



How To Make Remote Collaboration

In The 'Next Normal' Work For Everyone.





Regardless of when a vaccine is found or how we get our societies back to normal, millions of people around the world are taking part in an unprecedented experiment, and there is no going back. The social experiment that we are conducting will change not only how we live and interact with one and other but also how we work. Whether you work in Fortune 500 company, as part of a big team, or you are a consultant that works project to project, change is here.

Overnight, it appears that all of us have been forced to embrace the ubiquitous conference call for everything from kids' karate lessons to multimillion-dollar financing meetings. For the casual observer it could appear that video conferencing took over the world overnight, but this is a technology that has been waiting in the wings for a long time!

-
- **But is this the new normal?**
 - **Are we forever going to spend endless hours in front of our screens and completely work in a remote and virtual environment?**
 - **How will businesses, and work, evolve to cope with the challenges we face today?**

Did you know?

That the first video conference technology dates to the audio wires of the 1870s and Bell Lab's 'video phone' from 1927? From the Jetsons to Dick Tracy, popular culture has tried to visualize what video calls would look like and what efficiencies they would bring to our communication methodologies.



There's a reason why conference calls didn't take over the world decades ago.

Is it really a video call if no one is sharing their video?

My experiences are that we all get on a call with one another to turn off video and just talk over each other. I get it, we don't need to share our cluttered home offices, annoyed spouses complaining in the background and pets trying to get attention. But at the same time, video calling is offering us this promise of being connected to individuals, which won't occur when we just revert to the dial-in number scenarios of the past. So, we must ask the question, if no one wants to turn on their video has anything changed? Do we really care about the video part of video conferencing?

Video calls are more tiring than real life.

Is it just me or am I more drained after a day of staring at the screen, jumping from one call to another? It turns out that on a video call your brain works harder to interpret non-verbal cues like body language and tone

of voice. We need to pay more attention to get the same result, which means that we burn more energy. Add in the strange type of dissonance that most people feel when trying to communicate on these calls, the awkward pauses and difficulty in expressing your idea visually, and we're left with greater exhaustion and feelings of separation.

Hard to focus.

You're not just imagining it. It is scientifically harder to focus and give attention on a standard video conference than it is for in-person meetings. The latest research shows that talking hands-free on a cell phone impairs driving whereas talking to a physical person in a car does not. University of Utah professors found that conference calls slowed driver's reaction times and increased their risk of crashing due to an effect known as inattention blindness. So, does this mean that we're all just 'drunk driving' our way through video conference calls?

- Is it really a new medium, or more of the same?
- Are we really getting our point across or are we struggling more and more to do the same thing?
- If you were to solve a complex problem, would you rather meet on a conference call or meet face to face?



"For context, like many, I'm about two months into #WFH. I don't know about you, but something is missing, even though I've loved my experience working remotely and finding that my coworkers and I are collaborating quite nicely with our good ol' instant-messaging platform and Zoom. So, what's lacking? I want to say I'm missing the collaboration "experience." What do we want "an experience" to be? How do we bring a community element and human nature to all these tech innovations?"

Leah McCann at rAVe pubs, May 2020.

The simple answer to many is that we need to meet face to face (or find better solutions to bridge it when we simply can't). Forget the social interaction, relationship building and the evolution of our species that demands face to face interaction – but the multi-dimensional nature of face to face conversations are not going to be replaced by clunky video conference technology that really hasn't changed much in decades.

The Hybrid Solution

The reality is, the 'new' or even 'next' normal is not sustainable for a lot of people and a lot of tasks that we professionals face daily. Not every conversation and problem can be parceled into a video conference call and not all complex problems can be solved in the standard

30 or 60 minute meeting blocks. **Many researchers are already warning us that problem solving and creativity will suffer when teams are isolated from one another.**

For us to reap the rewards of transitioning to remote work, without suffering from the consequences, we need to find a new balance. This balance must address 3 key drivers for success:

- 1. The need for social interactions**
- 2. A focus on engagement between remote workers**
- 3. A new set of hardware and software solutions that allow teams to create as if they were in the same room**



Wants versus needs: can we have both?

