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Amy Vetter • Dec. 28, 2020



The potential of remote work has long been a hot topic in many professions, but nobody could've predicted a pressure test for work from home (WFH) quite like the one 2020 has provided. The Covid-19 pandemic has forced everyone's hand when it comes to remote work, making mandatory what was once optional. Accounting firms have had to adapt to a WFH reality just like everyone else. While the circumstances have been far from ideal, this year has taught us a lot about remote

work. We'd all be wise to heed those lessons in the years that come, even when the

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in the past 12 months.

The Cloud is essential

There is no bigger takeaway from this year than that cloud-enabled software is vital for modern businesses. The cloud has always been billed as allowing you to work from any device, at any place, at any time. That's as true as it ever was, but the appeal now has added meaning. Working remotely isn't just a convenience during vacation or a way to appeal to prospective team members; It's also about keeping you afloat when coming to the office isn't possible. After 2020, we know that's not a hypothetical concern. All of your essential systems need to be cloud enabled. If they're not, you're tethering your business to a spot on the planet and weighing it down.

You need more than email

As workers are spread out across physical space, you need [ways](#) to keep them in touch with one another. Of course, 2020 has been the year of [Zoom](#), so I probably don't need to spend a lot of time explaining it. What you may have overlooked, though, is the need to create a hierarchy of communication methods. Email, the de facto method of digital written communication, can feel cluttered and formal for internal discussions. Having a chat app like Slack or Teams, or a text or SMS message thread, will increase communication and productivity while working remotely. Just make sure you delineate what is acceptable to chat as opposed to what requires a formal email.

Clients are adaptable

"Our clients won't go for it." That age-old expression is a classic excuse for keeping outdated practices. "Sure, we'd love to be forward-thinking," firm leadership says,

“But we fear it will have a negative impact on our clients.” Well, that excuse will no

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is a distant memory. At times, 2020 may have felt like a step back for your firm, but if you reflect on all this year has had to teach us, it will allow you to take many steps forward in 2021 and beyond.

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