers have a board-level strategy in place to manage an older workforce. New people policies, practices and investments in back-to-work upskilling will help attract and retain a mature generation. The CIPD recommends a series of actions for employers, including more flexible working for those who may experience health barriers; training programs, and the overall support of health and well-being at work for older workers.

## Preparing for more connected teams

For both established companies and startups, skill needs and gaps, employee well-being and flexible working expectations must, of course, be key considerations. Greater fragmentation in the workforce means there's a new imperative for unified communications, especially for those who need to stay connected to clients, candidates and colleagues on a daily basis. But looking after and getting the most from remote workers presents obstacles for those without the technology to keep everyone connected and performing well. In fact, a [Forbes report](#) states that 70% of people do not feel prepared for work. What can be done about that?

**CloudCall's systems were built to ensure sustained productivity through continued connectivity. Here's how:**

### 1. STAY UPDATED

With CloudCall, team members can view one single source of truth for your contacts. Within each contact's CRM record, the full history of communications including calls, texts, emails and notes can be accessed. Plus, with the [Call Recordings](#) feature, the calls themselves also get saved to the contact's record. So, past calls can be reviewed if previous conversations need to be better understood.

### 2. LIVE SUPPORT

Supervisors using our telephony system are able to swiftly hop on to calls and coach agents in real-time with our live support features. With the Monitor tool, you can listen in on conversations without joining, meaning agents don't feel pressured during a call but benefit from valuable feedback immediately after the call is over. The Whisper feature allows for more experienced callers or managers to 'whisper' guidance on how to handle calls, without the recipient hearing. And, if it's necessary to interrupt, the Barge tool can be used to take control of the call. Whether training new starters, or supporting colleagues on difficult calls, these features are some that our customers can't do without.

### 3. BETTER COLLABORATION

There are a few different features of our integration that will help your remote teams not only collaborate more effectively, but gain insights and increase productivity at the same time. Of course, the need for advanced human connection to prepare for the future world of work is just one side of the story. To be fully prepared, employers and businesses must also look at the intersection that exists between the human factors and the undeniable progression of Artificial Intelligence in the workplace.

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## Key takeaways:



**According to the World Economic Forum, 85 million 'human' jobs will be displaced because of automation, and 97 million new AI-related positions will be created.**



**Many Gen Z and Millennial workers do not view work as central to their lives or place high value in job security. They want a strong work/life balance, purpose, opportunities to grow and flexible working patterns.**



**Almost 80% of US employees say they are content working from home, with 42% stating they would work from home forever. In the UK, 34% say they love working from home.**

# Artificial Intelligence

AI is fast becoming a staple in communications strategies, improving operational efficiencies, producing targeted marketing campaigns, optimizing processes and providing new ways to interact. [Statista](#) reports a global total corporate investment in AI of nearly 92 billion US dollars in 2022, while average funding for AI startups in the UK rose by 66% from 2021-2023, according to [Startups](#). How will our working days be impacted further by AI development? What will the new dynamic be between humans and AI, and how can businesses alleviate and address the possible dangers?

## A growth in Generative AI

Generative AI, a form of AI that generates multimedia content, has already stormed onto the scene. We are seeing it used successfully in Large Language Models (LLMs) like OpenAI's ChatGPT. Using input data, algorithms learn patterns and structures to generate articles, compose music, create design collateral, code, and write emails. As well as offering a new level of efficiency, generative AI can use contextual awareness to personalize customer experiences, making interactions more human-like. And we can expect to see more. Technology news site, [ZDNET](#), draws attention to the State of IT 2023 report by Salesforce which found nine out of 10 CIOs think generative AI has already gone mainstream.

According to IEEE Future Directions: **“Depending on the industry, generative AI is expected to lead to an increase in work productivity generating an incremental economic impact between 35% and 70% on top of the one produced by advanced analytics, machine learning and deep learning. This means over 6 trillion \$ of economic impact worldwide.”**

Furthermore, the areas that generative AI will likely have the biggest impact include:

















- >> Sales
- >> Software Engineering for corporate IT
- >> Marketing
- >> Software Engineering for product development
- >> Customer operations (management, care, ...)
- >> Product and R&D





# Interactions will become more engaging

From a customer engagement perspective, and, as generative AI models improve their responses to customers over time, and more data is collected, interactions will become more valuable and engaging.

