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Hybrid Work Done Right:
4 technology investments for small &
mid-sized businesses to make today



So where do small & mid-sized businesses start?

This eBook will walk you through **four key areas** to focus on for a successful shift to hybrid work and the technology investments needed to support them.

For most small and medium-sized businesses, there was no time to prepare an exit-strategy from the office in 2020 or an entry-strategy for remote work: it was reactive, ad-hoc and immediate. Where some companies had the basics to enable a remote workforce, others simply didn't and were left taking a patchwork approach to their most immediate needs. In spite of this, remote work was successful, and businesses, resilient.

Now, as Canada's businesses reopen, employers are again facing tough choices about their work model. This time, as it relates to **hybrid work** – an arrangement that more than three-quarters of Canadians want once the pandemic recedes. However, according to a recent study by KPMG, 81% of those surveyed are concerned their company isn't ready or equipped to manage it.¹

OPERATIONS



Create flexibility
& growth

HR



Foster better collaboration
& culture

SALES



Deliver a better customer
experience

IT

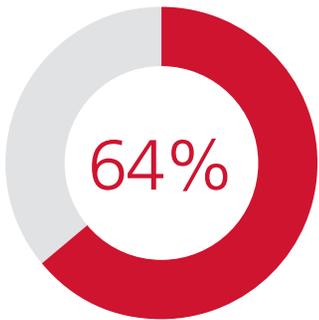


Support anywhere
operations

1. Digitize as many processes as possible to create more flexibility and growth

When shifting to a hybrid work model, it will be important for core business processes to be flexible, remote and as paperless as possible. Employees won't always be working simultaneously online or in-person together, so remove as many manual obstacles as possible to make sure core functions can be digitized and streamlined.

In the next 18 months



of small business owners and entrepreneurs will invest in solutions that help:

- employees work remotely
- automate core processes
- and/or allow existing automation to be less dependent on human intervention.²

But, according to a Salesforce survey, **nearly half of Canadian small businesses admit they don't know where to start** when it comes to these technologies³.

That's why small and mid-sized businesses should look for solutions that incorporate software and professional services, so they don't have to do it alone.



