

Telework Portfolio:

A Guide to Implementing Telework in Your Organization

Program Planning

Program Participant Selection

Program Maintenance

Telework Resources

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Telework Program Development Guidelines

For organizations examining how teleworking can contribute to organizational objectives, the following guidelines will provide a solid base for a telework program.

This document provides guidance for teleworkers, employees not teleworking, and management regarding conditions under which the telework program will operate.

Purpose

Teleworking, the practice of working at a remote location, usually the employee's home, for a limited number of days instead of working at an organization's main worksite, is a work alternative that is offered to some employees to benefit both the organization and the employees. Teleworking is not a formal employee benefit, but a work scheduling practice that helps employees balance the demands of their work and personal lives, as well as helps employers. Teleworking is a privilege, not a universal benefit or employee right.

Eligibility

Teleworkers will be selected from positions and departments that are deemed by an organization's management to be suited for teleworking. Some positions will be established to work full time at a remote office, while other positions will be identified as being eligible for part-time teleworking.

Eligibility and suitability of employees to participate in teleworking will vary amongst departments and business units, depending on the function and responsibilities of the employee. Candidates for teleworking should be a full-time employee.

An employee's supervisor, in consultation with Human Resources, should approve the opportunity to telework. Selection of employees to participate in the teleworking program should be based on specific, written, work-related criteria, including:

- Need for, nature of, and interaction with other staff and external clients;
- Need for use of specialized equipment;
- Availability of other similarly qualified employees on site; and
- Employee job performance.

Employees that are considered for teleworking must be able to work independently, be self-starters, and demonstrate attention to work time and productivity. An employee must have a satisfactory or better performance level with no record of performance or conduct issues. The resources that an employee needs to do his or her job must be easily transportable or available electronically.

Employees wishing to telework should be required to submit a written request. The employee should also complete a Teleworker Selection Survey and provide information concerning job responsibilities, proposed teleworking schedule, types of work tasks and activities to be performed at the remote office location, and description of the remote office space and the equipment required to furnish the remote office.

Teleworkers should be required to sign a Teleworking Agreement and complete associated documentation.

Length of Teleworking Agreement

Teleworking arrangements should be on a trial basis for the first three months with the option to

Telework Program Development Guidelines, cont.

be discontinued at any time, at the request of either the teleworker or the organization. Supervisors are responsible for decisions to continue or discontinue teleworking by the employee, following appropriate notification to the teleworker. If a teleworking arrangement is discontinued by the employer, every effort should be made to provide advance notice to the employee. However, there may be situations where no notice is possible. Likewise, if an employee elects to discontinue a teleworking arrangement, the employee should provide adequate notice to his or her supervisor.

Schedules and Hours

Full-time teleworkers should be assigned to work from their remote office locations.

The schedule of part-time teleworkers may be different from office work hours. However, teleworkers and supervisors must agree on the designated work hours. A regular teleworking schedule, including specific days and hours, must be established by the teleworker and approved by his or her supervisor. Generally, a teleworker will spend one to two days working from home with the remainder of the scheduled hours working in his or her office on business premises. The amount of time the teleworker is expected to work per day or per pay period will not change due to participation in the teleworking program. Neither will an employee's compensation, benefits, work status, and work responsibilities.

Normal working hours are expected to be maintained. Deviations from the agreed upon schedule must be approved in advance by the supervisor. The business policy will be followed for all absences. Teleworkers are responsible for keeping and submitting accurate records of their work hours.

Supervisors retain the right to require a teleworker to return to the business location on a regularly scheduled teleworking day should work situations warrant such. If a teleworker is required to return to the business location during regularly scheduled teleworking days frequently, the supervisor may re-evaluate the compatibility of the teleworker's position and job responsibilities with respect to teleworking or the specific teleworking schedule.

Workspace

Teleworkers must have an appropriate remote office space if their remote office is located in their home. This space must take into consideration ergonomics, equipment, and adequate workspace, noise and interruption factors. The teleworker's remote office should provide adequate work area, lighting, telephone service, electrical power, and temperature control. Additional requirements may vary, depending on the nature of the work and the equipment needed to perform the work.

Teleworking is not an alternative to child or elder care, and when applicable, the teleworker must make appropriate arrangements for dependent care.

Homeowner's insurance and any changes in rates or coverage are the responsibility of the employee. Any increase in the teleworker's home utility costs (excluding increased telephone costs) is the responsibility of the employee.

Federal and state statutory abstracts will be posted at the organization's central offices in lieu of posting them at the employee's remote office. Teleworkers should review these notices while on the premises.

Telework Program Development Guidelines, cont.

Equipment and Supplies

In many cases teleworkers provide their own equipment. Teleworkers may use organization-owned equipment at their remote office with prior approval by their supervisor provided that the equipment will be used for business work only. Its use by a teleworker at his or her remote office should not impede the work of employees working at the organization's on-site offices.

Office supplies are normally provided by the organization and should be obtained during the teleworker's in-office work period. Out-of-pocket expenses for supplies normally provided by the office will not be reimbursed. Teleworkers are responsible for all supplies, equipment, and/or materials provided by the business. All items remain the property of the business and may not be used for personal or other use.

The organization should reimburse teleworkers for other business-related expenses, such as long-distance phone calls, shipping costs, etc. that are reasonably incurred in accordance with job responsibilities and approved by the supervisor in accordance with regular policies. Appropriate documentation is required if such expenses are submitted for reimbursement. Human Resources should work with teleworking employees to ensure that appropriate arrangements have been made for discounted long distance telephone services.

The organization does not assume liability for loss, damage or wear of employee-owned equipment unless otherwise agreed to in writing prior to the occurrence. Maintenance, repair, and replacement of employer-owned equipment issued to teleworkers is the responsibility of the organization. In the event of equipment damage or malfunction, the teleworker must notify the appropriate staff immediately. The organization reserves the right to enter the remote office for inspection of the equipment, if necessary. Repairs to the employee-owned equipment are usually the responsibility of the teleworker. In either situation, the teleworker may be asked to report to the office until the equipment is usable.

Employee Access and Availability

Teleworkers must be available by telephone and/or email during scheduled hours, with the exception of their scheduled lunch period. Teleworkers are required to have a telephone answering service to ensure availability.

Teleworkers may be required to modify their at-office voice mail announcement to indicate that they may be reached at an alternative number or that he or she will be regularly checking messages. Supervisors may establish that employees are required to check for messages within a certain period (e.g. at least once every two hours).

Teleworkers must keep their supervisors notified of any changes to their home contact information.

Security

The teleworker should work with appropriate staff to identify all precautions necessary to secure proprietary information and to prevent unauthorized access. The teleworker is required to observe all office security practices when working outside the organization's on-site offices to ensure the integrity and confidentiality of proprietary information. Steps to ensure the protection of proprietary information include, but are not limited to: use of locked file cabinets, disk boxes, and desks; regular password maintenance; and any other steps appropriate for the job and the environment.

Telework Program Development Guidelines, cont.

Teleworkers agree to allow an authorized representative access to the remote office work area during prearranged times for business purposes as deemed necessary by the supervisor, including safety inspections, equipment installations and repairs, security assurance, retrieval of employer-owned property, and performance evaluations. To ensure hardware and software security, all software used for teleworking must be approved by the supervisor prior to installation. All software used for teleworking must be virus inspected and each computer must have virus protection software installed. Employer-owned software may not be duplicated unless authorized through the license agreement. Restricted access materials shall not be taken out of the office or accessed through the computer unless approved in advance by the supervisor.

Liability

It is the responsibility of the teleworker to maintain a safe and professional remote office that is free from potential safety problems. Teleworkers must certify that their remote office is free from workplace hazards by completing a safety checklist.

In the case of an injury while working at a remote office, teleworkers must immediately (or as soon as circumstances permit) report the injury to his or her supervisor or the Human Resources Department and request instructions for obtaining medical treatment.

Income Tax

It will be the teleworker's responsibility to determine any income tax implications of maintaining a remote office in his or her home. The company will not provide tax guidance, nor will the company assume any additional tax liabilities. Teleworkers should consult their attorney, tax advisor, or accountant regarding any legal or tax implications due to working at their home or other remote office location.

Evaluation

Teleworkers should agree to participate in all studies, inquiries, reports, and analyses relating to the teleworking program.

Telework: A Simple Costs/Benefits Analysis

This simple cost/benefits analysis worksheet for your organization will provide assistance when trying to answer the question of bottom-line benefits associated with telework programs.