-  More human-like conversations using natural language with chatbots.
-  An improvement in forecasting customer churn using advanced pattern recognition.
-  Empathy skills will improve, supporting more powerful customer conversations.
-  Businesses using more predictive insights to make data-driven decisions.
-  Feedback analyzed more across platforms, including social media, surveys and reviews to assess sentiment.
-  Businesses quickly turning feedback responses into useful and relevant content.
-  The identification of hidden patterns and trends to source new opportunities.
-  More accurate product recommendations.
-  Hyper-personalized experiences generating unique outcomes and experiences.
-  Better collaboration with teams for more joined-up messaging and improved team cohesion.
-  The ability to judge customer sentiment and changing communication styles to improve engagement.
-  A greater ability to analyze customer behavior and data. AGI will identify patterns to spot new opportunities and upsell at the right time.
-  The demand for AGI skill-sets.
-  24/7 customer service using AI chatbots.
-  More overall data-driven decision making.
-  Fully automated data entry, reporting and task management.

## New avenues for creativity and productivity

As more manual tasks are fulfilled by AI technology, and more time is freed for humans, new prospects for productivity and creativity emerge.

### In the future, we could see greater use of the following AI tools and techniques in the workplace:

- >> AI-assisted brainstorming - where human creative blocks are eroded and techniques such as random word prompts are used to generate new ideas.
- >> AI image editing tools that remove the time-consuming process of editing backgrounds, adding special effects and adjusting lighting to create original artwork for design and marketing teams.
- >> AI data tools able to spot trends and dataset relationships, opening new paths to creative solutions and tools that use historical data and social media sentiment to project future trends.
- >> The use of AI to capture customer demographics, motivators, needs and behaviors to create personas and match with engaging new designs.
- >> More copywriting tools that remove productivity barriers such as writer's block, or a lack of inspiration.
- >> More UX design tools which are already being used to eliminate lengthy code writing.

## Greater awareness of Artificial General Intelligence

Narrow/weak AI such as Large Language Models may also signal the beginning of strong AI. One form of strong AI is Artificial General Intelligence (AGI) which, theoretically, has the ability to perform a wide range of autonomous tasks that mimic generalized human cognitive abilities. While there remains differing views on whether true AGI will ever be realized, it is beneficial to appreciate the potential it has to radically alter the workplace. Co-author of 'Rebooting AI', Gary Marcus, says: "There is still an immense amount of work to be done in making machines that truly can comprehend and reason about the world around them." While Google DeepMind CEO, Demis Hassabis, recently said in the [Wall Street Journal's Future of Everything Festival](#) that: "AI intelligence systems would reach human-level cognition somewhere between 'the next few years' and 'maybe within a decade.'"

## A wider introduction of AI 'colleagues'

As AI technology gets handed more complex workplace tasks, it will become more enconced in our working day, to the extent where we may consider AI a 'colleague'. According to the [Harvard Business Review](#), generative AI will 'enhance, not erase customer service jobs'. The growth in digital humans may also signal another development in office support. [Soulmachines](#), an AI animated software firm has already created digital humans utilized in around 50 organizations. Professor of Information Systems at Indiana University Kelley School of Business, Alan Dennis, says: "Within a decade, we believe, managers at most companies are likely to have a digital human as an assistant or an employee."

# The dangers and challenges of AI

## Balancing the capabilities and limitations of AI

As personalized customer expectations soar, the level of engagement offered by AI will become the norm. However, at the moment, AI algorithms do not have the capability to fully understand the nuances and situational awareness needed for a rich and engaging conversation. Also, while AI can understand patterns, it cannot detect emotion to form an appropriate response, and does not understand cultural language differences such as the use of sayings and idioms. Businesses will need to appreciate the demands of customers by employing the best resources while also understanding the current limitations of AI.