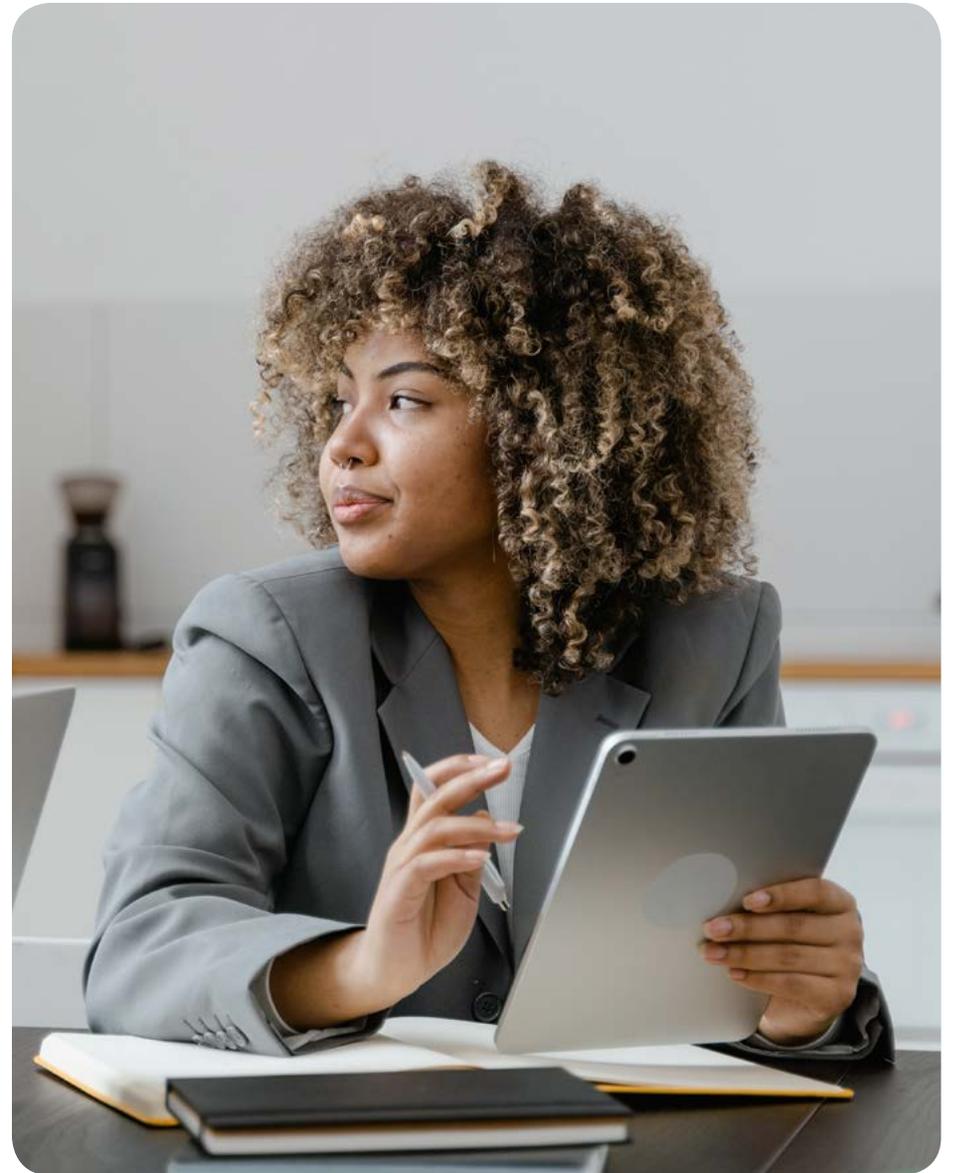


TECHNOLOGY INVESTMENT: DOCUMENT MANAGEMENT

An all-in-one document management solution like Ricoh's new Document Management Foundations is a great first step towards more digitized business processes like accounting, HR, sales or operations.

With Foundations, small teams can create up to four electronic filing cabinets in which to store, search and retrieve information that would otherwise require paper documents and manual workflows.

[Learn more >>](#)



2. Deliver a better, more profitable digital customer experience

Employees weren't the only ones affected by remote work – customers have also adjusted to a new, more remote and digital way of being served. And it's not a bad thing!

In fact, customer service has in many ways gotten better. Forrester's Canada 2021 CX Index⁴ results indicate that the quality of customer experience across Canadian brands remained stable and, in some cases, impressively **improved during the pandemic** – no small feat to accomplish in the face of so much disruption.

How did those companies do it? By doubling-down⁵ on investments in technology that simply made it easier and more convenient for customers to do business with them – something they'll continue to expect even after the pandemic recedes.

This means customers will be eager to have a blended experience that incorporates the best of both worlds: in-person and digital. They'll expect fast, seamless and easily available service on the channel that's most convenient to them – and small and medium sized businesses **can** make this happen **without** stretching their budgets.

As one of the most versatile and sought-after solutions during the pandemic, e-Signature will remain a must-have tool, for hybrid work and, importantly: customer service



76%

of consumers were initially driven to digital interactions with brands because of Covid



57%

will continue this behaviour because they appreciate the value

TECHNOLOGY INVESTMENT: E-SIGNATURE

With an e-Signature solution you can meet your customers where they are, whether that's remotely or in-person, and still get the deal signed, contract approved, or change order processed.

It's an easy and affordable way to invest in technology that not only elevates your customer experience (think: convenience) but also accelerates your time to revenue – making your business more profitable.

You don't just eliminate the hassle of signing contracts manually or in-person with electronic signatures, you also get the benefit of generating polished contracts and agreements that can be edited collaboratively to negotiate changes.

When it's time to sign, your teams can count on automated workflows to initiate updates and approvals so that nothing gets left behind.

Customers and partners will appreciate the flexibility and security of signing contracts from anywhere, while your employees become more productive with less manual paperwork. What's even better is that deals are closed quickly, agreements are signed easily, and projects are completed sooner – meaning you get paid faster.

[Learn more >>](#)



Take Salmon Arm Savings & Credit Union for example:

a local banking and credit union in BC that, fortunately, had revamped their mortgage renewal process just months prior to the start of the pandemic.

"Our process can now be done remotely, over the phone, and via electronic signing. We get the right paperwork, which is great for compliance, and the member experiences a fast and easy process [...] and the system allows us to continue to offer face-to-face meetings for those members who want that personal touch. It gives them the choice."

Tom O'Connor, Vice President of IT

3. Foster better learning, innovation and culture

Collaboration has never been a more widely used term than it has during the pandemic: and for good reason – while the world remained socially distanced, colleagues relied on virtual meetings, video conferencing tools and chat more than anything else to get work done.

And while this actually brought teams closer together, even from afar, interactions with distant networks have suffered significantly. This has created gaps in creativity and innovation as teams become increasingly siloed from one another remotely and knowledge-sharing becomes more difficult to achieve.

For hybrid collaboration to successfully foster learning, innovation and cultural growth the way in-person work once did, businesses will need to be intentional about the opportunities they create.



