

Article

Working Virtually – Win/Win

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Almost any office-based work can be successfully performed remotely. There is overwhelming data to suggest that this model provides a win-win result for companies and employers. Companies are reporting an increase in productivity, dramatic savings in real estate costs, lower absenteeism and increased opportunities to recruit top talent. Workers also report increased productivity, lower commuting costs and greater job satisfaction. Combine these benefits with the fact that this model also allows companies to meet the goals established in the *Clean Air Act of 1990*, which stipulates that every company with 100 or more employees must "reduce solo driving among their employees." Although the benefits of working remotely; telecommuting; Virtual offices or any of the other common terms used to define this structure are proven, and telecommunication costs have decreased dramatically, there are still issues that must be addressed in order to optimize the benefits of this working arrangement.



Reasons to Embrace Tele-working

- Immediate and long-term cost reductions by reducing office space and related overhead.
- Increased productivity, reports from virtual workers and employees report substantial increases in productivity due to fewer interruptions and less stress.
- Attracting and keeping top talent who prefer or require alternative work arrangements
- Capitalize on government incentives and avoid costly sanctions (Clean Air Act)
- Home office tax deductions and other indirect cost savings.

Technological Factors that Supports Virtual Work Arrangements

- High Speed networking and communications technology such as 128 Kbps ISDN lines
- Corporate intranets that extent to the home.
- Software for collaborations, video- and audio-conferencing, groupware products.

Challenges

- The big challenge for employers is control. Monitoring performance is more difficult for those working at home. Therefore, clear expectations must be established, documented and agreed upon.
- Remote workers often feel left out of the company or social process. This can lead to isolation and boredom resulting in professional and personal problems.
- An opposite effect is workaholic telecommuters find it difficult to end their day.
- Temptations such as over eating, engaging those who believe that can visit because the worker is home, and over engaging is household responsibilities when they should be working causes problems for some.

Define these areas to create your Remote Worker agreement:

- What is remote working?
- Selecting the right types of people
- Developing remote workers
- Managing remote workers
- Risks associated with remote work
- Technology as an enabler