



Vol.6 Number 2
February 2006

Remote Teleworking = Savings and Productivity

Many of us have an image in mind when we think of teleworking: It usually involves someone lounging in their bathrobe, alternating between online Solitaire and perusing eBay®, occasionally getting some work done in-between. But the fact of the matter is that this perception is a myth. Today's workforce is much more self-motivated and self-reliant than those of the past.

Just look at the example of AT&T. AT&T has reported \$180 million in yearly operational savings from deploying a teleworking workforce. This figure breaks out roughly to \$148 million in increased productivity and \$34 million in real estate savings. The number of AT&T managers who telework full time actually doubled from 2001 to 2003. Massive organizations like AT&T and small companies alike are all starting to realize the competitive advantages that teleworking can offer.

It's a simple fact that by employing a substantial part of your workforce working from their homes, you can dramatically reduce physical infrastructure costs, including real estate and utilities. You can recruit the absolute best talent from a national labor pool, and experience boosts in productivity from employees that are no longer bogged down in commutes to work and internal office politics. Plus, it is considered a major employment benefit to most employees to be able to work from their own homes.

Analysis has shown that employees are more than capable of working in a remote environment, and producing the same-if not better-results than before. All that's needed is a thoughtful examination of where teleworking will do the most good, and how it should be implemented to have the strongest positive impact across your organization.

Teleworking the Smart Way

To employ a remote teleworking process that maximizes productivity while minimizing any surprises, you should carry out an audit to determine the jobs that are best suited for this environment. You should consult all departmental managers, HR, IT and facilities management to build your action plan. Certain managers may perceive remote working as a threat to their level of control. This makes it essential to lay out the benefits to all participants, and move forward in a slow and deliberate fashion. You need to have a clear view of how your corporate culture is going to evolve before your remote teleworking plan is put into action. Once employees are actually operating offsite, be sure that regular interaction is maintained between the workers and managers. Employees still need to feel that they are an active part of the team.



When implementing a network that employs teleworking access, you must spend the proper diligence in evaluating the technology to be employed. The best teleworking appliances use echo cancellation and noise detection algorithms to improve voice quality, and your remote employees should be able to access all of the features and functionality available to your on-site team. Proper vendor selection is critical in getting the most from your remote application deployment.

The Future is Now

A joint survey performed in 2004 by AT&T and the Economist Intelligence Unit showed that 81% of executives viewed remote access to their corporate network as a "critical" or "important" goal. The study projected that 79% of companies would be employing VoIP for remote working in 2006, due to the robust functionality that VoIP offered for remote workers as compared to a PBX-based system.

This data provides concrete evidence that enterprises are shifting to an operating model where remote working is considered a vital strategy. Lower costs and increased productivity are the primary benefits. When this is combined with the new tools available to enhance remote networking, many organizations are discovering a winning combination.

If it hasn't already reached you, teleworking is probably on your horizon in some form. And it should be embraced as a new operating model that can energize your entire team. The image of the stay-at-home slacker is gone, and it has been replaced by a highly-mobile, highly-dynamic workforce that has found a new and better way to conduct business.

