

How Accenture Does IT

You don't need to be lonely working from home

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You're no doubt watching the news during the COVID-19 crisis. There's plenty of evidence that remote working is the new norm. Interviewees, advisors, even the news anchors themselves are presenting from their own personal spaces. This sneak peek into people's living arrangements reminds us of the downsides of working outside our familiar office environments. No more tech-filled conference rooms, no more fail-safe connectivity—and, strikingly, no more people. The remote in remote working has taken on a whole new significance.

Accenture recognizes that practicality and empathy is needed to find new ways of running our business that are sensitive to this new social isolation. Our leaders fully support our people in working from home during the pandemic. We have created an [elastic digital workplace](#) with the collaboration tools, robust network connectivity and advanced security procedures that make it happen. [Human resilience](#) relies on people's well-being and engagement to keep the wheels turning for every business. Open, ongoing communications are the right means to help people cope.



Tech tools can help

The good news is that today's tech can fast-track an active communications and collaboration strategy. For instance, we've seen an explosion of video conferencing within Accenture, even more so as our 500,000-strong workforce [operates remotely](#). On our internal Media Exchange platform we have a Do-It-Yourself video production tool that is fast replacing e-mails or conference calls as a means to communicate far and wide. The innovative tool helps us digitally keep in touch with teams and colleagues, bringing videos to life by enabling viewers to interact with elements like images, webpages or PDFs.

Then there's the collaborative benefits that come from working with [Microsoft Teams](#)—my colleague [Jason Warnke](#) has blogged about [what Accenture is doing in the last few months](#). We're helping our clients to take advantage of Teams in these difficult times, too. We created the [Teams Resource Center](#) to help executives make the fast, highly-informed decisions that keep their businesses working. And as our CEO Julie Sweet [mentioned recently](#): "We have a client who asked us literally to go from zero people using Teams to their entire 61,000 workforce in five days."

To improve communications during the coronavirus outbreak, Microsoft has offered premium Teams for the next six months. [1] The take up has been dramatic, with 12 million daily active users added in a single week—that's around 44 million users of Teams daily. [2] In the United Kingdom, Teams is being rolled out across the entire National Health Service (NHS) to help staff better communicate and collaborate around their responses to COVID-19. In this way, working remotely becomes much easier and more practical for doctors and NHS staff. [3]

Together, we can make it happen

As our joint venture, Avanade [4] described in a recent article, there is much IT leaders like me can do to make remote working successful. So, whether we are using video to enhance [business continuity](#), boosting employees' experiences using tools such as Teams, or taking a closer look at infrastructure, security and reporting capabilities, we can make sure people feel supported and in touch with their colleagues.

Global CIO teams know how to apply technology to help people excel. In these troubled times, we all have an opportunity to perform "on our best day." In my own team, we might be working in different locations but we're going to be working together, as one Accenture, long after this latest disruption has passed.



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Penelope Prett is Accenture's chief information officer and leads the company's global IT operations.

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[1] "Microsoft offers premium Teams for free over the next six months due to coronavirus," [Windows Central, March 4, 2020](#).

[2] As at March 18, 2020. "Microsoft Teams added 12 million daily active users in a single week amid the coronavirus crisis, bringing it up to 44 million total," [Business Insider](#).

[3] "Microsoft Teams to be rolled out across NHS in response to coronavirus," [digitalhealth, March 18, 2020](#)

[4] "How to make remote working work for employees and employers," [Avanade, March 6, 2020](#).

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