Ideally, we want to spend less time on commutes and pointless travel, and work from home as much as possible. We are going to have to deal with staggered openings, where only a percentage of the workforce can be on premises at any given time, and social distancing is maintained. We will want flexible spaces that can be used for many different purposes and can be re-configured easily. A lot of companies will reduce their real estate footprint, or maybe create more, smaller satellite spaces. Satellite spaces that could be used in the *'office-as-a-hotel'* model, where remote teams can come in ad-hoc and use the space when necessary. Small, core teams, will connect with a larger remote group and be able to work efficiently. Implementing easy to use Interactive Whiteboards that allow users to connect to their content, and act as a hub for other in-room peripherals like conference phones and projectors will allow teams to easily re-configure space as required.

Forget the home office, we need to transition to the Home Boardroom

Home offices have as many negative connotations as positive. Essential for some, impossible and 'overrated' for others. Recently, a CEO of a small business expressed concerns



that every sales manager was attending important customer calls wearing the same jersey and using lack of travel as a convenient excuse for not closing business. Maintaining professionalism and figuring out ways to communicate will be critical for the home office worker. What new furniture is required for this home boardroom? Implementing small interactive white boards, third person room cameras that allow one to stand up in front of the virtual audience and do formal presentations to create the same engagement as if they were face to face will be critical.

We also need to reinvent our concept of a remote meeting

Our existing video conferencing tools have not changed in decades. Every platform is identical in capabilities, with maybe a tweak here and there for usability. None of them offer anything more than simple screen sharing and camera sharing. If we are going to foster remote team culture that result in efficiencies, we will need software that allows anyone to express their vision, visualize their ideas, and allow them to be as creative remotely as if they were face to face in the same room.

So, what are we likely to see come out of this period of drastic change? And how can team leaders, managers and senior executives support their organization and seize the opportunity in front of them?

1. The workforce will be **dispersed, remote and onsite**

The overnight shift from traditional workplaces to remote offices (aka kitchen tables, basements, or spare rooms) showed business leaders exactly what IT and their employees were capable of outside the office: a lot.

Despite the challenges and the adjustment period, many workers report they are in fact more productive while at home¹.

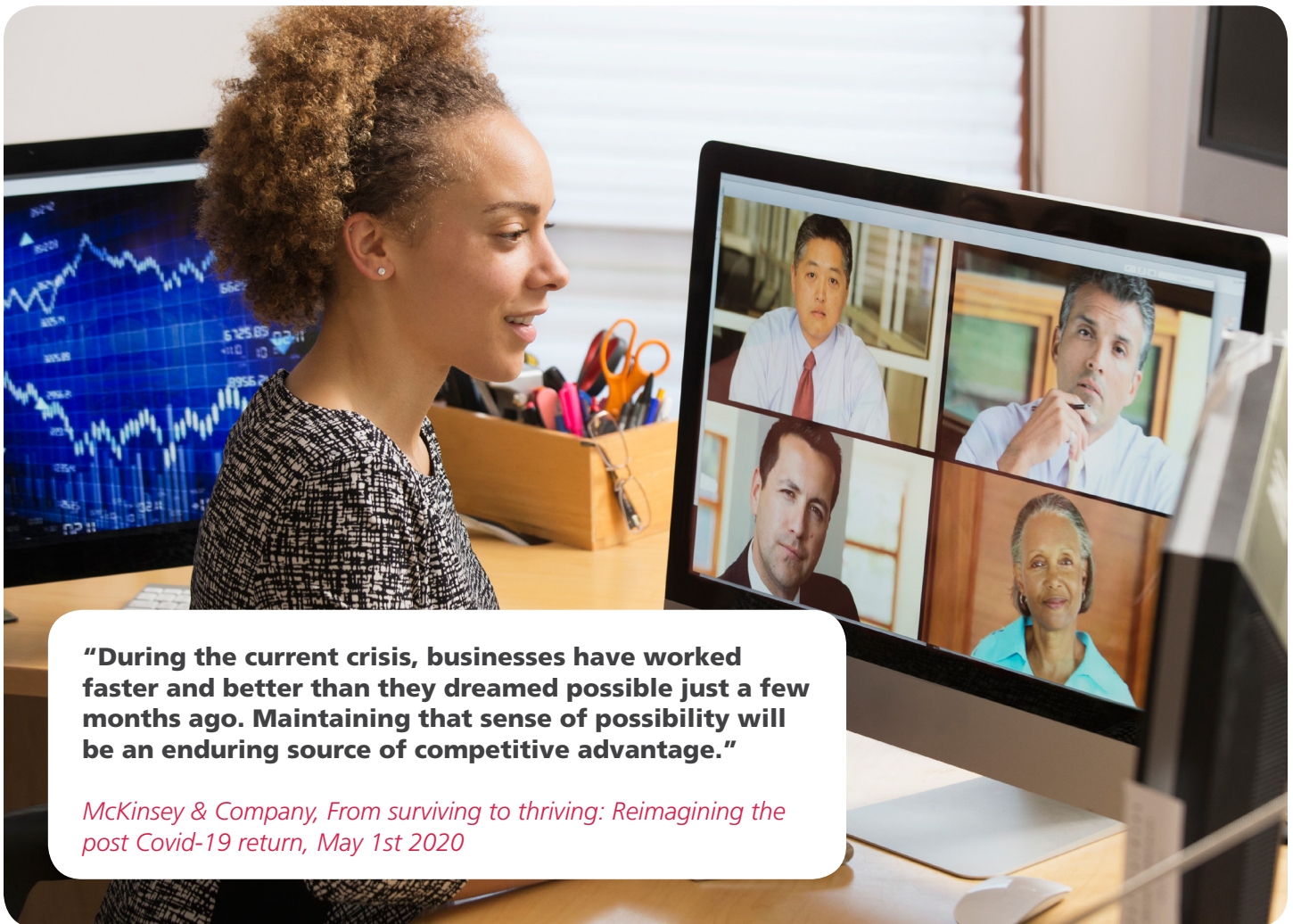
As employers have had no choice but to embrace the flexibility that remote working has afforded them, so too will employees. But don't expect the future of work to be all or nothing.

