

Enable Remote Work for Your Customers:



7

Strategies for Success



GUIDE

Subscription commerce has completely transformed the way businesses operate. With access to enterprise-grade SaaS, employees can work from anywhere with a laptop or mobile device, and an Internet connection.

While it may be easier than ever for companies to buy software to support remote work, that doesn't guarantee success for providers. In today's digital economy, software is sold, not bought, meaning providers must take an active role in educating, engaging, and supporting buyers.

Best practices for how to enable customers to be successful with remote work solutions can be hard to come by, which is why we've collected seven strategies that are being used by some of the world's most successful providers. Each strategy below contains important advice and tips, and taken as a whole, they provide a practical roadmap to help you succeed.

1. Curate a small, highly targeted portfolio of remote work solutions

When you walk into a store and see the shelves stocked with products, it may seem like you've hit the jackpot; after all, the store is almost certain to have what you're looking for. That experience for B2B SaaS buyers, on the other hand, is completely different. When there are too many apps in a digital marketplace, buyers will quickly become overwhelmed.

That's why you need to start small and curate the choices that your buyers have. By offering a hand-picked selection of remote work applications, you are acting as an expert advisor, steering them to the tools that will most effectively address their pain points.

Here's the full approach—land, engage, expand—that you should take when building out your catalog of applications to support telecommuting:

Land:

Start with two or three cloud services that are essential, such as email, office productivity, cloud storage, and video conferencing. By sticking to these “anchor apps,” at least at first, you will be able to keep the value proposition simple.

This makes it easy for everyone, both internal stakeholders and buyers alike, to understand your offerings and see their value.

Engage:

After you see initial sales, you need to create stickiness by driving customer onboarding and engagement. Keep your customers informed with webcasts, tutorials, and access to a knowledge center where they can go to learn more about their solutions.

Expand:

Once buyers are onboarded, you can expand your catalog to include the next set of core remote work applications. These can include: cloud-to-cloud backup to protect against accidental file or e-mail deletion; endpoint security to protect laptops on home or public networks against malware; mobile device management to protect mobile devices; virtual phone systems and other unified communications as a service (UCaaS) tools; and virtual private networks for secure remote access to corporate systems.

As you evolve your remote work offerings with complementary services, you can significantly increase the revenue generated by your marketplace.



2. Build a compelling value proposition that appeals to remote work technology buyers

Never take the value of your solutions for granted. What may seem like an obvious benefit to you may not be as clearly understood by a potential buyer. Customers will understand the value of your remote work offerings when you clearly communicate why they are relevant to them and why they are different from competitive offerings.

Every strong value proposition must do three things:

Resonate:

- Buyers have to want and need what you're selling.

Differentiate:

- Buyers have to understand why you stand out from other available options.

Substantiate:

- Buyers have to believe that you can deliver on what you say.

3. Bundle remote work solutions with core services first, then other apps

Buyers love a good deal, which is why bundles are always popular. When it comes to B2B SaaS, however, a better first approach is to package apps with your core services. For example, a telecom provider packaged mobile broadband subscription—a core service—with a tablet device and Microsoft Office 365. This bundle generated 1,500 active users in only a few months.

App bundles can also make good offers, but you have to ensure that they do not overwhelm customers. For example, another large telecom provider offered a package which included several apps to enable telecommuting—including Office 365, Symantec, Teamlike, and Teamdisk—with its onboarding services. However, the bundle attempted to solve too many challenges simultaneously, making the offer too complex and the business use unclear.

As a result, many customers asked the telecom company if they could “unbundle” because they already had some of the apps offered in the package. When you leave your plan open to negotiation, it creates a complex, inefficient sales process.

The key to successful bundling is a commerce platform that makes it easy to create and remove bundles quickly and easily. Providers must have the ability to iterate on different app combinations, test them in the market, and change them accordingly.

4. Use a human touch to sell

The transition to remote work can be challenging for businesses, and buyers will most likely need extra help from skilled sales professionals and support teams. In fact, even when a provider offers a digital marketplace with a curated selection of remote work apps, more than 90 percent of first-time sales occur through offline channels, like call centers.

A cloud marketplace is still essential, however. These online stores can drive qualified leads to your sales team. Moreover, many customers will make additional self-service purchases once they feel comfortable using a marketplace, making the combination of online and offline channels a way to establish a solid foundation for organic up- and cross-sell opportunities.

5. Don't just sell features; sell holistic, customer-centric telecommuting solutions

Selling cloud-based remote work tools requires a different mindset. Instead of ticking off speeds and feeds, sales teams need to put potential customers, and their telecommuting challenges, first. That way, a sales professional can identify the best apps, or app bundles, to address these pain points.

When a customer understands the value that they are getting from their applications, a salesperson becomes a trusted advisor, a key factor in reducing customer churn, and driving future up- and cross-sell opportunities.

To sell cloud-based remote work tools effectively, it is crucial to:

- Listen first. You need a thorough understanding of who the customer is, what their business is about, and what their telecommuting pain points are. This will help you find the right solution to fit the right business challenge.
- Communicate clear return on investment (ROI) and total cost of ownership (TCO) savings of your remote work solutions.
- Become expert at handling objections that are unique to remote work solutions, including concerns related to security, data ownership, etc.

6. Make onboarding for remote work tools a top priority

Onboarding is helping your customers activate, configure, and potentially migrate information to their new cloud-based remote work applications. It is also essential to a successful SaaS sales practice.





Without onboarding, your customers are significantly less likely to use their apps. Because customers are usually unwilling to pay for something they do not use, ineffective or missing onboarding can lead to a churn rate of as much as 80 percent. It can also put a tremendous amount of pressure on your customer service team, who will have to deal with a steady stream of unhappy customers.

A successful onboarding program should include, at a minimum:

- Proactive onboarding emails that remind customers to activate their products, as well as highlight features and give periodic tips
- An online onboarding center, which can include FAQs, deployment guides, etc.
- Expert onboarding support delivered by a skilled customer service team

In addition to driving retention, successful onboarding also establishes trust with your customers and provides opportunities for upselling and cross-selling. Onboarding is so valuable that approximately three-quarters of businesses need this service, and are willing to pay for it.



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7. Keep free trials simple

Say the magic word—free—and buyers will flock to a product offer. When it comes to remote work solutions, however, making customers jump through a series of hoops just to access a trial is a sure-fire way to generate high drop-off rates. Employees want to start working, now.

A simple three-step activation that requires light registration (an email address and a password) is significantly more inviting. You can keep the momentum going by setting up a series of communications to engage with your customers as the trial progresses. This can drive anywhere from a 20 to 40 percent conversion rate from free to paid.

The Bottom Line

A large majority of companies are now using cloud-based remote work tools, but an increasing number are realizing that they need help to be truly successful. With these key strategies, you can not only sell more telecommuting solutions, but also help your organization become trusted technology advisors and the go-to source for the technology that your customers need to thrive, whether at the office or at a remote workspace.

For more information, visit www.appdirect.com.

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