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TOP LINE

Amid an increasing number of COVID-19 lockdowns, remote workplace collaboration is here. This includes businesses which typically rely on their own networks to maintain cyber security. As corporate networks are linked to personal computers and at-home internet infrastructure, information security takes on a new meaning. Workplace collaboration tools previously more synonymous with Silicon Valley start-ups are suddenly essential to business continuity and productivity on a broad scale. Widespread application of these resources and tools is keeping the global economy functioning even as it highlights the need for vigilance in cyber security practices. Businesses must ensure policies and procedures for securing data are clear, established, and followed as networks become increasingly dispersed.

Question to Consider: How can businesses maintain cyber security amidst an exploding remote workforce and increasing reliance on collaborative online tools?

COVID-19: THE NUMBERS

COVID-19 continues to spread as the number of [U.S.](#) deaths are not predicted to peak until mid-April, even as the virus spreads in the southern U.S., with a suburb of New Orleans, [Louisiana](#), being particularly hard hit. UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson remains in intensive care and [Japan](#) declared a state of emergency set to expire on 6 May 2020.

U.S.: [387,547](#) cases / [12,291](#) deaths / [20,395](#) recovered (as of 7 April, 7:00pm EST)

Global: [1,414,738](#) cases / [81,259](#) deaths / [298,642](#) recovered (as of 7 April, 7:00pm EST)

BEYOND THE NOISE

Cyber Security: Workplace collaboration tools are suddenly [vital](#) to productivity as the number of teleworkers has exploded amid COVID-19 lockdowns. Yet, such a rapid transition presents a myriad of risks. Popular video chat platform Zoom has been plagued by [criticism](#) of its security as [hacking](#) incidents have risen. Telework also frequently relies on at-home network and computer security presenting a challenge to information security.

- **Secure Data:** Establish clear policies and procedures for online chats and video calls. Remind workers to be cautious of clicking on links from unfamiliar sources. Require consistent password updates, use of VPNs, and resources with vetted end-to-end encryption. Instruct employees to disable applications such as Siri and Alexa during calls; power off all devices not in use for sensitive calls.

Workforce Health: Virus complications and deaths are affecting young and old Americans alike; however, [health](#) is emerging as a more significant factor than age in COVID-19 complications. Mounting evidence suggests that the vast majority of hospitalizations ([73%](#)) and deaths ([94%](#)) are the result of cardiovascular complications linked to obesity, diabetes, and hypertension – regardless of age. Also at higher risk are individuals living in areas with high levels of [air pollution](#) prior to the pandemic, further emphasizing the importance of workforce health to business continuity.

- **Secure workforce health:** Consider the basic level of workforce health and availability of quality preventive care. Evaluate how health is incentivized among workforce. Identify policies and programs to encourage workforce health.

Transportation: Millions of workers in the food, agriculture, manufacturing, and transportation industries lack the luxury of working remotely. COVID-19 outbreaks have halted [production](#) at multiple U.S. meat processing plants and Amazon, Instacart, and Whole Foods workers have [walked](#) off the job. Disruption of the transportation sector would cripple already fragile supply chains and hinder the ability for businesses to provide goods and services that require transport.

- **Secure Transportation:** Consider the implications of strikes in the manufacturing and transportation industries. Evaluate how to prepare for difficulties in sourcing materials and equipment from domestic and international suppliers. Consider how to provide goods and services that cannot be delivered remotely.

TRUSTED RESOURCES: FOR NUMBERS & GUIDANCE

[Johns Hopkins University](#) – Coronavirus Resource Center

[World Health Organization](#) – COVID-19 Pandemic

[Center for Disease Control](#) – Coronavirus (COVID-19)

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