

A woman wearing a blue hard hat and a black headset with a microphone is looking down at a piece of equipment in a factory setting. The background is blurred, showing other workers and industrial equipment.

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The remote support solution speeds up work, improves its quality, and significantly saves on travel and production downtime costs. There are many benefits, but where to start?

Endless possibilities

The possibilities provided by augmented reality have been quickly identified and adopted, for example, in marketing, sales and service sectors, and more and more imaginative solutions are constantly emerging. Numerous remote support solutions for installation and maintenance needs are also available on the market. Suppliers range from Microsoft to startups. Some solutions are very light and may even be downloaded onto a mobile device from the App Store or Google Play. However, their functionality is not always guaranteed. At the other end of the spectrum, there are high-level data security solutions that can be seamlessly integrated into your business.

How do I choose the right solution?

Research institutes such as Forrester, ABI Research and many others have found that remote support solutions improve productivity and customer satisfaction. It seems obvious that enterprises who are serious about their business and want to develop their operations have at least made a mental decision to implement a remote support solution.

The question remains, how do you choose the right remote support solution for your company's specific needs? Does choosing a remote support solution differ from purchasing a cloud service for your business? The location of sensitive data is particularly important. Is your data stored in a public cloud or are you able to store it in your own data center? There are differences between remote support solutions and their providers, and not only when it comes to data location.



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Architectural considerations

If you decide to use a remote support solution, you should take a moment to consider your enterprise architecture: how well does the solution fit with your business architecture, for example, in terms of processes and information architecture? Furthermore, how adaptable is the solution to the target environment? The starting point is to think about how data is currently being moved and compiled within the company and how it is accessible to those who need remote assistance.

It is also essential for the organization to be able to locate the installation and maintenance problems. Are the problems related to a particular product or part thereof, a particular customer or customer group, a geographical area, or perhaps particular service personnel? How can the remote support solution save and reuse solutions to recurring problems? Each maintenance operation provides a valuable opportunity for the organization to improve its operations and the quality of its products.

Once you have considered your current situation and objectives, you can determine whether the new system – the remote support solution – will benefit your business. If so, the next step is to integrate your company's IT and see which of the available solutions best suits your company's technological architecture. This is how you get business and IT on the same page. For example, if user management has been defined as part of the application

architecture, there is no point in reconsidering it, instead, it is best to find a suitable remote support system that integrates with this solution.

You should also consider whether you are actually choosing a platform rather than a finished product. A platform in which all the basic functionalities are already implemented, but which integrates with other systems of your company and easily transforms to support your business.

Carefully considering the requirements of both business and IT right from the start will deliver the best results. An individual solution that is isolated from the rest of the system can turn out to be unbeneficial and remain largely unused. That is why it is essential that the remote support system integrates seamlessly with your business infrastructure.

Ensuring benefits through pilots

Proper architectural planning does not mean that an experimental culture should not be supported. It is only through piloting that you can know how well the system really fits into the everyday lives of people who use it at work. That is why all relevant actors should be involved in the piloting phase.

You should start with the end user - the service person on the field. Those who oppose anything new are not always the best fit for a pilot. Instead, it is advisable to include, for example, young people who value modern tools and an evolving work environment. On the other hand, once their interest is piqued, the most tech-resistant naysayers provide the best support for the deployment of new solutions. Either way, the most important thing is to find people who are ready to invest in the pilot and to provide feedback on their experiences.

While it is traditional to delay reading the instructions until something breaks or someone's blood pressure shoots through the roof, it is a good idea to carefully instruct the test users on how to use the remote support solution and to provide them with self-study material, such as videos or a traditional manual.

During the pilot, it is advisable to actively collect feedback, which is also valuable to the application provider. The user should never be left alone during the pilot, or even after the pilot – that is why you need to make sure that service provider's support is easily available during the pilot.

Everyone knows how frustrating it is to use an application that doesn't have a user-friendly and intuitive interface. In addition, a remote support solution is often used in an environment that is anything but easy – heat, cold, humidity, dust and noise are commonplace for the users of these solutions. It is quite clear that poor usability in such a challenging environment will increase the resistance to change and make it more likely for the pilot to remain short-lived. Therefore, it is worthwhile to pay attention to the user interface and think about it in

the context of the environment in which it will be used.

Installation work often requires two hands. That is why the application should also work with smart glasses in addition to tablets and smartphones. It is also natural that the remote support solution supports all leading operating systems – Android, iOS and Windows.