Cost Items	One-Time Costs	Recurring Monthly Costs	Cost Line Item Detail
Participant selection, preparation and training	Your Cost: \$ _____	Your Cost: \$ _____	Includes training and training manuals for teleworkers and supervisors. May also include budget money for program development and pilot program.
Voice and data telecommunications; network connection services	Your Cost: \$ _____	Your Cost: \$ _____	Includes one-time installation fee and router/modem for DSL or cable service. Many providers offer free installation with a minimum service agreement. Monthly charges include voice communications and corporate network access. Recurring costs may be much less with dial-up connection.
Computer, printer, software, etc.	Your Cost: \$ _____	Your Cost: \$ _____	Costs should represent a company owned desktop or laptop computer system and software. Do not include this cost if teleworker is using existing or own equipment.
Technical Support	Your Cost: \$ _____	Your Cost: \$ _____	Cost of IT department preparation and support time for teleworkers. These costs will vary based on program specifics and number of teleworkers.
Home-office set-up	Your Cost: \$ _____	Your Cost: \$ _____	Costs represent items required to complete the office such as chair, book case, office supplies.
Total Annualized Costs	Total Cost: \$ _____	Total Cost: \$ _____	Enter totals here: \$ _____

Employer Benefit per Teleworker	Benefits Recurring Monthly	Benefits Line Item Detail
Increased employee effectiveness	Your Savings \$ _____	Average 15% relative to non-teleworkers, with full-time teleworkers working an average of 4 days/week
Decreased employee absenteeism	Your Savings \$ _____	Teleworkers have the flexibility to work at least part of the time from home when recovering from a brief illness or caring for a sick child.
Decreased employee turnover rate	Your Savings \$ _____	Retention of teleworkers who have said that teleworking is an important job consideration leads to less job replacement costs.
Reduced parking requirements	Your Savings \$ _____	For each teleworker, organizations can expect a 95% reduction in parking costs for each teleworker.
Office space savings	Your Savings \$ _____	In most organizations, the average employee occupies approximately 150 square feet in space.
Total Annualized Benefit	Your Total Savings: \$ _____	Enter totals here: \$ _____

Potential Employer Net Savings from a Teleworker	
Potential First Year Net Benefits (Costs - Savings = Net Benefits)	Your Savings: \$ _____
Potential Annual Net Benefits (Costs - Savings = Net Benefits)	Your Savings: \$ _____

Teleworker Agreement

This agreement is between _____, henceforth known as “the Employee,” an employee of _____, henceforth known as “the Employer,” who works in the _____ Department/Division.

The parties agree as follows:

Scope of Agreement

The Employee agrees to perform services for the Employer as a “teleworker.” The Employer agrees that teleworking is voluntary and may be terminated at any time, either by the Employer or the Employee, with or without cause.

Term of Agreement

This Agreement shall become effective as of the date approved, and shall remain in full force and effect, as long as the Employee teleworks, or until the agreement is terminated.

Termination of Agreement

The Employee’s participation as a teleworker is entirely voluntary. Teleworking is available only to eligible employees at the Employer’s sole discretion. Teleworking is not an employee benefit intended to be available to the entire organization. As such, no employee is entitled to or guaranteed the opportunity to telework. Either party may terminate the Employee’s participation in the program, with or without cause, upon reasonable notice, in writing, to the other party. The business will not be held responsible for costs, damages, or losses resulting from cessation of participation in the teleworking program. This Agreement is not a contract of employment and may not be construed as such.

The Employer may terminate this Teleworking Agreement at any time without cause, providing the Employee with at least 24-hours written notice.

Primary Workplace

The Employee’s primary place of work during the term of this agreement is:

Remote Office:

provide address here

Or,

Home Office:

provide address here

Salary, Job Responsibilities, Benefits

There will be no change in salary, job requirements, and benefits because of teleworking; regular salary reviews should occur as scheduled. The Employee will be entitled to any company-wide benefits changes that may be implemented. The Employee agrees to comply with all existing job requirements as now are in effect in the Employer’s offices.

Teleworker Agreement, cont.

Work Hours, Overtime, Vacation

Work hours are not expected to change during the Employee's participation in the program. In the event that overtime is anticipated, this must be discussed and approved in advance with the supervisor if so required by departmental/office-wide policy, just as any overtime scheduling would normally have to be approved.

Work Schedule

The daily work schedule for the days when working from a remote office is subject to negotiation with and approval by the Employee's supervisor. The supervisor may require that the Employee work certain "core hours" and be accessible by telephone during those hours.

The Employee is required to identify work schedules on the "Remote Office Procedures" or other form approved by the Employee's supervisor or department prior to teleworking.

Communication

The Employee and his or her supervisor should establish a plan which details the required frequency and types of communication. This should include expectations related to: work schedules and locations, voicemail messages, attendance at meetings, telephone contact with the business worksite, managerial and other visits to the remote work location. The exchange of written documents, e.g. memos, letters, timesheets, paychecks, etc., and office supplies should also be addressed.

The Employee is required to identify communication procedures on the "Remote Office Procedures" or other form approved by the Employee's manager or department prior to teleworking.

Equipment

The Employer may provide the necessary computer, modem, software, and other equipment needed for teleworking based on job responsibilities and assignment of the Employee's primary place of work. All provided equipment are the property of, and must be returned to, the Employer upon request.

The Employer is responsible for the repair or replacement of malfunctioning, lost, damaged, or stolen equipment provided by the Employer if the Employee has used and maintained the equipment appropriately. The Employee may be required to bring any equipment needing repair or replacement to the appropriate location. Repair or replacement of any equipment (authorized for work usage), but owned by the Employee will be decided on a case by case basis.

Employer-owned software may not be duplicated except as formally authorized. The Employer will be responsible for insurance and maintenance of all materials provided to the Employee.

Failure by the Employee to return specified equipment within a reasonable period of time and/or provide appropriate compensation to the business after written notification of the termination of this agreement has been received by the Employer may be considered grounds for dismissal.

The Employee must complete the "Hardware and Software Inventory List" prior to teleworking.

Workspace

The Employee agrees to designate a workspace within his or her remote work location (or primary work location should the Employee's home be designated as the primary place of work) for placement and installation of equipment to be used while teleworking. The Employee agrees to maintain this workspace in a safe condition, free from hazards and other dangers to the

Teleworker Agreement, cont.

Employee and equipment. The Employer must approve the site chosen as the Employee's remote workspace. The Employee is expected to submit three photos of the home workspace to his or her manager/department prior to teleworking.

The Employee must complete the "Remote Office Safety Checklist" prior to teleworking.

Any Employer-owned materials taken home should be kept in the designated work area and not be made accessible to others.

The Employee agrees that the Employer can make on-site visits (with 48 hours advance notice) to the remote work locations for the purpose of determining that the site is safe and free from hazards, and to maintain, repair, inspect, or retrieve Employer-owned equipment, software, data, or supplies. In the event that legal action is required to regain possession of Employer-owned equipment, software, data, or supplies, the Employee agrees to pay all costs incurred by the Employer, including attorney's fees.

Office Supplies

Office supplies will be provided as needed. The Employee's out-of-pocket expenses for other supplies will not be reimbursed unless by prior approval of the Employee's supervisor/department.

Telephone Calls

The Employer may provide calling cards, a mobile phone, and/or a messaging service for the Employee's use in business communications. The Employer may provide compensation for operating expenses for Internet service should the teleworker's job responsibilities warrant. The Employer is not responsible for any damage resulting to the Employee's home and/or equipment as a result of providing compensation for this service.

Mileage

Any mileage incurred from the use of the Employee's personal vehicle for work-related travel will be reimbursed at the standard rate as defined by company policy. Mileage is reimbursable for work-related travel within the geographical limits of the business. However, mileage incurred through travel from and to the remote work location and the standard worksite is not reimbursable.

Worker's Compensation

The Employer will be responsible for any work-related injuries under the Commonwealth of Virginia's Worker Compensation Laws, but this liability is limited to injuries resulting directly from work and only if the injury occurs in the designated work area. Any Worker's Compensation claims will be handled according to the Employer's normal procedure for Worker's Compensation claims.

Liability for Injuries

The Employee understands that the Employee remains liable for injuries to third persons and/or members of the Employee's family on the Employee's premises. The Employer agrees to defend, indemnify, and hold harmless, its affiliates, employees, contractors, and agents from and against any and all claims, demands, or liability (including any related losses, costs, expenses, and attorney fees) resulting from, or arising in connection with, any injury to persons (including death) or damage to property caused, directly or indirectly, by the services provided herein by the Employee or by the Employee's willful misconduct, negligent acts, or omissions in the

Teleworker Agreement, cont.

performance of the Employee's duties and obligations under this agreement, except where such claims arise solely from the gross negligence or willful misconduct of the Employer.

Dependent Care

Teleworking is not a substitute for dependent care. The Employee will not be available during the hours noted on "Remote Office Procedures" to provide dependent care.

Income Tax

It will be the Employee's responsibility to determine any income tax implications of maintaining a remote office location. The Employer will not provide tax guidance, nor will it assume any additional tax liabilities. The Employee is encouraged to consult with a qualified tax professional to discuss income tax implications.

Evaluation

The Employee agrees to participate in all studies, reports, and analyses relating to this program.

Confidentiality

The Employee must maintain appropriate confidentiality of all work-related information, including written documents, automated data and verbal transactions. Written information must be maintained in a locked file box or cabinet provided by the Employer and automated data should remain secure. Any verbal transactions, including phone conversations, will be conducted in a private area. The Employee is responsible for ensuring that third parties do not have access to any confidential, client-related information.

Modifications to this Agreement

The Employee's supervisor/department maintains the authority to monitor this Agreement and modify any portion of it if necessary.

The Employee must complete all forms required by the Employer prior to teleworking under this agreement.

The Employee remains obligated to comply with all the Employer's rules, practices, instructions, and this Agreement. The Employee understands that violation of any of the above may result in preclusion from teleworking.

I have read and understand this agreement and accept its conditions.

Employee: _____

Date: _____

Supervisor: _____

Date: _____

Department

Director: _____

Date: _____

Section 2: Program Participant Selection

Section 2: Program Participant Selection

Teleworker Selection Survey for Supervisors

Teleworker Selection Survey for Employees

Teleworker Rating Sheet

Teleworker Selection Survey for Supervisors

Teleworking is the concept of working from home or another location (e.g. telework center) on a full or part-time basis. Every manager must fill out a questionnaire about each employee interested in teleworking.

