Best Practices for Teleworking

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Defining Telework

- Extends the workplace beyond the traditional office
- Is a voluntary arrangement and not an entitlement
- Is a management prerogative
- Replaces commute and business related trips
- Maintains productivity in face of man-made (special events, road closures) and natural disasters such as winter storms, hurricanes, etc.
- Depends on technology allowing for a seamless work environment

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Teleworking is Not…

- Always a full time arrangement

- A replacement for child care or dependent care

- Sending people home and never seeing or hearing from them again – communication and accessibility are a necessity

- A universal employee benefit

- Extending the work day

- A day off!
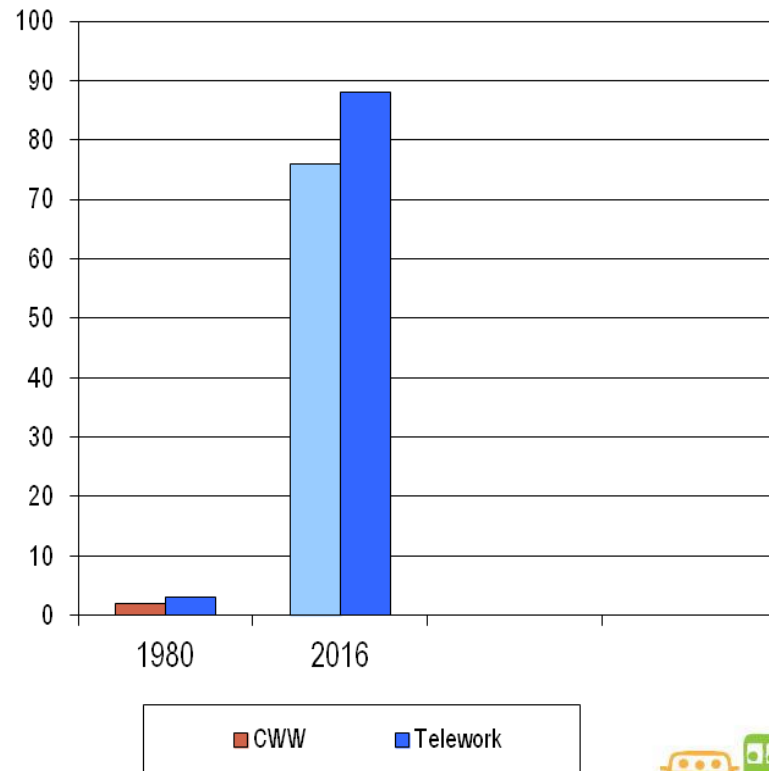
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Does Teleworking Help Recruitment and Retention?

- In the 1980s, only two offered compressed work weeks and only three offered telework.

- In 2016, 76 offered compressed work weeks and 88 offer telework.

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2015 WorldAtWork Study Shows

Strong Adoption of Telework Among US Employers
Employers allow the following kinds of telework:

85%	Ad hoc (e.g., to meet a repair person, care for a sick child)
56%	Telework on a regular monthly basis (at least one day per month, but not full time)
53%	Telework on a regular weekly basis (at least one day per week, but not full time)
34%	Full-time telework (every regularly scheduled workday)

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Teleworking Succeeds When…

- The job is right

- The employee is right

- The technology works

- And the manager approves of the arrangement

- The next three slides provide a high level tool for assessing the job and the employee

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Analyzing Job Functions for Telework

Job Function	Always	Sometimes	Never
Tasks can be done independently			
Work completed is measurable based on Deliverables			
Quality and quantity of work are measurable			
Non-teleworker functions are minimally affected			
Need for specialized material or equipment is minimal			
Security and privacy of information are guaranteed			
Teamwork needs can be managed			
Need for face-to-face interaction can be managed			

Eligibility Factors

- Performance rating
- Job is appropriate
- Employee's likelihood to succeed as a teleworker
- Manager is amenable
- Other _____

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Analyzing Employee Characteristics for Telework

Very Low				Very High

Characteristic	1	2	3	4	5
Self-disciplined					
Experience and skill level					
Past and current performance productivity levels					
Organizational skills					
Communication skills					
Relationships with others					
Relationships with clients					
Ability to be flexible					