## Cyber security

Data safety is a priority for all businesses. With the increase in AI technology, businesses should first of all gain a strong understanding of what the AI cyber risks are, continue to bolster their traditional cybersecurity techniques, and consider the use and safety of the AI tools they use. They may even consider the use of AI tools to better respond to security threats and to analyze data for cyber security risks. Cybersecurity is considered to be one of the biggest AI risks. A study from [Riversafe](#) which surveyed 250 cybersecurity leaders found that:

**80%** of cybersecurity leaders understand the biggest cyber threat to be AI

**76%** had paused the delivery of AI in their business because of the cyber risk

**14%** feel unconfident about their ability to protect against cyber attacks

**45%** of businesses have a system in place to assess security risks



(Source: AI Unleashed: Navigating Cyber Risks Report as detailed in [Cyber security leaders see AI as their biggest emerging cyber threat](#) ([continuitycentral.com](#)))

## The legalities of AI

AI has already prompted personal data privacy concerns due to the vast amounts of information it collects, and the potential to expose sensitive information. While businesses will need to look at new processes and policies to address this, they may also use AI to map sensitive data to ensure it is correctly stored or deleted. AI may again prove to be both a problem and a cure for Intellectual Property. As a result, the risks of copyright infringements, for example, the ownership of the content it uses have been called into question. For instance, [Reuters](#) recently reported that image media company, Getty Images, have accused Stability AI, a company which uses open-source AI tools, of breaching its copyright after using its images to train one of its systems. It's a case that may determine new laws on AI.

## AI regulation

Racing against the pace of AI evolution, global policymakers are working to craft and implement effective AI regulations, to gain a balance between leveraging AI and preventing the potential dangers. In the US, AI risk assessments are high priorities for the federal government, and the [Algorithmic Accountability Act](#), which includes the requirement for businesses to evaluate the impact of automation techniques they use and sell, is currently subject to Congress debate.

In March 2023, the UK government released a [whitepaper](#) detailing its plans for the implementation of a 'pro-innovation' approach to AI regulation. Although the government states that current UK laws and legal systems cover the emerging risks of AI, they acknowledge some risks have occurred or may occur beyond the remit of existing regulations. It's therefore likely that businesses will need to prepare for new regulations over the next year, address the need for AI legal and regulatory experts, and ready themselves for AI compliance.

## Algorithmic bias and ethics

Although, for instance, AI recruitment software can offer an arguably more democratic approach to hiring by using data and removing guess work and subjectivity, paradoxically, there remains a broad risk of bias with AI algorithms. This bias may occur as a result of a number of factors including the data input, the type of programming used, or bias inherent in the way data is collected or chosen.

This may require a closer analysis from businesses in the future to not only prevent poor decision-making but to also support their Diversity Equity and Inclusion efforts. This was considered during one of our [Blurple Panel webinars around building an inclusive future for LGBTQIA+ individuals within tech](#). Erin Casali, VP of Product Design at Xero, highlights the inherent bias within AI tools, and how these should be addressed to ensure an equitable future for all.

By using consistently diverse and representative data, identifying biases and addressing the model of data used, companies can rework algorithms to make them more balanced and fairer. For instance, making algorithms transparent, performing fairness audits to check AI models are working well and forming diverse stakeholder groups to implement ethical guidelines that address accountability, transparency, and respect for human rights.



## Tips for being AI-prepared:

As businesses look to increase their AI activities, training will likely take a front seat again, and increased investments in AI tech and tools seem inevitable. Not only will these moves ensure a competitive edge for businesses but they may also plug the gap with some of the more human challenges of the future. For example, as more discerning Gen Zs look for work with passion and meaning, the lack of manual and routine tasks in the workplace may mean employers can attract Gen Zs more easily. And with an impending age-diverse workforce, the increase in AI productivity may facilitate more appealing, manageable flexible working patterns for mature workers.

Whatever the outcome with AGI, it's wise for businesses to be aware now of how it may be used in the future to create code, deliver content, analyze data and design products on a whole new level and to consider carefully how it will coexist with employees.

### What you can do:

-  **Gain a clear understanding of the benefit AI can provide and create a strategy.**
-  **Ensure your organization and customer data is organized. With the potential to integrate AI with existing CRM systems, if data is fragmented, it will be much more of a challenge if data is not structured.**
-  **Understand clearly the dangers and risks associated with AI.**
-  **Consider the future of current job roles and how AI may impact these.**
-  **Think about testing or trialling AI technologies within your business, using those knowledgeable in AI to look at their impact and consider the risks.**
-  **Continually share AI knowledge with employees.**

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- Demis Hassabis, Google DeepMind CEO

## Key takeaways:



**Generative AI is expected to lead to an increase in work productivity generating an incremental economic impact between 35% and 70%.**



**As AI technology gets handed more complex workplace tasks, it will become more ensconced in our working day, to the extent where we may consider AI a ‘colleague’.**



**80% of cybersecurity leaders believe the biggest cyber threat to be AI, with 76% pausing the delivery of AI in their business because of the cyber risk.**

# How will we work in the future?

Juggling the need for high performing and connected teams, combined with understanding the risks of AI while maximizing its capabilities, is perhaps the ultimate challenge for businesses. Being able to do so well will likely become a critical margin for success. But how can they do it, and what advantages will new communication technologies bring?