Supervisor

Name: _____

Name of employee under your direct supervision who is considered a candidate for teleworking:

Name: _____

1. Is the work done by your employee, as it currently exists, or with modifications, suitable for teleworking, at least part of the time?

Yes

No

Please explain why.

If your answer was "No," this completes the survey for you. Thanks!

2. Please describe the kind of work your employee does.

Teleworker Selection Survey for Supervisors, cont.

For questions 3 through 6, please rate each characteristic as high (H), medium (M), or low (L) by placing the appropriate letter in each box.

3. Existing Work Characteristics

Please rate the following according to your employee's existing job requirements and characteristics.

- Amount of face-to-face contact required
- Degree of telephone communication required
- Autonomy of operation
- Ability to control and schedule work flow
- Amount of in-office reference material required

4. Future Work as a Teleworker

Please rate the following according to your employee's existing job requirements and characteristics.

- Amount of face-to-face contact required
- Degree of telephone communication required
- Autonomy of operation
- Ability to control and schedule work flow
- Amount of in-office reference material required

5. Employee Characteristics

Please rate the following according to your employee's existing job requirements and characteristics.

- Need for supervision, frequent feedback
- Importance of co-workers' input to work
- Discipline regarding work
- Desire/need to be around people
- Potential friction at home if teleworking (e.g. interruptions due to dependent care)
- Level of job knowledge
- Quality of work

Teleworker Selection Survey for Supervisors, cont.

6. Supervisor Characteristics

Based on your attitude towards teleworking and work style, please rate the following.

- Positive attitude towards teleworking
- Trust in employee's ability to telework
- Ability to establish clear objectives
- Ability to communicate with employee

7. What criteria do you use to evaluate your employee's work? (For example, quality of work, quantity of work, timeliness, etc.) Please be specific.

8. Considering the nature of your employee's job, how much would you want him or her to telework? Indicate your response by placing a check in the appropriate box. Choose only one.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Full time | <input type="checkbox"/> About once every two weeks |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Three days a week | <input type="checkbox"/> Occasionally for a special project |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Two days a week | <input type="checkbox"/> Other, please specify: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> About once a week | _____ |

9. What kinds of work would you expect him or her to do while teleworking? Indicate your response by placing a check in the appropriate box(es). Choose all that apply.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Writing/typing | <input type="checkbox"/> Research |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Word processing | <input type="checkbox"/> Talking on the phone |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Data management | <input type="checkbox"/> Computer programming |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Administrative duties | <input type="checkbox"/> Email |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Reading | <input type="checkbox"/> Field visits/travel |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Thinking/Planning | |

Teleworker Selection Survey for Employees

Telework is a time management and scheduling practice that enables employees to work at home on a full or part-time basis. Teleworking can be a productive scheduling practice for many employees, although it may not be feasible for employees whose job duties and home environment may not be conducive to working away from the office. Teleworking arrangements are successful when an employee's work responsibilities and personal work style are matched well to working away from the office.

This questionnaire provides an opportunity to consider whether or not teleworking will be an effective tool for meeting organizational and personal objectives. Responses to this questionnaire will help you and your supervisor assess if teleworking can work for you and your employer.

Each person interested in participating in the teleworking program must complete this survey.

Name: _____ Supervisor: _____

Job Title: _____ Department/Division: _____

1. Please describe your job tasks:

For questions 2 through 4, please rate each characteristic as high (H), medium (M), or low (L) by placing the appropriate letter in each box.

2. Existing Work Characteristics

Please rate the following according to your existing job requirements and characteristics.

- Amount of face-to-face contact required
- Degree of telephone communication required
- Autonomy of operation
- Ability to control and schedule work flow
- Amount of in-office reference material required

Teleworker Selection Survey for Employees, cont.

3. Future Work as a Teleworker

Please rate the following according to your existing job requirements and characteristics.

- Amount of face-to-face contact required
- Degree of telephone communication required
- Autonomy of operation
- Ability to control and schedule work flow
- Amount of in-office reference material required

4. Employee Characteristics

Please rate the following according to your own characteristics as an employee, and as a teleworker.

- Need for supervision, frequent feedback
- Importance of co-workers' input to work
- Discipline regarding work
- Desire/need to be around people
- Potential friction at home if teleworking (e.g. interruptions due to dependent care)
- Level of job knowledge
- Quality of work

5. Considering the nature of your job, how much would you want to telework? Indicate your response by placing a check in the appropriate box. Choose only one.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Full time | <input type="checkbox"/> About once every two weeks |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Three days a week | <input type="checkbox"/> Occasionally for a special project |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Two days a week | <input type="checkbox"/> Other, please specify: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> About once a week | _____ |

Teleworker Selection Survey for Employees, cont.

6. What kinds of work would you expect to do while teleworking? Indicate your response by placing a check in the appropriate box(es). Choose all that apply.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Writing/typing | <input type="checkbox"/> Research |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Word processing | <input type="checkbox"/> Talking on the phone |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Data management | <input type="checkbox"/> Computer programming |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Administrative duties | <input type="checkbox"/> Email |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Reading | <input type="checkbox"/> Field visits/travel |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Thinking/Planning | |

7. Given the amount of teleworking you want to do, and the kinds of work you would do while teleworking, what equipment/services would you need, and which do you currently have? Indicate your response by placing a check in the appropriate box(es). Choose all that apply.

	Need	Have
Computer/terminal	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Printer	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Modem	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Desk	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Filing Space	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
More than one phone line	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fax machine	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Voicemail	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Other, please specify: _____

Teleworker Selection Survey for Employees, cont.

8. Do you have adequate space in your home to dedicate to work that meets the conditions described in "Remote Office Safety Checklist"?

Yes No

9. Are there any distractions/obligations that will make working at home difficult or impossible?

Yes No

If yes, please explain: _____

Teleworker Rating Sheet

Employee Name: _____

Date: _____

To be completed by the manager of the teleworker candidate.

To make your selection, please place a check mark in the box under the appropriate response.

Characteristic	Below Average	Average	Above Average
Self-motivated			
Well-organized			
Level of productivity			
Ability to work with minimal social interaction			
Ability to work independently			
Degree of job knowledge and skill			
Time management			
Home environment (i.e. satisfactory child/elder care, minimal distractions)			
Positive attitude towards teleworking			
Prefers working from home one or more days/week			
TOTALS (add up check marks in each column)			

Section 3: Program Maintenance

Section 3: Program Maintenance

Remote Office Materials & Equipment Checklist

Remote Office Hardware/Software Inventory List

Remote Office Safety Checklist

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Remote Office Materials & Equipment Checklist

To be completed by the teleworker.

The Remote Office	Work Items	Technology
<input type="checkbox"/> Desk	<input type="checkbox"/> Reference Materials	<input type="checkbox"/> Business Telephone
<input type="checkbox"/> Chair	<input type="checkbox"/> Working Files (Paper)	<input type="checkbox"/> Desktop Computer
<input type="checkbox"/> File Cabinet	<input type="checkbox"/> Working Files (Disk)	<input type="checkbox"/> Portable Computer
<input type="checkbox"/> Bookcase	<input type="checkbox"/> Calculator	<input type="checkbox"/> Printer
<input type="checkbox"/> File Storage	<input type="checkbox"/> Telephone Directory	<input type="checkbox"/> Modem
<input type="checkbox"/> Tabletop Space	<input type="checkbox"/> Calender	<input type="checkbox"/> Phone/Fax/Modem Switch
<input type="checkbox"/> In-box	<input type="checkbox"/> Work Schedule	<input type="checkbox"/> Surge Protector/Battery
<input type="checkbox"/> Lighting	<input type="checkbox"/> To-Do List	<input type="checkbox"/> Business Telephone Line
<input type="checkbox"/> Fresh Air	<input type="checkbox"/> Business Cards	<input type="checkbox"/> Modem/Fax Telephone Line
<input type="checkbox"/> Heat/Cooling	<input type="checkbox"/> Carrying Case	<input type="checkbox"/> High Speed Internet Connection
<input type="checkbox"/> Writing Instruments	<input type="checkbox"/> Dictionary/Thesaurus	<input type="checkbox"/> Operating System
<input type="checkbox"/> Writing Paper	<input type="checkbox"/> Presentation Materials	<input type="checkbox"/> Word Processing Software
<input type="checkbox"/> Printer Paper	<input type="checkbox"/> Tape Recorder	<input type="checkbox"/> Spreadsheet Software
<input type="checkbox"/> Envelopes	<input type="checkbox"/> Copy Machine	<input type="checkbox"/> Communications Software
<input type="checkbox"/> Fax Paper	<input type="checkbox"/> Portable Fan	<input type="checkbox"/> Database Software
<input type="checkbox"/> Paper Clips	<input type="checkbox"/> Safety Checklist	<input type="checkbox"/> Radio/Batteries
<input type="checkbox"/> Staples/Stapler	<input type="checkbox"/> Smoke Detector	<input type="checkbox"/> Zoning Approval
<input type="checkbox"/> Note Pad	<input type="checkbox"/> Fire Extinguisher	<input type="checkbox"/> Evacuation Plan
<input type="checkbox"/> Scissors	<input type="checkbox"/> Flashlight	<input type="checkbox"/> Office Mail Plan

Remote Office Hardware/Software Inventory List

Teleworkers must complete this list prior to being allowed to telework.

