

How lockdown changed remote working tech

These remote working tools have incorporated lessons learned in lockdown and become better products as a result. Now that we're back to working from home for the foreseeable, it's a good time to get downloading.

On Tuesday last week, Prime Minister Boris Johnson advised that anyone able to work from home should do so, as the UK prepares for a second coronavirus spike. And in fact, it looks like remote working – or at least 'hybrid working' – is where most companies are headed. We've all learned a lot about how to work well outside of the office environment over the last few months – perhaps no one more than the efficiency experts behind Klaxoon, Serene and Slack. Whether you're struggling with distractions or feeling isolated from your colleagues, you might be interested in how these three apps have developed in line with consumer feedback.

Klaxoon: introducing Board, a new visual standard for collaborative work

Since 2015, the smartwork pioneers at [Klaxoon](#) have been developing a full suite of collaborative tools to help teams work as efficiently as possible, whether in person or online.

Their latest program, [Board](#), launches this Autumn. It's the product of 5 years of experience – and a whole bunch of feedback from thousands of

organisations for whom working from home is now the standard.

Like the rest of Klaxoon's roster, it is 'simple, inclusive, and promotes participation'. However, it also takes into account the urgent need to work differently, the emergence of new management practices, and the need to make long video conferences as inspiring and engaging as they can be.

Board offers a visual interface that is compatible with all types of content and formats. There are hundreds of ready-to-use meeting templates, and unique videoconferencing functions. The team at Klaxoon are firm believers in using visual management to boost efficiency, so Board allows for an easy transition between writing, speaking, video and imagery. The end result: an online space that emulates office workspace as authentically as possible.

According to Matthieu Beucher, CEO and Founder of Klaxoon, "Board was designed based on various experiences of teams that had to work remotely during lockdown, in order to provide real solutions to our new hybrid work model."

"We drew inspiration from the needs of companies and existing work methods in order to develop a unique, complete, and innovative product. We also observed and integrated new methods of communication and interaction in young communities that are producing incredible content."

[Discover Board](#)

Serene: dialing *back* on team visibility

One of several initiatives from Oxford's Venture Harbour, Serene helps its users achieve maximum productivity. When using the 'macOS app for laser focus', people report feeling very productive 2.1x more often than normal – thanks to

software that helps you plan your day and block distractions, and a beautiful interface designed to aid focus.

Though the program was developed prior to the pandemic, Serene's developers have certainly risen to the challenge raised by the now near-universal need to work from home.

According to Venture Harbour CEO Marcus Taylor, Serene "actually dialled back on team visibility features" in anticipation of more widespread remote working.

"In January, our roadmap was heavily focused on building features that helped team members and managers get insight into what was distracting team members and help encourage each other to be more productive" Marcus tells me.

"As we went into lockdown this felt too invasive and inappropriate, so we shifted to focus more on how to make it easier for individuals to be more productive."

Designed with entrepreneurs, writers and designers in mind, Serene helps its users focus organically; the emphasis is on blocking social media, focus music, and countdown timers, rather than warnings from the boss.

"Our key insight was that users who started the day with a clear plan were significantly more productive than those who didn't." Marcus continues.

"We therefore completely redesigned Serene in March/April to make it easier and faster for people to plan their day with a target number of 'productive hours' per day. Since then we've seen the average number of 'Serene minutes' per user increase significantly."

[Discover Serene](#)

Slack: new Workflow Builder templates and further integration with Atlassian

Instant messaging stalwart [Slack](#) has been around for a while, but is now the means of communication for colleagues postcodes – rather than desks – apart.

Alongside publishing a series of webinars and blog posts on [efficient remote working](#), the self-professed ‘students of the way people work together’ have adapted their [Workflow Builder](#) tool to make working life under lockdown as easy as possible.

The improvements allow users to update teammates on their status, approve requests quickly and receive feedback without having to organise a meeting. On top of this, teams are reminded when it’s time for their daily huddle, and also prompted to take breaks throughout the day.

Slack has also [embarked on a new chapter](#) in its partnership with Atlassian – the ‘industry leader in collaboration and project management software’ behind [Jira Cloud](#), [Trello](#) and [Confluence Cloud](#).

Slack CEO Stewart Butterfield says,

“By building deeper integrations across our platforms and providing seamless access to the Atlassian product suite from Slack, we’re making it even easier for teams to use our tools together and work faster, no matter where they’re located.”

The nature of work is evolving – but, luckily, these smartwork startups aren’t far behind.

[Discover Slack](#)