## A rise in VoIP capabilities

VoIP (Voice over Internet Protocol) is a telephony system that allows users to make and receive phone calls over the internet. It offers huge potential for small businesses looking to expand, and there are plenty of benefits for established companies to streamline and improve their processes while making cost savings.

According to software comparison website, [Findstack](#):

VoIP can save customers around **50%** of their communication costs

Cloud telecoms are growing at a rate of **19.9%** CAGR as of 2021

**82%** of companies report savings by moving to the cloud

VoIP costs are only expected to rise only **3%** by 2024

### Here are the benefits you can expect with VoIP:

- >> Advanced calling features such as on-hold music and auto attendant that can help small businesses project a larger sized operation.
- >> Direct and indirect cost savings, with no need to pay for private branch exchange (PBX) hardware, or copper wiring, cheaper cost of calls, and a reduction in recurring fees such as hardware maintenance costs.
- >> Expansion won't be a problem either as the ability to add new phone lines as and when needed means scalability is achievable and does not require the significantly larger investment in new traditional landlines or equipment. It also means that in an unpredictable global marketplace, businesses can adapt easily by adding or removing lines at the flick of a switch, and scale up using global numbers for international calls.
- >> As we look towards a more remote working environment, VoIP technology provides a platform where teams can come together more easily to connect and collaborate with colleagues by accessing data through their mobile devices. With such accessibility, this means productivity improves and critical learning and training programs can be accessed easily. In fact, with tools like CloudCall's Real time coach, on-the-job training is facilitated.

# Integrating VoIP with CRM

With so many advantages, it's unsurprising that VoIP is becoming essential for business communications. And, when integrated with a Customer Relationship Management system (CRM) via a Computer Telephony Integration (CTI), its capabilities grow more. Here's how:

- >> When VoIP technology is integrated with an existing CRM system CTI data is synced and calls can be made using the data available, keeping all communications in one platform and helping to streamline processes.
- >> When used with a softphone, (a VoIP software application that can be downloaded and accessed on an internet-enabled device) all VoIP features can be accessed, e.g., SMS messaging and contact records. This means remote workers or sales teams can access the call features they need, anytime anywhere.
- >> A higher return of investment is possible as all communication systems are brought together, reducing the need for further software investments. Using the data collected from the calls, managers are able to resource more efficiently and better manage call performance.
- >> Customer engagement is improved dramatically as all CRM information is available. Having detailed contact information during calls makes for more engaging and productive interactions, plus, as all calls are synced to the CRM automatically, there is no need to make notes or worry about forgetting conversations.
- >> Because calls can be made directly from the CRM, there is little time wasted looking up numbers or searching for previous call notes. This allows time for more calls to be made, increasing productivity.





# What will the future hold?

## The ISDN switch off

Aside from the merits of VoIP and integrating with a CRM system, adoption of the technology is likely to accelerate as a result of the ISDN (Integrated Services Digital Network) and PSTN (Public Switched Telephone Network) switch off in 2025. Known as the 'BT switch off' individuals and businesses with traditional, copper wire phones or landlines will no longer be able to use them, or any systems that connect to them, including EPOS machines, alarms or CCTV systems. According to BT: "As an essentially 20th century technology, the PSTN is increasingly out of kilter with the demands of 21st century communications." continuing: "Digital is the answer."

This brings a new necessity for businesses to switch to IP technology, like VoIP, where calls are routed via the internet. If you use a PSTN network, the following steps will help ensure business and operational continuity before the switch off date:

1. Conduct an audit of your existing system, including how many direct dial numbers and phone lines you have, the processes you use for handling unanswered calls, and whether your employees work remotely
2. Check the reliability and quality of your internet connection and its speed
3. From here, create a migration plan detailing your business' specific needs, for instance, the need for remote access.
4. Look for the best VoIP provider who cannot only offer equipment advice and options, but a system that integrates specifically with your existing CRM. After all, if you have a specialist CRM for recruitment, for example, it makes sense that you have a specialist [phone system for recruitment](#) too.