Deployment

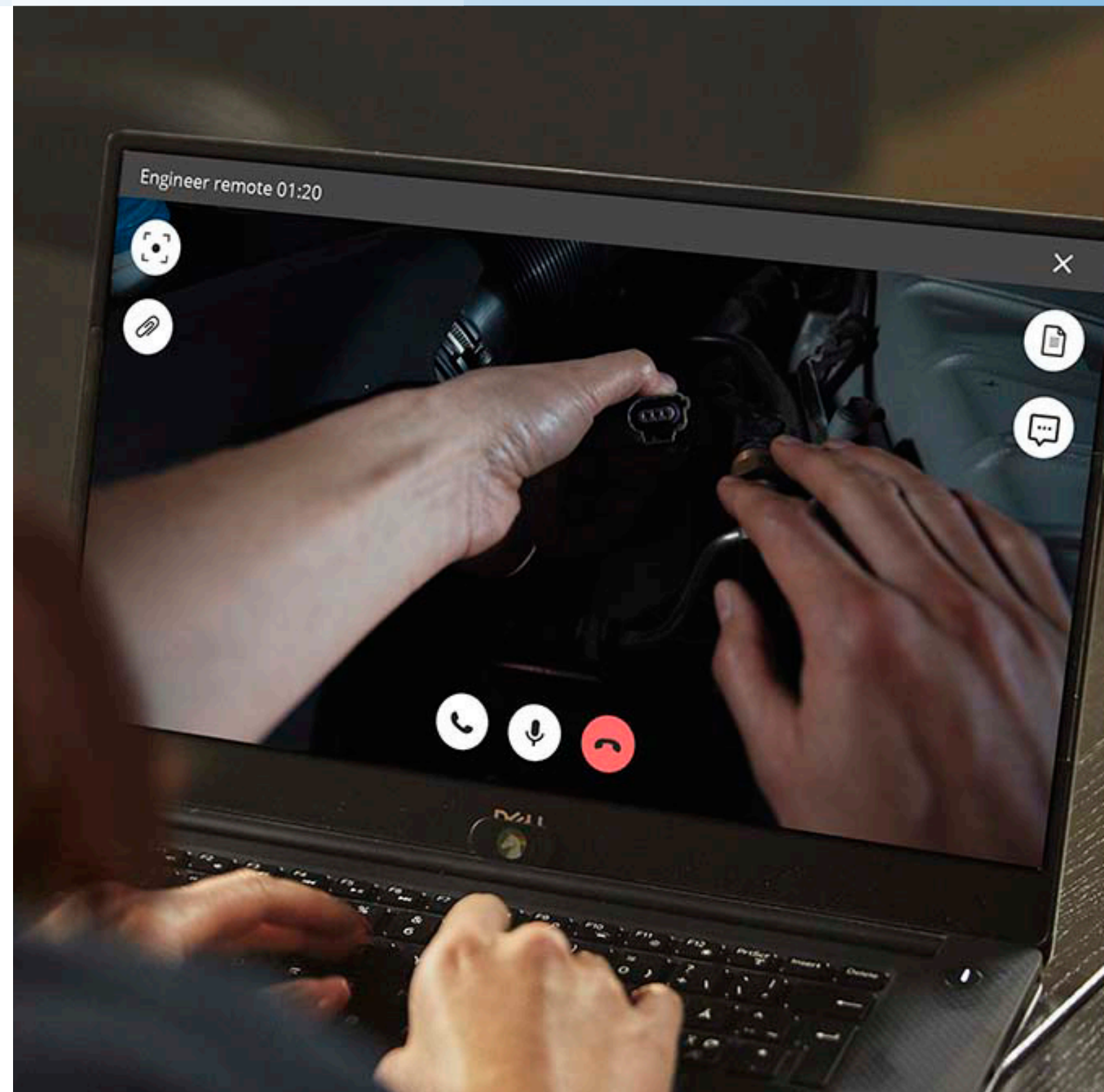
What if the remote support solution turns out to be functional and beneficial for the business? Does the selected service scale from a few users to thousands of users? Does the geographical location limit the use of the service in the form of delays or data placement? What if the connection for voice and video is weaker than normal? Will the service still work, though possibly by transmitting slightly lower quality images? It is important to ensure in advance that the situations described above do not pose a problem once the solution is deployed.

The company's lawyers will also start taking an interest in the project in the rollout phase, at the latest. The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) became effective in the EU on 25 May, 2018. The law also applies to remote support solutions. It is advisable to discuss the policies and procedures regarding the processing of personal data with the service provider. You can also take a look at your own GDPR arrangements at the same time.

Choosing the right service provider

After considering the relevant details, you can move back to the bigger picture – the service provider. Is the service provider a startup who has managed to develop a versatile solution with the help of investors, but whose sales are falling short of expectations? What will happen to the remote support solution if the company suddenly exits the market? And what if the solution is one of many services offered by a large software company? How keen will they be to help you when problems arise?

During the pilot, it is advisable to actively collect feedback, which is valuable to the company, but also to the application provider.



Conclusion

Today, remote support solutions are part of the business of many companies. There are many things to consider when choosing a remote support solution. The decision should not be made lightly. You should carefully consider what kind of solution will best support your business now and in the future.

Making the right decision has the potential to improve your business in many ways. It is therefore a good idea to consult the service provider and discuss how the benefits could be confirmed, for example, by piloting.

In summary, consider at least the following when choosing a remote support solution:

- How well the solution is suitable for the company's business architecture, such as the processes to be followed and the information architecture.
- How information is currently being moved and collected in the company, and how it is available to those in need of remote support.
- How can a remote support solution easily store solutions to recurring problems and reuse them when a problem recurs?
- If the remote support solution improves on an existing situation, the next step is to consider which of the available solutions is best suited to the technology architecture selected in the company.
- Is there a ready-made product for your needs or do you need an integrated platform for your systems?
- Trial use; try to find people who are willing to invest in the trial and get feedback on their experiences.
- Make sure you get easy support from your supplier as part of the pilot.
- It is worth paying attention to the user interface and thinking about it from the perspective of the conditions of the operating environment.
- For hands-free work, the app should also work with smart glasses in addition to tablets and smartphones.
- It is advisable to discuss with the supplier the issues related to the processing of personal data and how they have been considered in the solution.
- Also get to know the supplier yourself, whether it is a start up or a larger software house.

Contact us

If you need support and more information about the remote support solution, we're happy to help. You can visit our website or contact sales@softability.fi directly.

Softability designs, implements and tests smart applications for industrial and medical device manufacturers. We can implement both integrated software for hardware as well as cloud service solutions with user interfaces for different types of devices.

Our XR Studio develops [Augmented Reality \(AR\), Mixed Reality \(MR\) and Virtual Reality \(VR\) applications](#) for mobile phones, tablets and wearable devices like Microsoft HoloLens, smart glasses and VR headsets.

Our [XReach solution](#) also enables live-video remote support.

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