While half of Canadians would prefer to continue working from home, the other half is eager to get back to the office¹. As a result, businesses must have flexible collaboration tools that connect workers both on and offsite.



¹ Canadians Have Mixed Feelings on Working Remotely during COVID-19 <https://www.adp.ca/en/resources/articles-and-insights/articles/c/canadians-have-mixed-feelings-on-working-remotely-during-covid-19.aspx>

2. Business continuity planning will require **more agile, flexible and resilient operating models**



“During the current crisis, businesses have worked faster and better than they dreamed possible just a few months ago. Maintaining that sense of possibility will be an enduring source of competitive advantage.”

McKinsey & Company, From surviving to thriving: Reimagining the post Covid-19 return, May 1st 2020

COVID-19 has spared no one. Across industries, employers have been forced to act fast and adapt to the ever-changing conditions of this crisis.

As companies look to reimagine the future of work and emerge successful, IT leaders TO leadership will be asked to support new levels of agility, flexibility and resiliency across the organization.

But how?

By enabling more remote work and shifting to a technology ecosystem that supports heightened collaboration and communication, employers will be poised to unlock growth, improve productivity, and accelerate responsiveness across all areas of the business.

“This shift will call for substantial investment in workforce engagement and training in new skills, much of it delivered using digital tools.”²

From a Sales team that requires fast decision-making across the pipeline and responsive communication methods with clients, to nation-wide HR and Corporate Trainers that need to engage and drive home a deep understanding of the content being delivered, to a Marketing team in search of new and creative ways of positioning products or present to clients, remote collaboration will become the primary operating model for the next normal.

² From Surviving to Thriving: Business After Coronavirus: <https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/future-of-work/from-surviving-to-thriving-reimagining-the-post-covid-19-return>

3. Integrated collaboration will contribute to a **new resiliency strategy**

By the time the **COVID-19** crisis hit Canadian businesses, many had (fortunately) already recognized the value of investing in workplace collaboration solutions. In fact, according to a recent study, **64%** of remote workers reported having the collaboration tools required to function while working at home.³

But, while there have been some noted solo gains in productivity, the real insight is that 1 of every 3 remote workers has lost connection to their peers and reports feeling a massive drop-off in their ability to collaborate with others.