Although moving your communications systems may seem a huge disruption, with careful planning and support from your new provider, migrating to VoIP is a simple process, typically taking 2- 4 weeks.

## VoIP will harness 5G

5G will transform connectivity. The quality of audio and video calls, plus Web Real Time Comms (WebRTC) will be significantly improved, with a reduction in low-quality calls and buffer thanks to lower latency, strong network availability and improved bandwidth. It will also offer better connectivity for employees working in remote or rural locations and the opportunity for organizations to adopt a broader range of VoIP applications.

## IoT and VoIP

Combined with the Internet of Things (IoT), VoIP technology is supercharged. Connecting everyday appliances like printers, vehicles and even tooling, IoT links objects using unique identifiers, for example, sensors or software that share data with each other over the internet. For remote or hybrid workers, this means their softphones can seamlessly connect to on-site desk phones and printers from outside the office, helping improve productivity.



## An improved omnichannel experience through UCaaS

UCaaS, Unified Communications as a Service, is a platform that brings together numerous communications systems such as chat, video, email, messaging and VoIP. It's predicted that by 2030 more than three quarters of businesses will be using it for their communication needs.

## Advanced capabilities of clever language tools

AI will also begin to work more closely with VoIP technology. As reported by [Tech Round](#): "The synergy between these two technologies opens new doors for businesses, enabling them to deliver enhanced customer experiences and optimize operational efficiency."

Already, AI is able to understand the spoken word, and tailor communications using data analytics, pattern identification, and previous interactions to support customer engagement. AI chatbots offer real-time personalized experiences, solve simple customer queries, and collect valuable user behavior and insights from phone calls, such as customer sentiment, length of call and recurring issues. More recently, we have seen [Air AI](#) launch the first conversational AI that can hold customer and sales conversations for up to 40 minutes.

Large Language Models can analyze the sentiment in customer calls by examining words and sentences to detect empathy, or incorrect language used by call handlers. It can check whether the content of calls is correct or missing information to help managers assess call performance more accurately, ensure compliance and make data-driven decisions.

In the future, we can expect improved accuracy in all areas, including:

- >> More accurate transcription of calls, voice searches and voice commands.
- >> Sophisticated voice responses to reduce call handling times.
- >> Higher-level call routing through the use of predictive analytics and AI algorithms.
- >> Analyzed customer interactions to assess call performance.
- >> Improved security through the use of voice authentication, removing the need for passwords.
- >> Through the use of machine learning and natural language processing, customer chat bots will be able to decipher more complex language and queries.
- >> Customer satisfaction will be improved by gauging real-time sentiment on a deeper level.

The analysis of live customer conversations where AI algorithms are used to detect human emotions to improve call performance.

An explosion of call center capabilities is certainly on the horizon as VoIP and AI fuse further ties. According to [Gartner](#), approximately 95% of customer interactions will involve AI by 2025.

## Refining the art of conversation

According to [Google's 'Click to Call' research](#), 59% of customers prefer to call because they want a quick answer, while 57% call because they want to talk to a real person. Many customers still seek reassurance from a phone call too, for example, when arranging an appointment or making a service call. And, 45% of customers report feeling happier when speaking to a real person on the phone. That's more than double the number who will self-serve on a website (20%). By providing virtual queuing, self-service and having immediate access to contact records during calls, resolutions are reached more swiftly and conversations are enhanced.

Rewarding customer interactions don't just happen over the phone though. With so many digital platforms available, customers have a variety of ways to make contact. Our recent article on [Reclaiming the Art of Conversation](#) highlights the current fragmentation of conversation: "With so many channels, we are constantly entering and existing conversations, making context easy to lose. Customers may start a conversation online, and follow up using a different channel. 86% of customers say in those cases, it's important there's a record of their previous conversation. But all too often, that information isn't available."

Offering customers a seamless omni-channel experience is therefore essential. A CRM integration facilitates multiple channels on one unified platform, meaning, for instance, customers who begin a conversation on the phone may continue the conversation on a live chat, with all interactions recorded and up-to-date.