Employee Name: _____ Date: _____
 Department/Division: _____

Employer-Provided Equipment

Hardware	Type	Serial Number	Program	Version
Computer				
Monitor				
Surge Protector				
Printer				
Other				
Other				
Other				

Employer-Provided Software

Software Type	Serial Number	Program	Version

Employee-Provided Hardware & Software

Employee-Provided Hardware & Software

Employee Signature: _____ Date: _____

Supervisor Signature: _____ Date: _____

Remote Office Safety Checklist

Name: _____ Date: _____
 Supervisor: _____
 Telework Address: _____
 Description of Work Area: _____

This checklist assesses the safety of a telework candidate's remote office. Telework candidates should inspect the areas that they will designate as their remote work site, if it is in their personal residence, and complete this form. Telework areas must meet the standards noted below prior to a teleworker beginning work away from the office.

Please respond to the following questions by placing a check in the appropriate box.

	Yes	No
1. Is the workspace free from excessive noise?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Is adequate lighting (side or rear) provided at the workstation?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Is all electrical equipment free of recognized hazards that could cause physical harm? (Examples: frayed wires running through walls, exposed wires)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Is the electrical system adequate for office equipment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Is electrical equipment grounded?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Are surge protectors properly installed?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Are aisles, doorways, and floors free of obstructions to permit visibility and movement?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Is there an exit that allows prompt exiting?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Are phone lines, electrical cords, and extension wires secured under a desk or along a baseboard?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. Is a working fire extinguisher located nearby?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. Are working smoke detectors installed at the remote office site?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. Is the work area private and free of intrusion?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13. Can files and data be kept secure?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14. Are first aid supplies readily accessible and adequate?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15. Are office furniture and equipment ergonomically correct?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
a. Desk: 29" high?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Seating: Sturdy and adjustable, with backrest and casters appropriate for floor surface?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Keyboard: In line with wrist and forearm position?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Monitor: 20-24 inches from eyes, top of screen slightly below eye level?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
16. Are work materials and equipment in a secure place that can be protected from misuse or damage?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
17. Are there security requirements in place to protect confidentiality and security of company information and computer systems?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Note: This checklist is not intended to replace an assessment by your risk manager, legal counsel, or worker's compensation provider regarding liability for employees at remote work sites.

Remote Office Procedures

Telework participants will maintain standard office procedures and will make teleworking appear invisible to other business clients, employees and telework employees. Teleworkers should maintain standard office procedure with particular attention to:

1. Maintaining clear, consistent communication with supervisors and receptionists about teleworking days. Teleworkers will sign out and inform the receptionist that they will be teleworking on the day preceding a teleworking day. The receptionist will forward telephone calls to the teleworker's telephone, which then in turn are forwarded to the remote office location, if applicable, or to voicemail.
2. Providing supervisors with at least two days advance notification of variation from the telework schedule noted below.
3. Reporting to office for meetings as scheduled.
4. Identifying an employee working in the office to serve as a resource. This is a co-worker who uses the "buddy system" and is willing to get materials and engage in face-to-face communication with clients when necessary.
5. Communicating actively. Teleworkers need to make themselves accessible to the office staff and clients. Co-workers should be provided with the best means of reaching the teleworker on days working from a remote location.
6. Checking for voicemail and email messages every _____ hours.
7. Being available to answer the telephone during the hours of _____ to _____ and _____ to _____.
8. Responding to pager requests within _____ minutes.
9. Returning phone calls promptly.
10. Accessing the organization's network when pre-approved by teleworker's supervisor.
11. Maintaining the following schedule unless changed by the teleworker and his or her supervisor.

Days: _____

Hours: _____

I have read and understand my employer's Teleworker Remote Office Procedures. I agree to abide by and operate in accordance with the terms and conditions. I agree that the sole purpose of this agreement is to regulate telework and that it neither constitutes an employment contract nor an amendment to any existing contract.

Employee

Supervisor

Date

Teleworker Objectives & Deliverables

Telework supervisors and teleworkers should:

1. Complete this worksheet individually prior to the day of teleworking.
2. Review responses individually and meet to compare responses.
3. Review responses together to develop work management techniques to ensure productive teleworking days.

Employee Name: _____ Date: _____

Objectives	Tasks/Work to be Delivered
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	

Teleworker Status Report

To be completed by the teleworker.

Objectives	Tasks/Work Delivered	Status
1.	Comments:	<input type="checkbox"/> Met <input type="checkbox"/> Not Met
2.	Comments:	<input type="checkbox"/> Met <input type="checkbox"/> Not Met
3.	Comments:	<input type="checkbox"/> Met <input type="checkbox"/> Not Met
4.	Comments:	<input type="checkbox"/> Met <input type="checkbox"/> Not Met
5.	Comments:	<input type="checkbox"/> Met <input type="checkbox"/> Not Met

Teleworker Information Sheet

Please post this at your office/work station prior to your teleworking day.

Teleworker: _____
Title: _____
Division/Department: _____

I can be reached at:

_____	_____	_____
Telephone Number	Fax Number	Email

I report to:

_____	_____	_____
Name	Telephone Number	Email

For assistance when I am telworking, please contact:

_____	_____	_____
Name	Telephone Number	Email

I will return to the office on:

_____	_____
Day	Date

This notice was posted on:

_____	_____
Day	Date

Section 4: Resources

Section 4: Resources

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[Telework Case Studies](#)

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Telework FAQ's

Q: *Do I have to have a computer?*

A: No. Even though we tend to think computers when we talk about teleworking, all you really need is a telephone so the people at work can get in touch with you. Others only need a paper and pencil. It all depends on what kind of work you take home.

Q: *Do I have to stay home all the time?*

A: No. Most teleworkers spend some time in the central office. Some go in once a week for staff meetings. Others split their time between the main office and their remote office. Some work at home only during certain projects. The national average for teleworkers is one to two days per week working from a remote office.

Q: *Can the teleworker change back if it's not working out?*

A: Yes. The teleworker and supervisor should discuss the arrangement periodically and make appropriate decisions.

Q: *Won't the teleworker get out of touch with the office?*

A: Not the teleworkers sets up a way in which you will communicate with your supervisor and colleagues at your central office for the days when you will be teleworking.

Q: *Will the teleworker give up chances for promotion?*

A: No. So far, research shows that teleworkers and their work are noticed more than when they were in the office all the time. Many teleworkers have been promoted because of this.

Q: *Does the teleworker give up benefits by working at home?*

A: No. Teleworkers have the same benefits and salaries as any other employee. It's really no different from working in a branch office instead of an organization's central office.

Q: *What if an employee's home is too small for teleworking?*

A: Teleworkers don't always work at home. They can work anywhere that's convenient. That could be the community library, a room in a local business building with extra space, or a neighborhood teleworking center.

Q: *What if all the work can't be done at a remote office?*

A: A teleworker will need to re-assess the type of work taken home with his or her supervisor. Adjustments can be made along the way during the teleworking experience.

Q: *Is teleworking actually happening in the U.S.?*

A: Yes, it's happening everywhere. Once a new paradigm, it has become a best business practice for smart businesses that want to retain and recruit good employees, as well as reduce space needs and the costs of doing business.

Q: *Does teleworking really save time?*

A: Yes! Calculate how much time it takes a teleworker to commute to the office each day-remembering to add in the walk from the car, subway, or bus. Over a week, a month, or a year, this adds up!

Q: *Who pays for equipment?*

A: Usually, it's the employer. However, some employers, based on their corporate policy, may require the employee to own their own equipment.

Q: *Can money be saved on child or elder dependent care if when an employee teleworks?*

A: Most employers require that teleworkers do not change any type of arrangement they have relative to child or elder care. Teleworkers will be working at home and will not have time to care for their family members and complete their work tasks at hand. Unless, of course, special

Telework FAQ's, cont.

arrangements are made with the employer.

Q: *Can a tax deduction for a home office be taken?*

A: Probably not. Teleworking is voluntary and not a condition required as a condition of work.

Q: *What if the teleworker works with classified information?*

A: Generally the IT department will provide firewalls so classified information cannot be hacked while teleworkers are working remotely.

Q: *Will a second telephone line be needed?*

A: If teleworkers receive telephone calls or faxes from clients and co-workers, most likely yes. Also, if teleworkers are working on the Internet and do not have a high-speed internet connection, they will need a second line.

Q: *Do employees have to telework?*

A: Generally speaking, no. There have been no instances to date where employees are required to telework.

Q: *What if there is a meeting on a telework day?*

A: Company policy will most likely state that teleworkers will need to go to the meeting on their telework day, just as if there was a meeting scheduled and they were working in the central office.

Q: *What if travel for work on the telework day is required?*

A: This answer will probably be found in the company's corporate policy. Some companies feel that any activities that occur while teleworking aren't treated any differently than they would be if the teleworker was working at the main office.

Q: *How does a teleworker deal with neighbors while working at home?*

A: It will probably be a good idea for the teleworker to inform their neighbors why they will notice a car at home more often, or the number of telework days. They will also need to be informed that the teleworker is home to work and not to neighbor.

Q: *Can teleworkers work more than their regular hours?*

A: This will be something teleworkers need to arrange with their supervisor.

Q: *How do teleworkers communicate with co-workers?*

A: It is recommended that teleworkers set up how and when they will communicate with their co-workers prior to the first day of teleworking.

Q: *How many days a week can teleworking occur?*

A: This will depend on company policy. The national average is 1 to 2 days per week.