Needless to say, there is a significant opportunity to head off any 'decay in culture' and provide a more enhanced collaboration experience for remote workers to drive over all team performance through the roof before the competition does.⁴

The next step is for executive teams and boards to work with IT leadership to develop a better considered and holistic collaboration strategy for their organization – one that benefits from a secure integrated solution that can be brought to scale efficiently with little to no change management or training.



What the pandemic may have disrupted in the short term has in fact only served to highlight the importance for the long term: communication and connection.

Ricoh has the solutions to bring your teams and customers closer together, from whatever office they choose to work in.

³ From Surviving to Thriving: Business After Coronavirus: <https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/future-of-work/from-surviving-to-thriving-reimagining-the-post-covid-19-return>

⁴ Global Work-from-Home Experience Survey, Iometrics, Incorporated & Global Workplace Analytics May 2020 <https://globalworkplaceanalytics.com/global-work-from-home-experience-survey>

Reimagine the future of work with Ricoh's Communication Services

As we all come out of this crisis together, leaders will have to answer important questions about their readiness for what comes next:

- Will our infrastructure be resilient enough to sustain current and future tools as well as current and future levels of remote work?
- Do our employees have access to the right technology to make working from home a full-time option?
- What level of proficiency our employees have in virtual collaboration tools?
- What amount of training and knowledge-sharing will IT be required to provide and/or support?
- Do we have the right governance and policy controls to protect data security?



"For individual organizations, the sooner they start to plan for this shift, the better. This is something we're now putting into place as part of our drive to sustainability at IMIMobile, in the expectation that the office will be seen as more of a meeting and collaboration hub, rather than the only place staff should be working"⁵

Jay Patel, CEO of IMIMobile

⁵ Unified communications: The key to prospering in the new working reality of Covid-19 <https://www.computerweekly.com/feature/Unified-Communications-the-key-to-prospering-in-the-new-working-reality-of-Covid-19>

So, what will the office environment of the future look like?



The answer: flexible workspaces that can be used for many different purposes and can be re-configured easily. Many companies will reduce their real estate footprint, or maybe create more, smaller satellite spaces. **These could be used in the 'office-as-a-hotel' model, where remote teams can come in ad-hoc and use the space when necessary.** Small, core teams, will connect with a larger remote group and be able to work efficiently. Implementing easy- to-use Interactive Whiteboards that allow users to connect to their content, and act as a hub for other in-room peripherals like conference phones and projectors will allow teams to easily re-configure their spaces as required.

With Ricoh's Communication Services, you can integrate revolutionary collaboration and communication technology seamlessly across your organization. Our family of interactive whiteboards (IWBs), also known as interactive flat panel displays (IFPDs) are end-to-end solutions that combine the latest hardware innovation with the user friendly and intuitive **Reactiv SUITE** collaboration software.

It's this powerful combination of hardware and integrated software that enhances workplace communications with next gen functionality.

While For IT departments, the ideal solution should dramatically improve the workflow of your remote teams and not just be a glorified video conferencing appliance. The device should integrate all of your requirements into one simple user interface that is intuitive and easy to learn. It also should leverage your existing conference room equipment such that projectors, secondary displays, conference phone systems, wired and wireless screen projection technologies and other hardware devices can be managed and accessed as well. It should operate on a standard operating system that would allow the IT department to configure the image, load policies and ensure security while leveraging existing network and user authentication infrastructures.

Accessing data for collaboration should never be complicated – use your existing enterprise network resources or cloud service provider.

Your data, your way.

STEP INTO THE NEXT NORMAL WITH RICOH AND REACTIV SUITE

The modern meeting room is a place where ideas should come to life but oftentimes technology gets in the way. The challenge has always been finding the right balance between necessary devices and too many cutting-edge solutions that make training and change management a big factor in any decision.

In order to reap the rewards of transitioning to remote work, without suffering from the consequences, businesses will need to find a new balance. This balance

must take into account the need for social interactions, create an environment where engagement is cultivated between remote workers, and tie together new solutions that allow remote teams to not only engage with each other, but be creative -- as if they were all in the same room.