## The challenges of working from home

While there are plenty of benefits and ways to improve remote working, there are some potential drawbacks. Here are some of the main challenges and what you can do to address them:

## WFH Planning

Planning can feel like an issue with remote working. With no clear, routine breaks, teams can end up working over lunch, become distracted or experience interruptions. Here's what you can do to help your team manage a practical remote working schedule:

- >> Schedule regular check-ins with colleagues you don't see often. Two common challenges remote employees deal with are disconnect from teammates and lack of company visibility. To help, remote members can schedule regular one-on-one check-ins or virtual coffee chats with other colleagues.
- >> Ensure you discuss your working hours and work-life balance boundaries with your employees and ask them to note on their calendars when they are not available.
- >> Create blocks that say, "Please Request Time Before Booking" for times when you'll be working on large projects, for example.
- >> Use calendar alerts to set working hours and breaks so that colleagues know when they can and cannot make contact.
- >> Use focusing tools to block off time for uninterrupted work.
- >> Try to book meetings across one or two days, leaving the rest of the week open for work.
- >> Schedule in time for regular weekly tasks, for example, time on Monday mornings for admin work. Advise this when callers or employees need uninterrupted time, to get a project done and avoid distractions.

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## Key takeaways:



**Known as the 'BT switch off' individuals and businesses with traditional, copper wire phones or landlines will no longer be able to use them, or any systems that connect to them, including EPOS machines, alarms or CCTV systems in 2025.**



**An explosion of call center capabilities is certainly on the horizon as VoIP and AI fuse further ties. According to Gartner, approximately 95% of customer interactions will involve AI by 2025.**



**It's predicted that by 2030 more than three quarters of businesses will be using UCaaS (Unified Communications as a Service) for their communication needs.**

# Where will we work?

The technology and communication tools we will have at our disposal will shape how we work in the future. The growing popularity of remote working after the pandemic has already set a new tone, and now with the digital technology available to facilitate it, the perception of work may become less 'bricks and mortar' and more of an abstract term used to describe a new virtual working environment.

## The rise of hybrid working

One of the biggest legacies of the pandemic is the change in working culture. Although exclusive remote working has fallen, the popularity of splitting time between the traditional office and home is soaring.

In a recent [podcast with Institute of Fiscal Studies](#) director, Paul Johnson, Professor of Economics at Stanford University, Nick Bloom, said that employees value hybrid working as much as an 8% pay increase. Also, [data analysis from the Office of National Statistics](#), which explored the future plans of workers in February 2022, found that:



Over **8 in 10** workers who had to work from home during the coronavirus pandemic said they planned to hybrid work.



The percentage of people working purely from home has decreased, while the number of hybrid workers has risen from **13%** in February 2022, to **24%** in May 2022.



As of February 2022, the most common hybrid working schedule that people planned to adopt was working mainly from home.



The number of workers who planned to split their time equally between work and home, or work mainly from their place of work and occasionally from home, fell.

## The office of the future will take on a new meaning

The office as we know it will likely become a place where people go to collaborate – a defined destination to purposefully work within teams and socialize. Hybrid meeting rooms, hot desks, shared office space and generally, many more people working from home, are almost certainly on the cards. The recruitment industry especially has changed in recent years as more candidates expect hybrid flexibility, online interview processes and a great culture whilst working remotely. As hybrid working becomes the norm, there will be a new drive to improve its effectiveness, and for businesses to adopt the communications infrastructure needed to serve homeworkers and their customers, clients and colleagues. The adoption of a CRM and VoIP integration can help facilitate the future of the office environment in several ways:

## Increasing sales

Remember, ‘time kills all deals’. But time will be on your side when your remote team uses a CRM system integrated with VoIP technology. By gaining access to contact records at any time, team members can respond swiftly to clients and customers. A [Lead Response Management study](#) found that “salespeople had 100 times greater chance of making a successful contact with a lead within five minutes of an inquiry, as opposed to 30 minutes. That same lead was 21 times more likely to enter the sales process if contacted within 5 minutes.”

CloudCall [features](#), such as screen pops and call recordings mean salespeople can access all the [data](#) they need to close a deal, no matter where they are. This instant access to contact records also improves sales team collaboration. Plus, insight tracking allows managers to keep an eye on the success of their mobile teams with real-time dashboards and call recordings.

## Optimizing data

As data becomes ever more critical to decision-making, a CTI drives new customer insights. Using data from phone call records, analytics can track the efficiency of sales and customer service teams. This optimizes call quality and call handling while helping to identify KPIs. In a remote working environment, it is more important than ever to keep updated on how a team is performing when they’re communicating with customers. Accurate analytics provide truthful and meaningful feedback to call handlers on tasks such as how they open and close calls.