Q: *What will happen if the teleworker runs out of work on a teleworking day?*

A: Teleworkers will have to work with their supervisor to determine what type of additional work can be done remotely if they finish their telework tasks sooner than anticipated.

Telework Case Studies

The following case studies were adapted from the Commuter Connections Telework Resource Center's 21-month Telework Demonstration Project . Commuter Connections is a regional network of transportation organizations coordinated by the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments. For more information about Commuter Connections, please visit: www.commuterconnections.org.

The Acacia Group

Background:

The Acacia Group, located in Bethesda, Maryland, is a diversified financial services organization that provides financial planning advice for investment managers, insurance, and banking, boasting approximately 250 employees. Due to their relocation from Washington, D.C. to Bethesda in 1997, Acacia had lost many valuable employees. By working with Telework!VA to implement a telework program, Acacia tried to prevent further loss of employees who have long commutes. Acacia's Director of Human Resources Information Services and Employee Services served as the site's telework coordinator. The telework team included representatives from human resources, information technology, legal, and operations.

The Telework Policy:

Acacia's telework program is referred to as the Flexiplace Program. Acacia's Flexiplace Policy and Guidelines includes a seven-page policy statement, a Principles and Guidelines signature page, Flexiplace application, and Flexiplace agreement.

Acacia's Flexiplace policy covers the following areas: rationale, eligibility, work location guidelines, equipment considerations, liability, and security. All Acacia employees are eligible to apply for the Flexiplace Program. Participation is voluntary and may be terminated at any time by either the employee or Acacia. No minimum length of employment is required to be considered for the Flexiplace Program.

Acacia's policy does not include any limitations on the number of days per week an employee can telework. Use of company equipment is handled on a case-by-case basis. Acacia has a four-step approval process for inclusion in the Flexiplace program.

Acacia reported no hardware or software costs. Indirect program staffing costs were \$7,800. Two employees were retained as a result of teleworking for savings of \$121,900. No employees were recruited as a result of teleworking. Acacia reported that productivity generally increased, and that work was measured based on projects completed. Acacia reported no impact on monthly communications charges, overhead, or monthly sick leave usage.

Program Results:

Acacia's teleworkers reported saving an average of 119 minutes in commuting time on telework days. They reported that this time was spent:

Telework Case Studies, cont.

- doing more work for their employer;
- performing household chores;
- spending more time with their families; and
- sleeping.

Acacia's teleworkers, their co-workers, and their managers were surveyed, and teleworkers reported higher productivity, moral, and motivation. Further, teleworkers reported less stress, no feelings of disconnect from their central office, and positive management reinforcement of their telework. Co-workers of teleworkers reported no problems with their reduced interaction with teleworkers. Teleworkers, managers and co-workers all reported that clients noticed no disruption of or decrease in teleworkers' quality of work. Teleworkers, managers, and co-workers agreed that teleworking was good for the organization, useful for employee retention, and mutually satisfying.

Program Evaluation:

Acacia's telework consultant conducted focus groups with managers and teleworkers five months after the program implementation. Teleworkers reported technical communications problems and slow response times when accessing Acacia's LAN. The majority of teleworkers reported they had no understating of how their work was being evaluated. Managers reported they had no formal arrangement for measuring what teleworkers were accomplishing at home. Managers also reported they were seeing more resistance than support for teleworking from other managers despite the fact that teleworking was having a positive effect on employee recruitment and retention, employee morale, and customer satisfaction. Managers felt the program should be continued and that more education was needed for other managers.

Organizational Benefits and Challenges:

Acacia's telework coordinator reported the following benefits and challenges.

Benefits:

- provides work-life balance;
- reduces commuting;
- good business decision for the company.

Challenges:

- merger with another company may slow the program down;
- perception that work is not getting done if employees are not seen in the office;
- having employees pay for their own computers.

Current Status and Future Plans:

Acacia's telework program has expanded. Some of the original teleworkers left, but others have been added. The program included 17 teleworkers in January 1998. Twenty of Acacia's 250 employees were teleworking as of March 1999.

For additional information about Acacia's telework program, contact Janet Schmidt, 301-280-1278 or visit <http://www.acaciagroup.com/>.

BDM International, Inc./TRW

Background:

BDM International, Inc. was a Fortune 1000 multi-national information technology company, located in McLean, Virginia, that provided systems, services, and solutions to public sector and commercial customers. During the course of the Telework Demonstration Project, BDM was acquired by TRW, a major provider of high-technology products and services to the automotive, aerospace, and information markets, with more than 18,000 employees. The acquisition did not effect the site's participation.

The director of diversity served as the site's telework coordinator. Other team members included a corporate attorney, the director of security and safety, the vice president of benefits and compensation, a facilities and corporate support specialist, a business management specialist, the internal audit director, a staff member of decision support and program analysis, network engineering staff, and the director of technical services.

The site's primary business goal for participating in the project was to be the "preferred employer." The team was also looking for ways to reduce office space requirements at the site's new location in Reston, Virginia. TRW's pilot telework program was coordinated with federal Defense Contract Audit Agency representatives.

TRW implemented its pilot telework program with 36 teleworkers in January 1998. Participants included programmers, analysts, engineers, technical writers, human resource staff, and software code testers. Thirteen managers and 19 coworkers completed project surveys.

The Telework Policy:

TRW's one-page telecommuting policy is included in its 49-page Telecommuting Guidelines Manual. This document addresses benefits, participation procedures, eligibility criteria, responsibilities, internal operating process, schedule and time reporting, telecommuting costs and the business case, approval process, hardware and software requirements, security and safety, accidents and claims reporting procedures, orientation and training, monitoring, reports, and evaluation. Participation is voluntary, and the employee or TRW may terminate the agreement at any time. Employees may telecommute from home, a telework center, or another site. Employees initiate a telecommuting request by submitting a written business case describing how the arrangement will benefit the company and the employee.

TRW reported hardware and software costs of \$73,000 and indirect program staffing costs of \$14,200. One employee was retained as a result of teleworking for a cost savings of \$90,000. One employee was recruited as a remote worker (i.e, the employee went to work for the company and did not have to relocate to the Washington region) for a cost savings of \$35,900 in relocation expenses. TRW reported no impact on productivity or sick leave usage (the company has combined sick leave and annual leave).

Telework Case Studies, cont.

Program Results:

Separate focus groups with teleworkers and managers were conducted approximately six weeks after the program was implemented. Teleworkers expressed uncertainty about whether teleworking would change how their performance was measured. Managers reported that teleworking was transparent to clients, and that there had been no issues raised by non-teleworkers. TRW employees reported saving an average of 99 minutes in commuting time on telework days. They reported that this time was spent:

- spending more time with their families;
- doing more work for their employer; and
- doing household chores.

TRW's teleworkers, their co-workers, and their managers were surveyed, and teleworkers reported that they completed more work when teleworking, that teleworking gave them greater flexibility to balance work and family demands, that their morale and motivation had increased, and their stress levels decreased. Teleworkers also reported that they found their management supportive of telework, and co-workers and managers of teleworkers reported no communication problems as a result of teleworking. Co-workers did not find that reduced face-to-face interaction with teleworkers was a problem. Teleworkers, managers, and co-workers reported clients noticed the same quality of work. Co-workers reported teleworking did not create more work for them. Managers believed that teleworking positively impacted employee retention. Teleworkers were extremely satisfied with the program; managers and co-workers were satisfied with the program.

Organizational Benefits & Challenges:

TRW's telework coordinator reported the following benefits and challenges.

Benefits:

- recruitment and retention of talent;
- cost savings;
- employees regard it as beneficial.

Challenges:

- teleworkers found it more convenient to be in the office;
- bandwidth issues (downloading takes a long time);
- general technology-encryption software precludes teleworking for some.

Current Status and Future Plans

The number of teleworkers increased from 36 in January 1998 to 130 in April 1999. The program will be expanded through a coordinated approach by human resources.

For additional information about TRW's telework program, contact Judy McFarland at 703-345-6940 or visit www.trw.com.

The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT)

Background:

The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) is comprised of six modal administrations: the Maryland Aviation Administration, the Motor Vehicle Administration, the Maryland Port Administration, the Mass Transit Administration, the State Highway Administration, and the Maryland Transportation Authority. Prior to the Telework Demonstration Project, MDOT had completed a successful telework pilot program for Headquarters' employees and was looking for a way to expand the program.

MDOT's telework team was led by representatives from Systems Planning and Evaluation and Human Resources. Other team members included representatives from the various modal administrations, finance, and general counsel.

Approximately 50 teleworkers from five of the six modal administrations participated in the Telework Demonstration Project. MDOT's teleworkers included human resources trainers and analysts; financial analysts; procurement specialists; planners; engineers; information services staff; and legal, administrative, and real estate personnel. Twenty managers of teleworkers and 18 coworkers participated in project surveys.

The Telework Policy:

Teleworking at MDOT is a management option, not an employee right. MDOT has a two-page telework policy, a four-page teleworker agreement, and a two-page teleworker's assignment. MDOT's policy has been incorporated into the Transportation Service Human Resource Policy. MDOT management may approve expenditures based on need and available funding for office equipment, software, communications devices, and office supplies needed by teleworkers.

MDOT's teleworkers reported saving an average of 90 minutes in commuting time on telework days. They reported that this time was spent:

- doing more work for their employer;
- spending more time with their families; and
- doing household chores.

MDOT reported no equipment or communications costs. Teleworkers either used their own computers, surplus equipment, or laptop computers already available for employee use. MDOT did not document any impacts on staffing, productivity, absenteeism, overhead, or employee recruitment and retention.