Adjustments for Employees

- Impact on teamwork?
- How will my manager know that I am working?
- Increased isolation from co-workers
- Developing good organizational skills
- Dealing with distractions in the home environment

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Employee Advantages

- Increases focus, productivity and work quality; reduces distractions and interruptions
- Increases flexibility
- Reduces commuting stress, delays, and costs
- Improves morale
- Accommodates work/life balance
- Lower personal costs, e.g., meals, clothing

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Every Employee is Different

- Directing
- Coaching
- Advising
- Delegating

- Developing trust
- Managing electronically
- Asking questions
- Encouraging independence

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How Will my Manager Know I am Working?

- **Performance Issues** —
  How do they know when employees are working in the office?
  They know that employees are working based on meeting their objectives in a timely manner, and delivering a high quality of work.

- **Communication Issues** —
  How will they reach staff?
  Ongoing emails, phone calls, instant messaging, video conferencing, etc.

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Goal-Setting with Managers

Employees should accomplish the following with their managers:

- Confer on organizing their work for the first few days of teleworking
- Develop tasks relating to job objectives and deliverables for the telework day
- Establish time frames
- Provide status reports and ask for feedback

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Teleworkers: Managing Work

Teleworkers should:

- Maintain contact with coworkers
- Follow company protocol for security of information
- Stick to deadlines
- Keep managers informed of problems and progress
- Attend scheduled meetings
- Schedule meetings with coworkers and others as needed

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Establish Communications Standards

- Assess current ways of communicating with managers and co workers and how teleworking will change communications, if any

- Impromptu communication on telework days may have to occur electronically

- Expect more e-mails, IMs and telephone calls

- Impact on coworkers, non-teleworkers, external clients and supervisors should be seamless

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Teleworkers and Communication

Teleworkers have to be accessible.

- You may be called in to the office for an emergency, if needed.

- Use technology when possible
- Call or contact manager if needed.

- E-mails, calls, chats, texts should be on-going.

- Make sure that schedules, electronic boards, white boards all reflect telework day.

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Will Teamwork be Impacted?

- Clear direction from management about when attendance electronically or physically is required

- Coverage is critical

- Use technology when appropriate and efficient for teamwork

- Make sure that teleworkers are adequately trained on collaborative technology

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Teleworkers: Getting Organized

Employees should:

- Pick a dedicated work space at their home that provides a safe environment for working

- Establish a routine – have the employees start at the same time, take breaks, lunch, and end at the same time (this may vary from employee to employee)

- Organize their work schedule and tasks based on organizational needs

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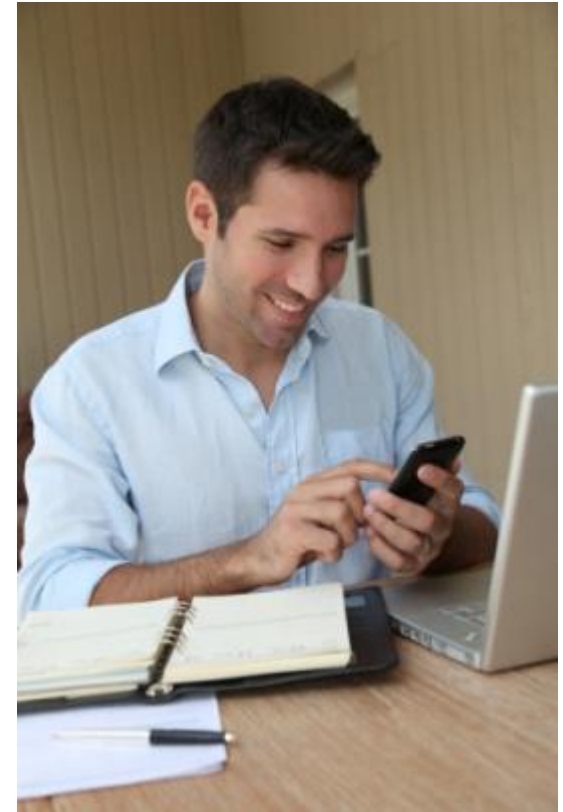
Ergonomics

Employees should have:

Desk
- Be sure the desk is a comfortable height (29 in. high)

Chair
- The seat should be adjustable, both for height and angle to provide support. An ergonomic chair should be used for preventing injury.