### 4 tips for using call analytics

Call analytics provide a clear overview of your team’s performance. This information provides real-time data that you can use to set goals and KPIs, take a look at our 4 tips for using call analytics:

1. Help your team hit KPIs by creating targets and goals for individual members.
2. Everyone has different strengths and weaknesses, but by tailoring your team members goals they will be better prepared to meet these targets.
3. Celebrate your teams’ successes with facts and figures from your call analytics to help keep them motivated.
4. With personalized dashboards, your team members can monitor their progress.

# Maintaining team morale

With a disjointed office of the future, managers may be concerned that a lack of in-person connectivity will impact team spirit. Here's how a CRM integration can boost morale:

## Improved collaboration

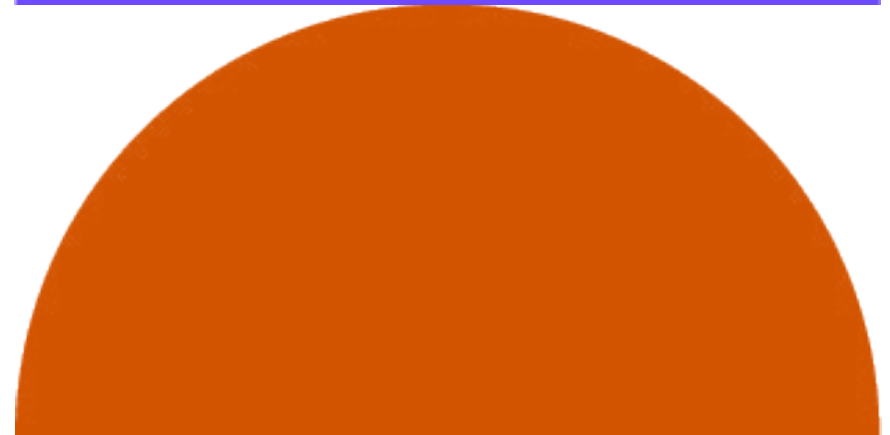
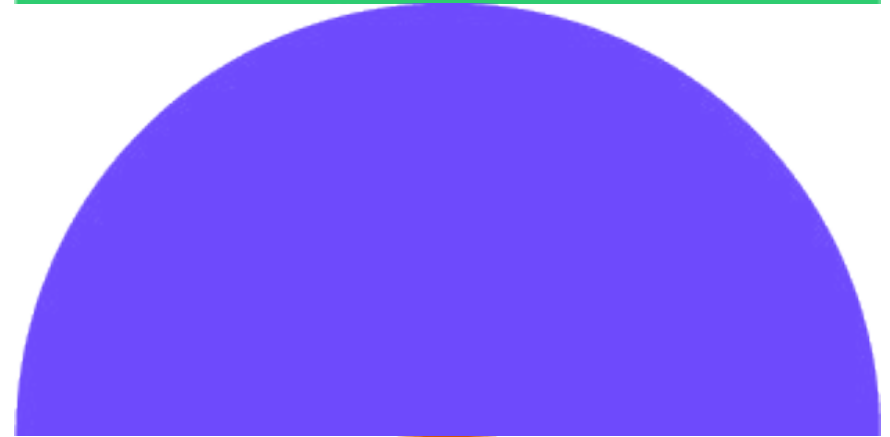
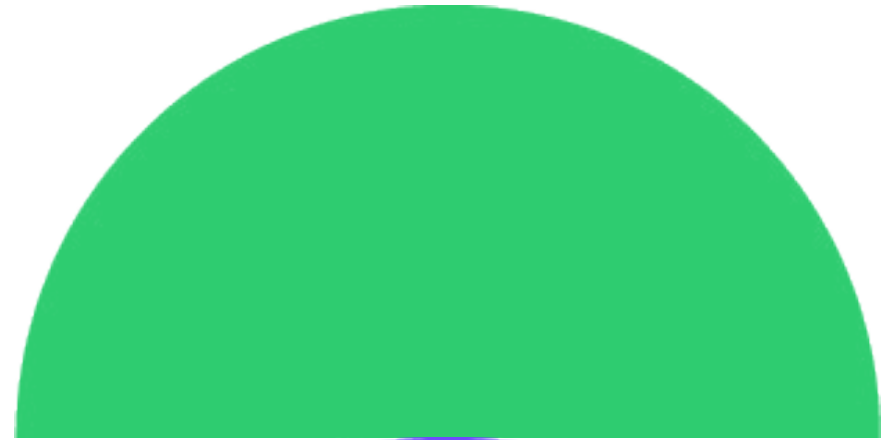
Features like Instant messaging allow for quick and easy contact for colleagues who know they can contact another team member for extra reassurance, quick conversations or call support. Plus, instead of trawling through a CRM, they can send a record to a colleague instantly via instant messaging.