Program Results:

MDOT's telework consultant conducted focus groups with managers and teleworkers approximately 60 days after the pilot was implemented. No major problems were identified; however, not all of the teleworkers who had completed training had begun teleworking. Additional follow-up was conducted to identify causes for this delay and encourage participation.

Telework Case Studies, cont.

MDOT's teleworkers, their co-workers, and their managers were surveyed, and teleworkers and their managers reported increased productivity. Teleworkers also reported a greater flexibility to balance work and family demands, increased morale and motivation, and decreased stress as a result of teleworking. Teleworkers reported that their managers and co-workers were supportive of teleworking; co-workers and managers also reported support for telework. Teleworkers, managers, and co-workers reported that clients noticed the same quality of work. They also did not find it difficult to convene meetings. Co-workers reported that teleworking did not increase their workload. Managers reported that supervising teleworkers did not involve additional time. Teleworkers, managers, and co-workers agreed that teleworking is good for the organization. Teleworkers and their co-workers reported that clients were supportive of teleworking; managers were neutral on this issue. Teleworkers felt that employees are more likely to continue working for MDOT as a result of teleworking.

Organizational Benefits and Challenges:

MDOT's telework coordinator reported the following benefits and challenges.

Benefits:

- reduces traffic congestion and improves air quality;
- enables MDOT to use its experience to initiate telework programs within other organizations;
- improves employee moral and productivity.

Challenges:

- management resistance in some areas;
- lack of off-site technical support;
- lack of criteria for department-wide acquisition of hardware and software for teleworkers;
- difficulties interfacing with remote work sites.

Current Status and Future Plans:

MDOT's telework program has been expanded since the conclusion of the Telework Demonstration Project. Additionally, legislation passed by the Maryland General Assembly in 1998 requires the Secretary of Budget and Management to establish a statewide teleworking pilot program. The goal is to have 10% of all eligible state employees telework.

For additional information about MDOT's telework program, contact Bill Mangels, Office of Systems Planning and Evaluation, at 410-865-1283 or Wesley Hordge, Office of Human Resources, at 410-863-1196.

Telework Resources

Internet Resources

The following organizations offer general telecommuting information and information on telework pilot programs.

Commuter Connections, Washington Council of Governments

www.commuterconnections.org

How to Make Telework Work For Your Organization (e-work guide)

<http://www.ce.org/eworkguide/default.asp>

International Telework Association and Council (ITAC)

<http://www.workingfromanywhere.org>

Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments Telework Resource Center

<http://www.mwcog.org/commuter/Bdy-Telework.html>

Mid-Atlantic Telecommuting Advisory Council (MATAC)

<http://www.dctelecommute.org>

RideShare, Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission

www.rideshareinfo.org

State of Maryland Telework Partnership With Employers (TPE) Program

<http://www.teleworksmart-md.org>

Telecommute Connecticut!

<http://www.telecommutect.com>

Telework.com

www.telework.com

The Telework Consortium

www.teleworkconsortium.org

The Telework Times

<http://radio.weblogs.com/0125927/>

U.S. Government - Cooperative Effort Of Office of Personnel and Management and General Services Administration

<http://www.telework.gov>

U.S. Government - General Services Administration Telework Program

<http://www.gsa.gov/>, search for "Telework Overview"

The following is a list of consultants that help organizations implement and evaluate telework programs.

Clifton Gunderson LLP

9515 Deereco Rd, Ste 500, Lutherville Timonium, MD 21093

(410) 453-0900

Email: nacva@nacva.com www.cliftoncpa.com

Telework Resources, cont.

ICF Consulting

9300 Lee Highway
Fairfax, VA 22031
(703) 934-3000
www.icfconsulting.com

Midwest Institute for Telecommuting Education

1900 Chicago Avenue
Minneapolis, MN 55404
(612) 752-8010
www.mite.org

Strategic Transportation Initiatives, Inc.

PO Box 25
Clifton, VA 20124
(703) 222-9373
Email: STIconsul@aol.com

Creating a Telecommuting Policy, by Kelly Caldwell <http://telework.monster.ca/>

Telecommuting. Employees long for it, but many employers still have their doubts. For some employers, the obstacle to embracing telecommuting stems from a lack of trust in employees. For others, trust isn't the issue, but a lack of experience in how to approach this arrangement is creating the roadblock. However, with the right strategy in place, implementing a telecommuting program for your company can be a step in the right direction for all parties.

Where Should You Start?

First, outline a document with the reasons for the company's decision to consider telecommuting as an employee option. Create a list of the benefits associated with telecommuting. This is the easy part. Among the many employer/employee benefits are the potential for reduced commuting, improved staff morale, etc.

Next, create a list of each change that is necessary for the company to launch its telecommuting program, i.e., what policies are necessary, what equipment will have to be purchased, which management issues need to be addressed, etc. Set guidelines regarding acceptable investments in equipment and office supplies as well.

It's Policy Time

Yes, even something as progressive as a telecommuting strategy requires policy and procedural guidelines. Your first step should be to define what telecommuting means for your organization. This isn't as easy as it sounds, since the definition of telecommuting will vary (at least slightly) for each company.

Next, create a Telecommuting Request Form that you can use to consistently evaluate each employee's fit (and cost) as a telecommuting candidate.

It's also important to create a Telecommuting Agreement that eligible employees should review and sign. This agreement will include the following:

- A definition of the telecommuter's work schedule
- An outline of the probationary period, if applicable
- A list of all work-related items provided by the company
- Acknowledgement that the employee will take precautions to protect company items from damage or theft
- Acknowledgement that the employee will return all company property upon termination or resignation of employment
- Acknowledgement that the employee is responsible for addressing legal or tax-related issues that arise from his or her use of the home as a place of business

Who Gets to Telecommute?

Once you've determined that telecommuting will work for your organization, how will you decide which employees are good candidates for telecommuting? Begin by establishing a series of standards that you will apply to every telecommuting request you receive. First and foremost, the type of position the employee has will be the primary factor in determining whether telecommuting is a viable option for them. Many positions will quickly be eliminated from consideration because they require too much supervision or daily involvement at the office to be

Telework Articles of Interest, cont.

practical for telecommuting. However, other positions may be ideal for telecommuting. Each job description should be analyzed to determine the feasibility of an off-site work arrangement. The suitability of a home working environment should also be assessed. In order to work effectively, the telecommuting employee will need a home-based office area with proper lighting and office furniture.

Next, an employee's tenure with the company can be used as a criterion in your decision-making process. Many companies require a minimum number of months of consecutive employment in order for employees to be eligible for telecommuting. By doing so, employers reward loyal staff and feel more confident that these employees will succeed in this type of arrangement.

Finally, employers place a great deal of trust in employees who work off-site. For this reason, employees with disciplinary problems should not qualify for telecommuting privileges. Establish a time period during which an employee's discipline record must be clear prior to telecommuting eligibility. Similarly, employees with an above-average job performance history should be considered strong candidates for telecommuting. And, generally speaking, the most successful telecommuters are those who can utilize phone, email, and in-person communication with colleagues for support and guidance.

As the trend for telecommuting increases, and more workers dream of trading suits for bathrobes and sensible shoes for fuzzy slippers, the need for best practices in this area is clear. Taking the time to carefully craft a telecommuting strategy that meets the needs of both employee and employer will lay a strong foundation for shared telecommuting success.

How Remote Workers Impact Office Space, by Ken Robertson, KLR Consulting Inc.

Today it is very common to find remote workers in an organization. Remote workers include all employees who spend some portion of their week away from the regular office. The two most common remote workers are those who work from multiple locations in a single day (mobile workers) and those who work from home (teleworkers).

In most organizations the cost of office accommodations are usually only exceeded by the cost of employees. We have studied many clients with remote workers who are typically assigned full-time office spaces. Significant savings can be attained by reengineering your office space to better accommodate remote workers.

Remote workers perform the primary portion of their job outside of the traditional office. When they return to the office they are rarely performing "desk bound" work. They are more likely to be interacting with their manager and peers, dropping off information from the past week or gathering information for the coming week. The office requirements for these employees is very different than for those employees who work exclusively at the office facility. Remote workers are prime candidates for using smaller, shared workstations.

Mobile workers spend a large amount of time outside of the office. Many of these employees are only in the office one day a week. They are usually equipped with portable technology such as a cellular phone, notebook computer, portable printer and a cellular modem. These employees truly work out of a virtual office. The location of work can include their customer's site, their vehicle or their home. When these employees return to the regular office they can be accommodated in much smaller, shared space where they will set up their portable technology - basically only requiring a connection to the local network.

Telework Articles of Interest, cont.

Teleworkers typically work from home two to three days a week. The majority of their "heads-down" work is performed at home. The home office should be constructed as an ergonomically-acceptable space. Teleworkers will have either a dedicated desktop computer or a portable notebook computer, modem and possibly a low-end printer in their home office. Like the mobile workers they can utilize a small shared space in the central office where they can plug in their notebook and access a telephone line.

Organizations with remote workers should rethink the way they use space. Having full-time dedicated offices for these employees is wasteful. Organizations can save significant dollars by having remote workers share small workstations. For remote workers this could mean, for example, having four employees sharing one workstation while for teleworkers there could be five employees sharing three workstations.

