

## Members Quarterly

Spring 2014 Edition

## Perspective

## The Art of Teleworking

*It's not just a benefit for employees anymore*

It's hard to believe how many organizations still have problems with employees working from home. With all the new technology available, monitoring time and output is so much easier than it was years ago. That, along with a proper reporting system, makes it very difficult for employers to state that productivity or time spent on work drops when the employees are not on site at the office location.

Employers should carefully look at the benefits of telework—it's not just an employee perk. We experience long delays and dangerous travelling conditions. We get people calling in sick or having to stay at home with their kids because of bus cancellations or school closures. Even in summer months, we experience a greater number of severe weather issues with high humidity, heat, tornado warnings, etc. Wouldn't it be more conducive to have them work at home and get their deadlines met with a potential increase in productivity and job satisfaction? Beyond monitoring login times to corporate networks and output on certain functions, managers can schedule team meetings at regular intervals to review progress on projects and tasks.

Employees should also respect the fact that working from home is not the opportunity to slack off or take personal appointments without advising their managers and supervisors. If you have a medical appointment booked during business hours, it is common courtesy to advise your superiors in case they need to reach you. It would be appreciated that if you took a few hours off for personal time, this time would be made up after hours so you don't fall behind. Just because your employer has your cell number doesn't mean that you don't have to communicate time away from work. There is nothing more frustrating for managers than trying to get hold of you on an urgent matter to discover that they can't reach you for hours due to a doctor's appointment.

For employees, working from home is definitely a benefit but certain conditions must be met. If there are core hours of the day where everyone should be on duty, those hours should be stipulated in advance. Meetings can now be conducted via the Internet which provides an excellent alternative to bringing people in, particularly with the severe weather changes. With instant messaging and email, you probably get quicker replies to your questions than waiting to see the other party in person or playing telephone tag.

Most employees who telework realize the big advantage. They truly make the effort to go above and beyond in their tasks even without overtime pay. They spend more hours each day on work. They may respond to emails after business hours if this is an accepted practice. They see telework as a true benefit of working for their organization.

All conditions pertaining to work should be stipulated and discussed beforehand. Make sure that you don't change the game rules as you go along. Once you have the buy-in and have faith in your workforce, telework will be a win-win situation for all parties involved!



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