Lighting
- Light should be directed toward the side or behind line of vision. Direct sunlight should not be used on work surfaces.

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Ergonomics

Safety

- Employees should be aware of

  - Electrical support needed for equipment when configuring work space
  - Cover interconnecting cables to avoid tripping
  - Place equipment close to electrical outlets. Use surge protectors.
  - Place heavy items on sturdy stands close to walls
  - Provide sufficient air space around computer. Keep out of direct sunlight and away from heaters

  - Noise

    - Professional image may negatively impacted by the sounds of crying children, barking dogs, vacuum cleaners, etc.

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Teleworkers: Training Family and Friends

- The message to family and friends is that you are at home working!

- Decide on what interruptions are OK – emergencies, etc., typically they are the same as those OK in the office

- Set rules for office materials

- It's OK to come back to the office temporarily if a space is available

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In-person Meetings While Teleworking

- Meeting for the first time

- Kick off meeting for complex Project

- Delicate issues (body language)

- Social reasons

- Team-building

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Tips for Managers

Supervisors play a big role in making sure the teleworkers do not feel isolated. This should be part of their overall training. Teleworkers should be included in developmental activities, such as trainings, etc.

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Tips for Managers

- Have virtual breaks for people to video conference with each other
- Make sure that employees have work/life balance
- Use interactive technologies
- Once a week have a video conference with your employee(s)
- Involve teleworkers in any company programs, such as transportation incentives
- See if co-working is an option/possibility

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Tips for Managers

- Align the employees to work at a drop-in station
- Select employees carefully - try to select employees who have experience working at home
- Make sure they have proper equipment/furniture
- Go out of your way to include teleworkers. If there's an impromptu meeting

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Tips for Managers

- Integrate your teleworkers in innovation exchanges
- Clarify your expectations so that the remote team knows how to reach your expectations
- Consider an award plan for remote workers
- Face time helps build relationships

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Successful Telework Programs Have Certain Characteristics

- There is a transition period!
- Are seamless to the world
- Plan for flexibility and change
- Fit departmental culture
- Plan for accessibility and communication

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Tips for Managers

- Consider conducting short team huddles, or meetings. IE, once a week conduct a 15 minute quick video conference to video-huddle

- At hiring, do incorporate some considerations for whether or not a person would or would not be a good remote worker

- Spend some of the money that is saved on overhead on creating relationships with the remote workers

- Hire good communicators

- Build trust so that teleworkers will tell you about problems, and involve you in solutions

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Gaining Upper Management Commitment

- Productivity

- Cost

- Coverage

- Bottom-line

- Overhead

- Recruitment / Retention

- Sustainability

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Gaining Middle Management Commitment

- Performance Issues —
  "How do I know they are working?"

- Communication Issues —
  "How will I reach staff?"

- Technology Considerations —
  "Do we now have to equip the employees at home and at work?"

- Equity/Haves and Have-Nots —
  "What about those who cannot telework?"

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Potential Advantages of Teleworking

- Positive employee morale
- Increased employee productivity
- Less downtime from weather, traffic
- Increased employee availability
- Broader talent pool for recruiting & access to expertise
- Reduced absenteeism

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Tips for Managers

- Managing by results
- Trust
- Developing good communication and access procedures
- Maintaining team environment
- Concerns regarding loss of control

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Will Managers Lose Control?

- Not an entitlement.

- Managers decide which jobs, which individuals, how frequently, etc.

- There is a telework termination clause for both parties.

- Managers coach employees initially, if it does not become second nature, they can bring the employee back to work.

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Telemanaging through Goal-Setting with Employees

- Assist employees in organizing work through on one meetings prior to teleworking for the first few times
- Assigning work to employees
- Defining objectives and deliverables
- Establishing timeframes
- Reviewing status
- Coaching employees

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Planning for Success

- Act on problems as they arise

- Be honest with teleworkers

- Ask for input from coworkers

- Respect the teleworking arrangement

- Integrate a review process

- There is an adjustment period

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