The bottom-line return can be substantial. Consider an organization of 200 employees with 10% of the employees working as mobile workers and 10% teleworking. The organization currently uses 40,000 square feet to accommodate its employees (200 workstations). Under the guidelines presented above, the organization could reduce its space by at least 4,600 square feet. At approximately \$25 per square foot for annual operating costs this minor change saves \$115,000 annually.

The business benefits of redesigning space for remote workers is impressive. If you have remote workers in your organization you should start to think about how you can institute a space-sharing program to reduce your organization's operating costs. The savings achieved can be used to support enhancements in other areas or to improve profitability.

Bringing the Office Home, by Alan Joch State Tech, Spring 2004

State and local governments are making teleworking programs succeed in an era of tight budgets and heightened security concerns. Here's how they're doing it.

As the transportation planner for the city of Stamford, Conn., it's Thomas Bruccoleri's job to pore over proposals for new developments to make sure increased traffic won't snarl downtown roadways. So where does he go when he has to think about traffic? Anywhere but Interstate 95.

Like a growing number of public and private workers in Connecticut, Bruccoleri is a regular teleworker. Whenever he avoids his hour-long commute on I-95, he becomes more efficient. "My productivity stays high at home because I'm able to stay focused," he reports from his home office, which is equipped with a notebook computer, a digital personal organizer and voice mail services provided by the city. "At the office, there are frequent interruptions. Here, I can concentrate for long periods of time."

Although he teleworks only one day a week because his job requires frequent meetings with officials and developers, Bruccoleri believes he's benefiting along with his employer. Besides enjoying higher productivity when working at home, he has two extra hours to himself, and he saves money on gas and car maintenance. Plus, he's not adding to the gridlock and pollution on I-95.

For years, states and cities have been promoting teleworking (also called telecommuting) for their own employees and for those of private employers. Now, two new challenges are making teleworking a hotter topic than ever.

Telework Articles of Interest, cont.

First, state and local authorities, like their federal counterparts, worry that nearly a third of their work force could be lost to retirement as early as 2006. However, innovative work arrangements seem to keep talent in the public sector. For example, officials in Lakewood, Colo., report that 68 percent of the city's teleworkers said they are less likely to look for another job thanks to this option.

Second, teleworking can make financial sense in an era of tight budgets. Fewer office workers means reduced demand for office space, which can add up to a sizable expense: An office, utilities, workstations and other necessities cost about \$10,000 a year for each employee.

"Telework is increasingly being seen by states as a potential solution to reducing costs and dealing with their fiscal crises," says Christina Dorfhuber, Pittsburgh-based principal and head of public-sector human capital activities at Deloitte, a professional services firm headquartered in New York.

While teleworking may address these two challenges, advocates say it's also attractive for other reasons. A North Carolina study estimated that having 5 percent of state employees teleworking five days a week would increase productivity, reduce office leases and lower employee turnover. Together, that would save the state \$23 million per year.

In other studies, organizations that sponsored teleworking programs cut turnover by 20 percent, boosted productivity by 22 percent and reduced absenteeism by 60 percent, according to the International Telework Association and Council (ITAC) in Silver Springs, Md. "Teleworking is something to do today because it's a business solution to business problems, not because it's trendy," says consultant Gil Gordon, president of Gil Gordon Associates in Monmouth Junction, N.J.

Skepticism Remains

With numbers like these, you'd think the country would be littered with vacant office buildings emptied by people who are working at home. Yet, despite its huge potential, teleworking remains something of a workplace wallflower. Last year, about 23.5 million Americans teleworked, up nearly 40 percent over two years, according to ITAC. But compared to the nation's total labor force of 147 million, only a fraction is taking advantage of this flexible alternative to the traditional office.

One of the reasons for this lack of interest is the cost of setting up a home office. Depending on job requirements, organizations could spend \$3,500 or more to equip a home office. (See "The Well-Equipped Home Office" on page 22.) In addition, consulting and training for mid-size agencies to implement a teleworking program can top \$25,000.

Upfront costs aren't the only problem, though. Security concerns leave states scrambling to devote tight IT budgets to homeland security projects. The fight for technology dollars "has been pretty heated," Deloitte's Dorfhuber says. "With budget crises the way they are, there is some hesitation to invest in telework technology. Although it is appealing on many levels, there are cost efficiencies to be gained from other activities too."

Network security is another big issue. Having hundreds of outside-the-firewall workers remotely logging on to internal networks creates headaches for CIOs. "Don't underestimate the impact on security and the technical support infrastructure," warns Linda Finley, director of Minnesota's Office of Technology in St. Paul.

Telework Articles of Interest, cont.

Then there are the managerial challenges. “With the passage of time, teleworking no longer elicits a ‘Huh?’ reaction,” consultant Gordon says. “What hasn’t changed is an inbred resistance from some managers— resistance that’s often based on misinformation and myth.”

This may be especially true in the public sector. Managers used to working in a bureaucratic environment “are being asked to perform unnatural acts,” says Gina Vega, professor of business at Merrimack College in North Andover, Mass., and author of *Managing Teleworkers and Teleworking Strategies*. “It creates problems when they’re suddenly asked to relinquish tight control.”

Finley believes managerial doubts— along with security, support issues and cultural change—are partially responsible for slowing the spread of teleworking throughout Minnesota government. “It’s human nature for managers to have an interest in seeing what people are doing,” she says. “In Minnesota, there’s still a cultural attitude on the part of some people who think that if you’re not physically at work, you’re not working. But technology enables us to take advantage of things like teleworking, and we should leverage that capability.”

Though managers seem to have the most concerns about teleworking, they aren’t the only ones affected by the change it brings about. Employees who have grown used to office camaraderie and water-cooler conversations might worry that “out of sight” means “out of mind” when the time comes for raises and promotions. “It’s nice to think people recognize us for our accomplishments, but managers do need to see our faces or we tend to get overlooked for promotions,” Professor Vega says.

Although certain dangers do exist, a number of states, including Connecticut and Arizona, feel that these fears are exaggerated. They believe that with well-structured programs in place, the benefits of teleworking far outweigh the risks involved.

Connecticut’s Bankroll

Connecticut estimates that at least 117,000 private- and public-sector employees in the state regularly telework an average of two days per week. This is good news for a state that is striving to reduce pollution and traffic congestion, especially in the southern part of Connecticut, according to Dennis Jolly, supervising planner for the Department of Transportation (DOT) in Newington.

Five years ago, the state implemented a service to encourage teleworking. It gives state support for seven independent contractors to provide free consulting and training to employers—public and private—who are interested in teleworking. “We’ll provide any service they need, other than legal, to help them decide about teleworking,” Jolly explains.

The state recently boosted the annual budget of the program, known as Telework Connecticut, by 25 percent to \$500,000. Currently, 126 employers participate in the program, including the cities of Stamford and Plainville, representing about 3,500 teleworkers.

Spending half a million dollars a year for teleworking may prove to be a bargain. “Instead of spending hundreds of millions of dollars on a new highway, [the DOT] is trying to reduce the number of people on the road through teleworking,” says James Lush, Telework Connecticut project manager based in Hamden. “It’s one sure way to get cars off the road.” He estimates that mid-size employers receive about \$25,000 to \$30,000 worth of free consulting services.

Telework Articles of Interest, cont.

Most clients use the services to transform ad-hoc teleworking into a formal program. “We begin by helping employers define their telework goals,” Lush says. Some see opportunities to save money, others want to retain valuable employees and still others expect productivity gains. When the goal is productivity, Lush works to dampen expectations, at least in the beginning. “It may take two to three months after a person begins to telework before all the components fit together” and greater efficiency kicks in, he explains.

Once the consultants help an employer design a formal policy, the program’s technology specialists step in to analyze the computing and telecommunication needs at both the headquarters and field locations. The main questions the specialists try to answer are: Does the employer have the right infrastructure for teleworkers to achieve increased productivity? Equally important, can that be done securely? In addition to establishing broadband accounts and virtual private networks (VPNs), employers should consider subscribing to telephony services that offer home offices the same voice mail and call-forwarding features as the main office.

At this point, negotiations begin between employers and teleworking candidates over who pays for what office equipment. “If the teleworker deals with sensitive or confidential information, it behooves the employer to provide all the computing equipment and connectivity services,” Lush says. “Then the employer is in a position of control and can say, ‘You must maintain complete confidentiality in your home office, and no one else can use the computer for any reason.’ People who work from home for the first time don’t think about the fact that kids can get on the computer at night, download a virus and the next day everyone in the company is affected by it.”

Some employers even provide office furniture to ensure that workers use ergonomically correct equipment. This minimizes the chances of workers’ compensation complaints down the road.

The final step is to begin a pilot to help employers and employees work out job, technology or cultural difficulties. “We sit down, iron out the bumps in the road and then roll out teleworking to the rest of the workplace,” Lush says.

Arizona Pioneers

In 1995, Arizona mandated that 15 percent of its state work force—about 3,300 workers—would telework at least one day a week to cut down on Phoenix area smog. Recently, the state upped that goal to 20 percent. At the same time, teleworking is becoming a key tool for the state to attract and retain employees.

With current state-employee turnover rates at 14 percent, Arizona is paying about \$40 million per year in human resource expenses to maintain appropriate staffing levels, says John Corbett, telework programs administrator for the state’s Department of Administration in Phoenix. “If we could avoid one-in-ten voluntary turnovers by being more flexible, it would represent a significant saving,” he says.

The state doesn’t have hard numbers showing how effective teleworking is in reducing turnover, but Corbett believes more teleworkers will translate into happier employees. “We have anecdotal stories from workers who were offered more [money] to jump ship but stayed because of teleworking,” he says.