With Ricoh's interactive whiteboard and **Reactiv SUITE** software you can effectively eliminate the distracting and confusing array of technologies from your meeting and conference rooms. Go from projectors, cables, microphones, speakers and webcams to an all-in-one tool that delivers all of that and more.

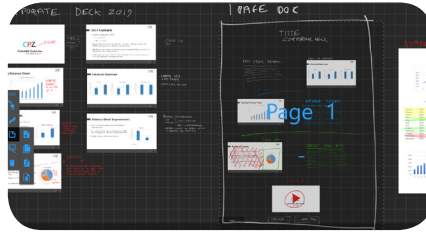


"We've all been having problems with remote meetings and presentations. And many are using some cobbled-together makeshifts that are far from secure. **Reactiv SUITE** cuts through all that, and doesn't waste your time. Create, meet, present, explain, mark up, refine on the fly, conclude -- it's all right there in front of you. You can easily access, manipulate, and discuss content and ideas drawn from all types of media, and in a nanosecond you can sign and execute securely, as well.

This is a gamechanger and an energy saver -- your energy, the world's energy. It's essential to the new era we're in now, and to the even newer world we're about to enter. No going back."

– Internationally celebrated Canadian author Margaret Atwood, a strategic investor and advisor

Reactiv SUITE is comprised of three components: **STAGE**, **SCRIBBLE** and **HUDDLE**. Each one is designed to work in a single ecosystem based on your meeting type: **presenting**, **ideation**, **brainstorming** and **project management** to name a few.



Reactiv STAGE

STAGE is a powerful, nonlinear storytelling and presentation tool that enables teams to shift the focus from managing content to consuming the narrative of a presentation.

STAGE allows teams to open, render, mark up and present content in any format (Microsoft Word, PowerPoint, Excel, MP4, PDF, JPEG, GIF).

Whether you are giving a lecture, training a team, pitching a product to your clients, or having any other type of meeting, **STAGE** can dramatically reduce mistakes, improve retention, and allow your team to walk away with deeper insights.



Reactiv SCRIBBLE

SCRIBBLE is a digital whiteboard that serves as a brainstorming and layout tool. It creates an infinite canvas, allowing any user to collaborate and sketch, write ideas, mark up pages and develop dynamic layouts that accurately represent the overall team vision.

Users can combine a variety of file types, including web and natural handwriting, into meaningful pages that can be easily shared or distributed.

SCRIBBLE helps simplify complex ideas, visually communicate vision and intent, and allows your team to capture decisions while reducing miscommunication.



Reactiv HUDDLE

HUDDLE is an innovative communications and videoconferencing tool that allows remote users to collaborate and participate as if they were sitting in the same room.

HUDDLE allows you to not only share video and audio, but seamlessly share files and even interact, ink and manipulate content regardless of your location.

Unlike other one-sided conferencing solutions, **HUDDLE** improves the productivity of meetings since everyone can engage without any physical barriers and fewer clicks.



"Reactiv SUITE is the only platform that I have ever seen that makes me feel like I am in the same room, with my virtual team. I can engage, discuss, debate and mark-up content and data effortlessly; my message can be as clear and effective as if I was face-to-face. There is no other product like it in the market."

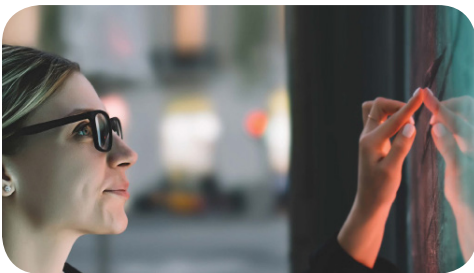
Thomas Schneck, Hudson Valley Equity Group

Reactiv SUITE is so simple and easy to use that it requires little to no training or change management. No matter what kind of work your team is doing, it can enhance their collaboration experience, improve productivity and facilitate deeper connections. Here are just a few examples of **Reactiv SUITE** in action:



Brainstorming

In any brainstorming session, activities like documenting multiple ideas and sketching out thoughts can become very tedious and time consuming. Using **Reactiv SUITE**, every attendee can collaborate and add their ideas simultaneously. This combined effort yields more ideas in less time as well as making everyone feel as if their voice has been heard.



