

10 essential tips and tools for mobile working



Anywhere working brings with it a whole host of benefits, from better networking to happier employees, cost savings to increased productivity. But how do you go about getting mobile?

At Microsoft's recent Anywhere Working small business mini-summit, attendees and guest speakers shared their top tips and tricks for successful flexibility.

1. **The right priorities.** Anywhere working isn't about abolishing the office, or squeezing more out of employees. It's about optimising productivity, providing better balance and getting out and meeting people. Anywhere working should be focused on delivering flexibility and variety, rather than exchanging the shackles of the office for the isolation of home working.
2. **Support and advice.** 'Running your own business can be one of the loneliest things you can do,' says Paul Kelly of [Your Business Community](#). Remote working is all well and good but you need to make sure you don't become disconnected. Shared workspaces are great places to meet fellow small business owners and LinkedIn and [MeetUp](#) are great for finding local networking groups in your area. It's also worth checking out if your local authority hosts events and runs groups to support local business.
3. **Somewhere to work.** We all know that Harry Potter was partially written in coffee shops, but it's not just writers who can benefit from the caffeine and free Wi-Fi. If you haven't got a co-working hub like [Central Working](#) nearby, then coffee shops are good alternative for somewhere to work and open yourself to serendipitous networking.
4. **Email in the cloud.** 'I'm a Microsoft house,' says Clare Findlay of [Purple Demand](#), 'and it still amazes me that I can get my emails in different places every day.' [Office365](#) offers cloud-hosted email, meaning you get a business-class, professional email account that you can access no matter where you are or what device you're on, as long as you have access to the internet.



5. **Wherever-you-are Wi-Fi.** If you're lucky enough to live in London then finding free Wi-Fi shouldn't be a problem, but further afield, you might need some alternatives. The easiest option is tethering – this means using your smartphone as hotspot, which you connect your device to (just be sure your data allowance can withstand the usage). Alternatively, BT has hotspots nationwide that you can use on a pay-as-you-go basis, or [Boingo](#) offers a membership-style alternative.
6. **The right device(s).** What you use depends on what you do. Many attendees said that whatever mobile device they used, they'd keep their desktop for ergonomic reasons – they're easier to work on for long periods and it's good to have a base set up for periods of intense concentration. That said, when you are on the go, you need a device that syncs all your files and apps and lets you do everything you would on your standard PC. [The Surface Pro 3](#), for example, is designed for exactly that: to help you be as productive as possible.
7. **Cloud storage.** Storing your thoughts on the go and sharing documents with colleagues are top priorities for small business owners if our attendees are anything to go by. Several recommended [OneNote \(which is free\)](#), [OneDrive and SharePoint](#) as top tools. Lucky then that an Office365 Business Premium subscription gets you 1TB of OneDrive storage space for each user.
8. **Reliable communication.** Breaking down the walls of the office can create new, invisible barriers between employees. You need to make particular effort to ensure everyone feels part of the team and connected to the day-to-day of the business, wherever they are. [Skype and Lync](#) are great for video calls and instant messages to help bring that 'water cooler' feel back to an anywhere working business.
9. **Security.** Just because your employees are free to roam, it doesn't mean your data should be too. Take precautions and think about where your data is stored, what protection your employees' devices have and what encryption policies you have for data both at rest and in transit. [Windows 10](#), for example, lets you sandbox applications, meaning you don't have to worry about containerising your employees' devices.
10. **The right mind set.** Finally, anywhere working won't work for you unless you embrace it and lead by example. So be sure to measure results, not presenteeism; respect employees' boundaries and don't use their connectivity as an excuse to overwork them; and set up regular online meetings and huddles so that virtual workers don't feel they're missing out on opportunities or information.

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