Arizona plans to use teleworking to target its most productive and valuable employees by giving them greater flexibility in managing their work and family lives “before they begin looking for something more flexible elsewhere,” Corbett says. “We’re sitting in a calm sea, but right around

Telework Articles of Interest, cont.

corner is the tempest,” as improvement in the overall economy reduces the pool of available workers.

Before the “tempest” hits, Arizona will draw on the lessons it learned as a teleworking pioneer. State agencies start with a pilot project, which helps them set criteria for determining the best home-based candidates: primarily those whose jobs don’t require constant office interactions with co-workers and who excel at working independently. Few Arizona teleworkers work at home full-time, choosing instead to work offsite only part of the week.

How state agencies outfit teleworkers with technology depends on individual needs. Some teleworkers need only a removable storage drive and disks to ferry files between home and office. Some get subsidies for broadband network connections so they can access office files as quickly as if they were onsite. Either way, they’re required to install firewall and antivirus software, and a connection to protect their home-office computers and communications links.

Although Arizona has learned a lot from its long history with teleworking, some questions remain, including how to soften managerial resistance. “In the beginning, we thought acceptance was just a matter of letting them know what teleworking was, but education alone hasn’t been enough,” Corbett says. “Managers were not seeing what was in it for them as a business strategy, but instead saw telework as something they had to go along with.”

Corbett’s answer is to bring about cultural change among reticent managers by framing teleworking as part of a work-life balancing effort. “Initially, they say, ‘This is just a touchy-feely thing to do; we don’t manage people’s lives,’” Corbett says. However, as family-friendly benefits become the norm, skepticism decreases. Eventually, teleworking “becomes a business decision,” he reports.

Just Do It

Because IT is at the heart of most teleworking arrangements, CIOs might cringe at the prospect of adding one more burden to their overworked staffs. But some believe a proactive approach can actually decrease support headaches.

Minnesota’s Finley notes that teleworking is especially beneficial to technology workers, and points to people on her own staff as an example. “Programmers are well-suited to work from home,” she explains, and they typically don’t require help desk support when equipment misbehaves.

“If an organization is typical of many these days, it already has ‘guerrilla teleworking’—teleworkers in place without a formal policy,” says David Fleming, founder of Fleming LTD in Davis, Calif. This can create problems since informal policies that determine who gets to telework and how their home offices are equipped can make employers vulnerable to discrimination and workers’ compensation issues, he explains.

Fleming, who helped implement the state of California’s first teleworking project in the 1980s, also warns that “formal” shouldn’t mean “onerous.” The California agencies that failed to implement effective teleworking programs often crafted overly restrictive policies, such as insisting that teleworkers stay in almost constant contact with skeptical supervisors to convince the supervisors that they were working. “No one wanted to telework under those conditions,” he recalls.

In contrast, Minnesota has developed broad teleworking guidelines for agency managers, but

Telework Articles of Interest, cont.

gives them the freedom to customize the policies to accommodate their department's needs. "Each agency uses its own discretion on how to handle home workers," Finley explains. Consultant Gordon offers one last piece of advice for state and local governments considering a teleworking program. "Just jump in and do it," he urges. "You can benchmark telework in pilot projects for the next 10 years, but the only way to know how effective it will be is to try it. We know teleworking works. The only question is how to tailor it for your individual organization."

4 Keys to Effectively Manage Remote and Mobile Workers, by Phil Montero founder, www.youcanworkfromanywhere.com

Most organizations feel one of the biggest challenges they face when implementing a telework program is managing mobile or remote workers. It is unfortunate that many organizations let this perception stop them from reaping the many benefits of telecommuting and a more flexible workplace.

Remote management is not much different from managing people on-site. The biggest difference is the shift in management style from "eyeball management" (assuming workers are being productive because you physically see them at their desks working) to managing by results.

By learning to manage by results rather than activity, improving communication and nurturing trust between managers and employees, the whole organization benefits. In fact, managers of telecommuters have reported that their overall management skills increased for both on and off-site workers.

There are 4 main keys to managing remote employees. These tips for distance management will help you work more successfully with your mobile workers and virtual teams.

Basics of managing remote or mobile workers

- Managing by results, not activity
- Improving communication (staying connected)
- Handling meetings and schedules
- Feedback and support

MANAGING BY RESULTS, NOT ACTIVITY

One of the most common fears that managers and executives have when considering a telecommuting program in their organization is "How do I know my employees will be working if I'm not there to watch them?" Well the simple answer is that you won't, not every minute. But realistically, you can't be sure they are really working every minute you see them in the office either. It is easy to confuse activity with accomplishments.

A manager's job is to provide specific, measurable, and attainable goals for the teleworker to meet so that he or she knows what must be done and when. These can include reports completed, number of calls made, number of support issues resolved or any other appropriate measure of job productivity.

It is important that the employee and manager arrive upon a shared definition of the deliverables and timetable together. This ensures that everyone is on the "same page" and prevents any miscommunication. It also ensures that the goals and expectations are realistic.

Telework Articles of Interest, cont.

A manager's value to an organization is as more of a coach and mentor, not an overseer. This move away from "eyeball management" and the resulting clearer definition of employee job responsibilities are one of the major contributing factors to the improved productivity normally experienced with telecommuting.

Shifting your focus to performance based management will help you build a more productive mobile workforce.

IMPROVING COMMUNICATION (STAYING CONNECTED)

Communication is one of the most important elements to ensure a successful telework program. This is one area of remote work that technology helps make easier every day. A variety of tools are available today to make it easier than ever to stay in touch and collaborate.

The most obvious way to ensure proper communication with teleworkers is to have defined working hours. By clearly setting expectations of what hours employees need to be available up front, you can circumvent a common point of confusion and ensure timely communication. The key is developing the balance between being in touch and being pestered. This sense you can foster over time.

Another common area of miscommunication and concern that tends to cause problems when dealing with remote workers is the timeliness of communication. Managers and on-site coworkers are often concerned with being able to get in touch with remote workers when needed.

Any easy, but often overlooked, solution to this problem is to create a set schedule for voice and e-mail checking and responding. This can be hourly, twice a day or whatever works for your situation along with an expected response time appropriate for your organizations communication needs. By having this schedule clearly defined everyone can rest assured knowing when their messages will be received and responded to.

There are also a variety of activities managers can do to make sure that remote employees are "connected" and still feel like part of the gang at the office. This includes having regularly scheduled phone calls, making sure to include remote workers in impromptu lunches and other social events and routing more informal information, memos and FYI items to them.

HANDLING MEETINGS AND SCHEDULES

Meetings are a necessary part of any organization or team project. These meetings serve a variety of purposes including sharing information, keeping up to date on what's going on, making decisions, reporting on progress, brainstorming and exploring ideas, plans and alternatives.

Keeping track of everyone's schedules and including remote workers in meetings is viewed as a big stumbling block by many organizations investigating telecommuting, but this doesn't have to be the case. By being creative with time management and using the available technology and tools properly, these can become non-issues.

There are a variety of web-based groupware/virtual office and dedicated software solutions available today to help organizations manage group schedules and shared calendars. This allows both on and off-site employees to always have access to current schedules and up to date information on last minute scheduling changes.

Telework Articles of Interest, cont.

One important realization is that not all meetings need to be "face-to-face." If you use technology properly, remote workers can use a combination of teleconferencing, videoconferencing, groupware and web conferencing to participate in meetings and attend presentations in real time without having to travel and waste valuable time. This also allows you to include remote workers in important ad hoc meetings that might arise.

For those times when meetings require face-to-face communication, try to schedule these meetings when teleworkers or team members will be in the office. To make this even easier, schedule consistent meetings (maybe a staff meeting the 2nd Tuesday of every month or a team meeting every Friday). Knowing in advance when a meeting is going to occur makes it much easier to plan around.

FEEDBACK AND SUPPORT

Another basic management technique that we often fall short with is giving employees ongoing feedback and support. Many employees - at all levels of an organization - believe they don't get enough feedback from managers on how they are performing.

Regular meetings should be scheduled between managers and telecommuters to assess needs, give feedback and discuss problems. This is an excellent opportunity to discuss the initially agreed upon scope of work to be done, timelines, and deadlines.

Another important way to improve the relationship with remote or mobile workers is to be sure to include them in feedback and praise. Many managers and executives give feedback and praise to their employees in a very informal way. Often it comes to mind when they see these colleagues or coworkers in the office. Telecommuters don't have as many opportunities to "bump into" the boss or a manager so some extra effort is required to provide it.

This doesn't have to mean a lot of extra work. Even using simple, quick ways of letting people know how they are doing such as a brief voice or email, a quick note jotted in the margin of a report or memo or a short chat when they are in the office can help make sure your employees get this much needed feedback.

Also don't forget to occasionally make the pat on the back public at a staff meeting. This assures onsite workers that the telecommuters are still carrying their load and is another way to help minimize any possible resentment that onsite employees might feel toward telecommuters and their work arrangements.

Fear of the challenges of managing mobile workers and staying connected are two of the most common obstacles organizations face. This often prevents them from taking advantage of the power and flexibility that comes with having a more mobile workforce.

Don't let this get in your way. As I mentioned, most of these management techniques and strategies are not new. They are the same things that good managers have been doing for years to make sure they build trust and clear communication among their team. Using the guidelines I've shared with you in these four key areas you can work from anywhere effectively and keep your team connected!

Section 5: Notes

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