

Monthly Newswire

Welcome to our monthly newswire. We hope you enjoy reading this newsletter and find it useful.

July 2020

Improve your Wi-Fi for working from home

The TP-Link RE 220 is a cheap and easy way to extend the range of your home Wi-Fi.

Working from home during the lockdown has meant that many of us have discovered parts of our homes where the Wi-Fi signal is weak or even blocked completely by walls, furniture, etc. If your home office is too far from your router, you will have realised that Wi-Fi “dead zones” can be a real issue.

This is where a Wi-Fi range extender can help. Like the name suggests, it can help give your network a boost by receiving the signal from your router and then re-amplifying it further around your house. However, not all Wi-Fi range extenders are created equally. The TP-Link RE220 comes highly recommended and has performed consistently well in various independent reviews.

The RE220 is easy to set up. Simply plug it into a nearby electricity socket, press the WPS button to pair it with your home network and it'll begin broadcasting Wi-Fi around your house. It broadcasts on both 2.4GHz and 5GHz bands. The device itself isn't too bulky - it has an Ethernet port for connecting wired devices and is designed to offer consistent, reliable Wi-Fi performance.

The device supports up to 32 Wi-Fi devices at any one time - which should be enough for most households. It is also compatible with almost every Wi-Fi router, so it should be easy to set up.

The icing on the cake is the price. The TP-Link RE 220 is available from most electronics retailers (and online) for around £22.99.

Onboarding new employees, remotely

Onboarding new team members can be difficult and time consuming at the best of times. Now businesses are learning how to onboard remote employees during lockdown and social distancing.



The key to successfully integrating new team members who are working remotely is to offer a structured onboarding process. They may feel strange joining a company while working from home during the current phase of lockdown, so making them feel welcome is important.

Send a welcome package

Help new recruits feel part of a team by sending them a welcome package.

This might include a welcome letter from the CEO, IT equipment such as a laptop, mouse, keyboard, etc. In addition, try to include some branded goodies such as a coffee mug, headphones, or a t-shirt.

Introduce the team

Set up calls or virtual meetings with other team members during their first few days on the job to help them to get to know their new colleagues. It can also be helpful to assign a buddy to each new joiner. Their buddy can act as a key point of contact during their first few weeks in the role, helping them find out how to contact IT, find policy documents, or act as a sounding board as they learn the day-to-day aspects of their new role.

Communication tools

Ensure that your new recruits understand how to use all key communication tools. This might include company email, group messaging, video conferencing tools such as Skype, Zoom, etc.

Goals and expectations

In advance of their first day, new joiners should be provided with a schedule of training and onboarding sessions. Their manager should also set up a call on their first morning in the role, to set out goals and expectations. Regular one to one meetings should be set up to discuss progress, resolve potential issues and help the new joiner to get up to speed as quickly as possible. Doing these meetings over video conference can be more effective as it can be helpful to read the body language of a new starter so that you can identify whether or not they feel comfortable with the tasks that are being assigned - most communication is visual, after all.

Protecting your business against fraud

In these uncertain times, businesses are combatting an increased amount of fraud.

Throughout recent months, there have been widespread reports of an uptick in fraudulent websites, charity scams and fake emails purporting to be from banks, etc. This increase in fraudulent activity is being driven by opportunists who are attempting to take advantage of the confusion and change of circumstances resulting from the current global pandemic.



In order to protect against fraud, businesses should carry out a risk assessment. This should include an assessment of any IT risk that could arise through remote working. Cyber security measures should be put in place including firewalls, anti-malware and anti-virus software. This software should be kept up to date.

All staff should be trained on how to spot fraudulent emails and should be provided with clear guidelines on what to do if they spot a fraudulent email. For example – check email addresses to see if they look suspicious, report the suspicious email to the IT manager, delete the email, etc.

On the financial side of things, regular internal and external audits should be undertaken. Two signatures / authorisations should be required to sign off on payments from the business. Access to the firm's bank accounts, online banking facilities and payment systems should be restricted to a limited number of people. An authorisation / approval process should be put in place for all payments over a certain amount.

Computers, company mobiles, phones and devices should all be password protected. All staff should be trained on how to create a secure password and a process should be put in place which means that all passwords are updated on a regular basis.

Even if you implement these measures, your business could still be the victim of fraud or cyber crime. Make sure that you have appropriate insurance policies in place so that your business is protected against any losses incurred from crimes such as fraud.

Helping your employees feel safe as they go back to the workplace

As we emerge from lockdown and return to the workplace, managers will need to ensure that employees feel safe.

Over the coming weeks and months, many businesses will return to some form of normal operations. This means that staff will begin to return to offices, factories and other places of work. Managers will need to help their people back into their work routine.

It's only natural that employees will feel uneasy about going back to their place of work. Employers can help by keeping up to date with the latest government guidelines. These guidelines should be communicated to all staff on a regular basis so that everyone is aware of the relevant policies and procedures. This in itself can help to calm people's nerves as it demonstrates that the firm is implementing the latest health and safety recommendations and is taking their wellbeing seriously.

As ever, communication is key. Managers should have open conversations about personal protective equipment (PPE), respecting social distancing guidelines, etc. Some employees may have different views on what safety precautions are necessary in the workplace. As such, the management team should create appropriate training materials and deliver training to all staff so that everyone knows what is required of them. It is important to remind everyone that they have a responsibility to others and that if everyone follows the guidelines, then risks to staff and customers will be minimised.

Business premises should be set up to comply with social distancing guidelines. This may include setting out floor markings to encourage social distancing, setting up workstations that are a good distance apart and putting screens in place where customer interactions take place. Businesses will also need to put an appropriate cleaning regime in place in order to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

The UK Government has issued a number of guides to help business to return to work safely. These are freely available on www.gov.uk