

Georgia Commute Options - Case Study

Drew Eckl & Farnham, LLP



ORGANIZATION:

Drew Eckl & Farnham, LLP

INDUSTRY:

Law firm

LOCATION:

Atlanta, Georgia

STATISTICS:

- 225 employees
- 24 active teleworkers
- Pilot began in 2004

REASONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION:

- Reduce time employees spend commuting
- Improve morale
- Improve quality of work
- Reduce parking needs and cost
- Improve employees' work-life balance

CHALLENGES:

Incorporating existing teleworkers into a formalized program

BUSINESS BENEFITS:

- Improved morale
- Increased productivity
- Improved recruitment and retention

"Our teleworking program has proven to be increasingly popular, as it allows attorneys and paralegals to complete work more quickly without wasting time in peak hour traffic, and without detriment to their personal or family time. We were also able to reduce our firm's parking space needs by increasing the number of teleworkers."

- Reinhard Breckner, Director of Administration

Drew Eckl & Farnham, LLP, is a litigation firm specializing and principally representing the risk industry. The company's telework program was developed in 2004 with the selection of 20 employees to participate in the pilot program. A steering committee was convened to develop company policies and procedures for the pilot.

All teleworkers were required to have high speed Internet access and remote access was provided through a Virtual Private Network. Teleworkers were also required to have a second phone line. Teleworker selection was based on recommendations by partners. The program includes attorneys, paralegals and has grown to include three secretarial staff.

A two-hour training session was conducted for all teleworkers and their managers that covered tips for successful managing of teleworking and for being organized teleworkers. The training session also provided an overview of company policies for teleworking, as well as the technology and telecommunications components.

Some of the challenges included initially gaining management approval for the pilot and also gaining supervisor's approval for participation. Another challenge has been to find suitable digital dictation equipment for the law industry. The main challenge of the program was introducing remote work in an environment, which had been traditionally more accustomed face-to-face interactions. Both managers and teleworkers initially expressed concerns regarding visibility in a telework environment.

To learn more about teleworking, contact Georgia Commute Options.

1-877-9-GA-OPTIONS | Telework@GaCommuteOptions.com

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STAFF TELEWORKING:

Professional, managerial, technical/skilled, director/executive, sales/marketing and clerical support

PROGRAM COMPONENTS:

- Policy and program guidelines
- Technology and ergonomics guidelines
- Employees use own equipment
- Teleworkers had to provide high speed Internet access
- Remote access provided through Cintrix and a Virtual Private Network
- Training, discussion forums, and formal evaluation

LESSONS LEARNED:

- To have a seamless operation, the computer technology must work, but the telephony component must also be well-planned.
- It takes a few months for the program to settle in and for problems to be resolved. After that, it is easy to expand.

PROGRAM RESULTS

PRODUCTIVITY

- About 42% of teleworkers reported increased productivity with the remaining reporting that productivity levels remained constant. 50% of management also reported increased productivity.

THE WORKPLACE

- 92% of teleworkers reported improved morale as a result of the program; 75% of the managers concurred.
- Teleworkers do not report any problems with coworkers.
- 77% report that management and supervisors are supportive of teleworking.

PROGRAM EXPANSION

- About 94% of teleworkers and 100% of managers report that teleworking is "good for the organization."
- 75% of managers are willing to expand the program.

TRAFFIC IMPACTS

- Prior to the program, 100% of participants drove alone. After the launch of the pilot, the drive alone rate decreased to 70%, with 12% of the change being attributed to teleworking.
- At pilot program levels, teleworkers will reduce 81,000 vehicle miles, 200 lbs of VOCs and 164 lbs of NOx annually.
- On average, teleworkers save 86 minutes each day and use that time to work more for their employer (92%), spend time with their family (52%) and get more done at home (42%).

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