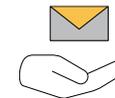
According to Microsoft's research⁶ collaboration in the traditional sense has never been greater:



Weekly meeting time has gone up **148%** for Teams users



66% more people working on Office documents



Emails have increased by **40.6B**

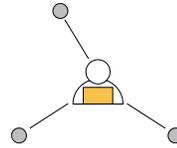


45% more Teams chats per person, weekly

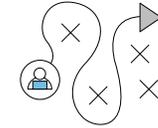
Without a plan to bridge these gaps, small & mid-sized businesses are at risk of:



1. Not attracting or retaining top talent



2. Losing much-needed innovation and knowledge-sharing



3. Stalling cultural growth

The way forward can be as simple as redefining workspaces into collaboration hubs and combining interactive white boards with the right software.

TECHNOLOGY INVESTMENT: COLLABORATION BOARD & SOFTWARE BUNDLES

With Ricoh's interactive whiteboards and software bundles, small and mid-sized businesses get an all-in-one solution that combines high-quality AV features like built-in cameras and speakers with inclusive software design for a whole new group participation experience.

Use the integrated software to encourage participants to share their ideas freely by adding notes simultaneously to any document on screen. And spend less time getting technology up and running or toggling through digital files, while also encouraging open feedback. Finally, share compelling presentations that can include content in multiple formats from documents to video and audio without skipping a beat.

[Learn more >>](#)



Consider Ontario's Peak Human, a holistic wellness clinic offering a range of health programs and services.

Founder and primary care physician, Dr. Sanjeev Goel instantly transformed his practice with a whiteboard and software bundle that helped to deliver a remote yet personalized and collaborative patient experience.

"This has allowed me to really duplicate that in-person patient encounter without losing too much quality and patients are loving it."

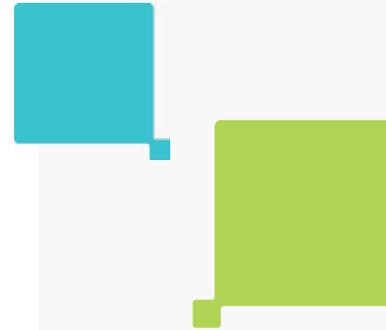
4. Support safer, more secure anywhere operations

Something many small and medium-sized businesses discovered during their rapid shift to remote work was the financial advantages that come from reduced physical space. But as more and more applications have shifted to the cloud, there are some obvious challenges for businesses to overcome.

With the average cost to recover from a security breach estimated at nearly \$27,000⁷ the savings made by being remote or even hybrid could very well disappear if data and network security aren't properly supported.

To adopt a truly functional hybrid workforce, in which employees can be empowered to achieve 'everywhere' operations, businesses must be capable of delivering consistent, secure network access. That means having the right level of IT skills and support to perform regular monitoring, patching and data backup activities.

But what if small and mid-sized businesses don't have that kind of personnel on staff?



According to StaySafeOnline.org, 71 per cent of data breaches happen to small businesses, and nearly half of all Canadian small businesses have been the victim of a cyber-attack.

TECHNOLOGY INVESTMENT: CLOUD SECURITY & DATA BACKUP SERVICES

If you're not in the business of IT security and infrastructure, then you source a service provider who is – because the demands of hybrid work will not ease up and a do-it-yourself approach just won't cut it anymore.

