

Telecommuting: The Future of Work Part II

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Telecommuting

- Telecommuting Basics
- Employee Advantages
- The Disadvantages
- Suitable Job Tasks
- Teleworker Characteristics



Telecommuting Basics

- Telecommuting is quickly becoming a way of working for several reasons, i.e. cost of fuel, time spent commuting, etc
- However, some organizations still want the staff in the office
 - They aren't seeing the benefits of telecommuting employees
- So let's review the telecommuting way of work

Telecommuting Basics

- There are two types of telecommuting:
 1. Routine work which occurs as part of an ongoing, regular schedule
 2. Situational work approved on a case-by-case basis where the hours are NOT part of a previously approved regular schedule
- When one refers to telecommuting, the first type is the one that most frequently comes to mind

Telecommuting Basics

- The concept of telecommuting often carries misleading ideals



- We need to understand the realistic expectations

Telecommuting Basics

- The ability to work from home depends on a trusting employer, space at home, a supporting family, and self-discipline
 - There may be expectations to get house chores done because you are home



- Be sure your family understands your work schedule to avoid problems

Telecommuting Basics

- It will be important to communicate with co-workers and your boss
 - Take advantage of tools such as, skype, e-mail and phone for co-worker communications
 - Keep your communications skills honed for professional interaction
 - Your boss may establish a communication plan
 - Anticipate attending mandatory meetings



Telecommuting Basics

- Working from home is just like working in an office – same commitments, same efforts, just a different location
- You won't have the free time that you think you will
 - Some teleworkers find themselves working more than the standard 8 hours
 - Start off with a standard work week and slowly work up to a flexible schedule

Telecommuting Basics

- Telecommuting is not the means for an end to day care
 - Watching children during work hours will vary with each employer
 - Children coming home after school or home on a holiday is usually acceptable
 - If the child's care interferes with productivity then you should maintain daycare



Employee Advantages

- It allows for a better work-life balance
 - Provides greater flexibility to schedule doctor visits, parent-teacher days, and other important non-work tasks
- Less Distraction
 - Tasks that require concentration are well suited for teleworkers
 - You don't have employees stopping by your desk to chat

Employee Advantages

- Cuts down on wasted meetings
 - Conference calls or web based meetings are better planned
- Less Stress
 - Relief from the stress of the commute
 - Eliminates the urgency to get home for family commitments

Employee Advantages

- Social Benefits
 - What teleworkers save in commute time can be spent in after-school or community events



Employee Advantages

- Telecommuting reduces the risk of fatalities and injuries that result from traffic accidents during rush hour
- Reduces wear and tear on your car
- You may qualify for a rate reduction on your car insurance with reduced mileage



- Telecommuting protects our environment by reducing toxic fuel emissions

Employee Advantages

- Increases Employee Empowerment
 - Remote work forces people to be more independent and self-directed



Disadvantages

- Social Interaction
 - Feel less like part of the team and miss the office banter
 - Isolation, especially when the rest of the family is out of the house
- Hard to separate work from home life
 - The convenience of having an office so close can make it challenging to stay away from work
 - It is important to have a separate work space in the home

Disadvantages

- Motivation
 - It can be harder to be motivated
 - Distractions at home might tempt you to do other things than work
- Internet Connection
 - Good connectivity is necessary to be productive
 - Down time and power outages can affect your work flow

Suitable Job Tasks

- Routine, repetitive tasks are ideal
 - This type of work requires less supervision or interaction
- Analysis for creating reports or conducting studies
- Data entry which requires concentration for accuracy



Suitable Job Tasks

- General cancer registry tasks suitable for telecommuting are:
 - Casefinding
 - Abstracting
 - Follow-Up
 - Quality Control
 - Database Specific Reports
 - Reports for Studies
 - Cancer Conference Preparations
 - Cancer Committee Preparations
 - Outcomes
- Many management tasks can be done remotely with good communication skills

Teleworker Characteristics

- Self-Motivated and Self-Disciplined
 - Some people struggle with being productive when no one is checking up on them
 - Teleworkers must develop regular routines and set their own deadlines
- Teleworkers must be good performers
 - You must demonstrate you can solve problems on your own and complete tasks on your own

Telework Characteristics

- Organization and Time Management
 - At the office there are subtle cues to keep a person on task when you know someone is watching
 - At home, it is more difficult to manage time and stay on task
 - The more organized your workspace and habits are the more productive you will be

Teleworker Characteristics

- Telecommuting reduces the amount of supervision and feedback immediately available
 - Teleworkers must be adept at making independent decisions supported by supervisors
- A teleworker needs to be confident and resourceful as there will be no one to guide you step-by-step

Remember

- Telecommuting is not an employee benefit
 - It is a management option and an employee privilege



"So will it always be just an office romance for us?"

Summary

- Consider your job tasks and the suitability of doing those tasks remotely
- Identify your work characteristics to determine if you are ready to work remotely or need to develop and fine tune some skills
- Weight the pros and cons of telecommuting based on your home environment and office

References & Resources

- <http://www.telecommuting360.com>
- <http://globalworkplaceanalytics.com/resources/costs-benefits>
- <http://www.teleworktoolkit.com>