## Live support

Features like CloudCall's Monitor and Whisper mean managers can jump on a call at the drop of hat to support their team and give real-time feedback, or use Barge to intervene if a call handler is struggling.

## Regular updates

Because all call updates and recordings are instantly updated in the CRM, colleagues can find out the latest information and view a contact's full history. Working on one unified communication platform together brings a feeling of oneness and team cohesion.



# WFH Security

While working from home is convenient and has many benefits, it also exposes individuals and businesses to a range of cyber security risks, so it's important to consider introducing or updating remote working security procedures.

Here are the top remote working security tips to ensure you and your staff are working from home safely:

## Use a comprehensive anti-virus and internet security software

Anti-virus suites take the hard work off your hands by offering automatic remote work security against a host of threats.

## Secure your devices

While you may trust yourself and your tech-savvy employees to keep themselves safe online, it's worth remembering that working from home means company computers are more likely to be exposed to young children and other members of employees' families.

## Invest in a web cam cover

Or, if your webcam is external, unplug it when not in use: Savvy hackers can easily access your webcam without permission, compromising your privacy.

## Use a VPN

VPN security can be enhanced by using the most robust possible authentication method.

## Secure your home Wi-Fi

One of the simplest ways to ensure cybersecurity for remote workers is to strengthen your home Wi-Fi network's security.

## Make sure that your passwords are strong and secure

Use passwords on all your devices and apps. Make sure the passwords are long, strong, and unique: at least 12 characters that are a mix of numbers, symbols, and capital and lower-case letters.

## Be alert to the dangers of phishing scams

Emails are essential for communication between colleagues. However, emails are also one of the easiest means of communication to exploit and compromise.

## Keep all software up to date

Patches and software updates often address potential security concerns.

## During video calls, be mindful of what might be in the background

You may also want to use functions such as the "blur background" feature if your platform has it. This can prevent people in your conferences from spying on objects in the background of your home, which can often include sensitive data about you or your clients.



## Security checklist for employers

If you're an employer considering remote work security best practices, ask yourself these questions:

- Is there documented work from home security policy?
- Do you have a BYOD (Bring Your Own Device) policy?
- Can you provide cyber security awareness training to employees?
- In particular, do you train staff to be alert to phishing attacks and how to avoid falling victim to them?
- Are you ensuring that staff use a VPN, and is this set up correctly and kept up to date with security patches?
- Is the platform you use for staff video teleconferencing secure with end-to-end encryption?
- Do you use a centralized storage solution – i.e. safe data storage in the cloud – and encourage staff to backup data regularly?
- Are company devices secured by company-approved anti-virus software?
- Do you encourage employees to have strong and safe passwords, and have you considered the use of a Password Manager?
- Are you encouraging the use of two-factor authentication to validate credentials?
- Do you use encryption software to protect company data by barring access to any unauthorized users?
- Are you advising staff to use corporate email solutions and not to rely on their own email or messaging accounts for the storage or transmission of personal data

## Embracing tomorrow's world of work

With the right technology and tools available, planning for a more remote and diverse workforce seems straightforward. But all human aspects of the future of work should be considered in relation to wider technological developments. It will become increasingly essential to factor in AI's ability to touch and steer every element of the workforce. And it will prove invaluable to gain a deeper understanding of AI's limitations, capabilities and how it may integrate with existing systems. Likewise, grasping the potential of new communications technologies and how they may integrate will ensure the vital connectivity needed as we look towards a more remote world of work.





There's no easier or more cost-effective way to unlock your company's data and unleash its potential than CloudCall. Getting under the hood is no longer reserved for enterprise-level businesses, every business can and should be exploring their data story and making the most of the valuable steer on strategy that it provides.

**Discover what CloudCall can do for you.**

**CLLOUDCALL.COM**