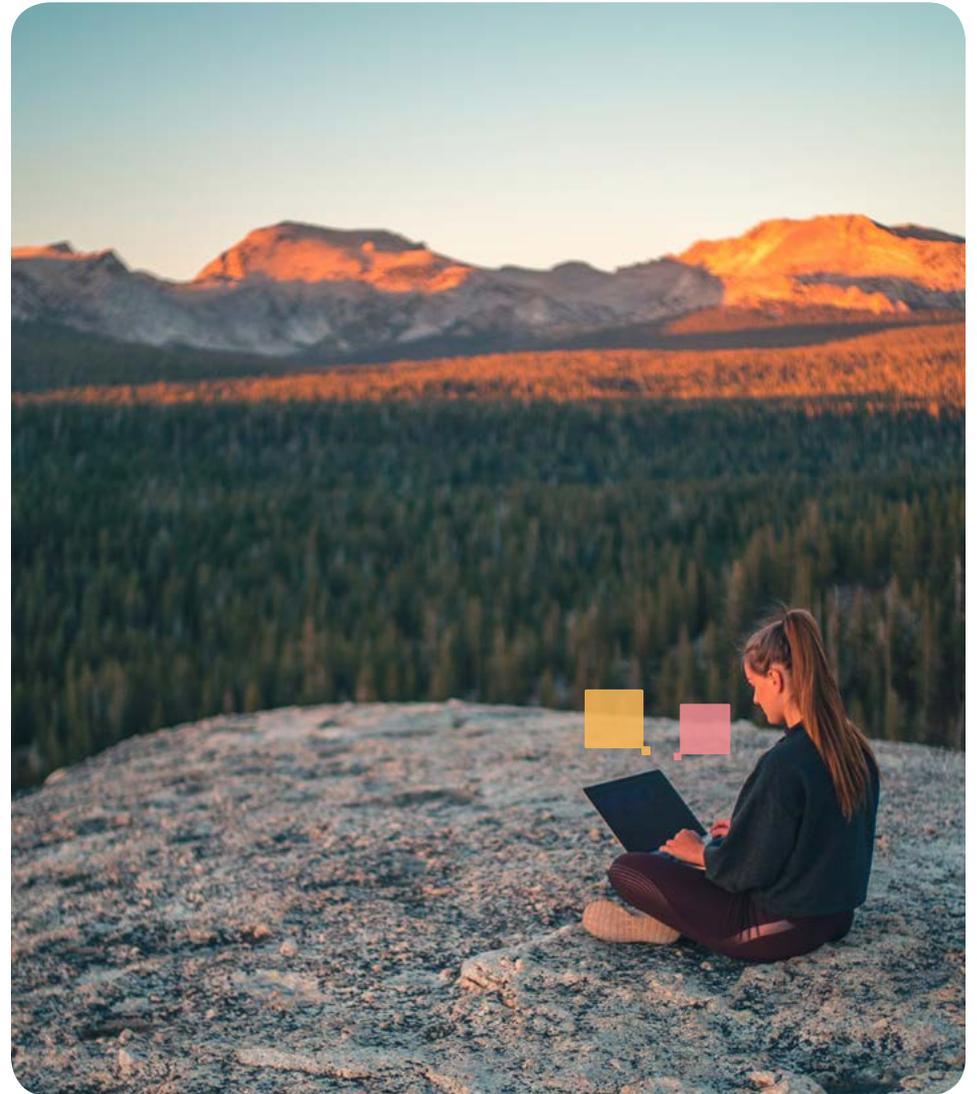
That's why Ricoh offers a range of as-a-service packages for Cloud, Security & Help Desk to keep your costs down while you leverage a team of experts. Whether it's migrating to the cloud, managing your IT help desk, or keeping your hybrid work environment secure and protected, Ricoh can help.

[Learn more >>](#)

CONCLUSION

A year ago, the average small and mid-sized business didn't have the time to prepare a remote work strategy – today, the story and the landscape of technology solutions, is different. **There's a unique opportunity right now for businesses to seize this moment in time, redefine their processes, workflows and technologies and actually prepare for a shift to hybrid work.**

If your business has spent any amount of time working remotely this year, then you've likely already made some investments towards your hybrid strategy. Think: video conferencing, online collaboration tools, secure VPN access, and even hardware like laptops. But remote work and hybrid work are not the same thing. And it's important to know that a true hybrid work strategy will go much further than simply the act of working remotely. With employee, customer and partner expectations at stake it's no longer enough to just make-do.



NEXT STEPS

There's never been a better time to plan for and invest in the future of work. Take a first step with an e-Signature solution, or a second and third with more comprehensive packages like collaboration boards, document management or cloud security – you can elevate your employee, customer and partner experiences while also benefitting your business.

To learn more about what's right for you, book a call with one of our Solution Consultants.

Contact Us



1 <https://home.kpmg/ca/en/home/media/press-releases/2021/05/canadians-like-hybrid-model-concept-workplace-reboot.html>

2 & 3 <https://www.itbusiness.ca/news/cisco-survey-accelerated-digitization-of-canadian-smbs-could-add-70b-to-countrys-gdp-by-2024/116379>

4 <https://go.forrester.com/press-newsroom/forresters-canada-2021-customer-experience-index-nearly-90-of-brands-cx-quality-remained-stable-or-improved-during-the-pandemic/>

5 <https://www.forbes.com/sites/christopherelliott/2021/01/28/this-is-how-the-pandemic-improved-customer-service/?sh=28b95fa248dd>

6 <https://cloudamcdnprodep.azureedge.net/gdc/gdcdff7xKv/original>

7 <https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/worklab/work-trend-index/hybrid-work>

8 <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/201020/dq201020a-eng.htm>

9 <https://cloudamcdnprodep.azureedge.net/gdc/gdcdff7xKv/original>