Corporate Training

An essential part of any business, **Reactiv SUITE** makes it easier and faster for trainers to compile their digital files and media content. It dramatically reduces the wasted time dealing with the technology, projectors or managing multiple windows, and allows attendees to truly focus on the training. With **Reactiv**, the trainer can toggle between digital files with ease, so their audience never loses interest. They can also mark directly into documents to emphasize certain information. Files can be saved and shared quickly. The result is improved retention and a deeper understanding of the materials.



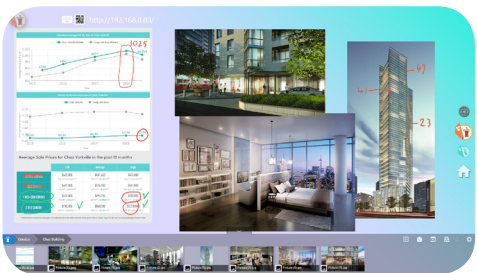
Presentation/Storytelling

Unlike static slideshows that deliver information in a one-way format, **Reactiv** creates truly interactive presentations where all team members can participate. Content from multiple formats can be combined in seconds to present to an audience, without wasting valuable meeting time switching between information sources. Additionally, participants can add comments directly into the document(s), then save all the presentation changes. This reduces the workload involved in meeting follow-up and dramatically reduces mistakes, improves retention and allows



Education

For teachers, **Reactiv SUITE** can make classroom lessons more impactful and memorable. Teachers can share any type of content with their class, mark up previous work, easily explain complex formulas, or show relevant videos—all without wasting time switching A/V equipment or computers. End result: it keeps students engaged and helps improve retention.



Technical & Engineering Teams

Reviewing and editing schematics across multiple team members and locations can be a development nightmare. Now, with **Reactiv**, it's easy to ink, mark up, change and truly collaborate on designs and specifications. You can even save the versions in an auditable format to maintain version control and ensure all team members are in alignment on the development process.



Marketing Teams

Using **Reactiv**, marketing teams have an intuitive, flexible tool to review and edit video content, web pages, printed collateral and more. Plus, your creative teams can use the infinite canvas to develop new ideas or storyboard content, even across multiple locations.

The future of work is here to stay. And as we've outlined above, those in leadership tasked with getting wider team participation or optimizing team performance will be faced with finding the right collaborative tools and strategies to support the next normal. The good news is that there are options.

Designed specifically to meet unique needs like these, **Ricoh's Communication Services**, provide organizations the flexibility to operate and do business from anywhere in the world while reducing travel and delivering on the kind of upgraded collaboration experience teams need to be fully productive - without compromising your IT department's data security concerns.

Beyond the immediate term, **Reactiv SUITE** is the most comprehensive collaboration tool for agility, resiliency and flexibility across nearly every type of organization—key elements for success in the next normal connecting both remote and onsite workforces.

Empowering the next workforce

While workplace innovation has been happening for decades, never has it been at the speed and scale as we have seen recently. **Ricoh can help.**

As digital workplaces and remote teams pave the way for the future, Ricoh's Digital Workplace Solutions combine the right experts, services and technologies to optimize the flow of information within your business and better serve your customers.

No matter your requirements, our reimagined solutions can help you and the teams you serve, work smarter remotely. Help create a future forward collaboration toolkit that ensures remote working benefits employer and employee alike.

Learn more about how Ricoh Communication Services can help your teams work smarter.

Talk to our experts to book a demo today and see for yourself.



RICOH
imagine. change.

Ricoh Canada Inc., 100-5560 Explorer Drive, Mississauga, ON L4W 5M3, 1-888-742-6417

©2020. Ricoh Canada Inc. All rights reserved. Ricoh and the Ricoh logo are registered trademarks of Ricoh Company, Ltd. All other trademarks are the property of their respective owners. The content of this document, and the appearance, features and specifications of Ricoh products and services are subject to change from time to time without notice. Products are shown with optional features. While care has been taken to ensure the accuracy of this information, Ricoh makes no representation or warranties about the accuracy, completeness or adequacy of the information contained herein, and shall not be liable for any errors or omissions in these materials. Actual results will vary depending upon use of the products and services, and the conditions and factors affecting performance. The only warranties for Ricoh products and services are as set forth in the express warranty statements accompanying them.