

“Using Telecommuters = Business Expansion”

By: Paula Dodds

What is telecommuting? The practice of telecommuting or workers using a “remote office” is becoming a more widely acceptable company practice. Workers utilize technological resources to do their work “virtually” from their home office or a local work center. The U.S. Department of Labor reports that the number of U. S. workers who telecommute at least some of the time now tops 19 million.

These workers have been overlooked in the past for long-term placements because they do choose to work from home. But this should no longer be the case... These individuals have many qualities that employers would find very valuable. They’re independent thinkers, dedicated professionals and self-starters. Whatever their reason for staying home, whether it be a disability, child or elder care, or something else, these consultants are a valuable resource for any company.

Why would you, as an employer, use telecommuters? There are *many* perks for companies when using virtual employees:

Increased worker productivity

Imagine getting the one perk out of your job that you’ve always wanted.... For many, being able to work from their home office is just that! When I’m working from my home office, I’m no longer thinking about just “getting the work done” so I can get the heck out of the office. I’m enjoying my work and enjoying my work atmosphere. I get my “water fountain” chit-chat in my online group of other telecommuters. I’m surrounded by drawings from my kids that have completely covered one whole wall of my office. I am free to work as hard as I want and not miss my kids. They’re right there! I can walk out of my office and give one of the girls a hug and go right back to work. I don’t have to miss them anymore!

Cuts in corporate real estate costs

You no longer have to plan for more office space or more parking spaces for your employees. You’re getting the work you need done by the deadlines you set AND you can have a smaller workspace for your onsite employees and yourself. No more adding new cubicles and desks. Just outsource! Let your virtual employees plan for their own office space!

Access to expert help whenever needed

Whether you need a new webmaster or database administrator or copywriter, find someone who can do that job for you and pay them only for the work they do! Don’t waste money on salaries for people who really only work part of their day on their assigned job tasks. Price a project you need done, whether it’s a one-time gig or an on-going need, and hire a freelancer.

Savings on recruiting and training costs

This goes back to hiring “expert help” for all of your needs. You don’t have to train new employees on how to do something. Hire someone who knows exactly what you need done and how to do it.

Savings on relocation allowances

No more relocating for your employees! They can work from their “virtual” office and never have to move their family and belonging cross-country or between cities. Employees are happier because they can stay in the homes that they love, and continue to be employed.

Cuts in corporate fixed expenses

Corporate expenses also take a hit when your on-site employees are increased. A bigger space requires more electricity, more furniture to fill it and even more office supplies. Staying in a smaller space and keeping a smaller number of on-site employees allows you, the employer, to keep your utility bills and office supply budget smaller. Most freelancers and off-site employees don't charge for such things as staples and paper clips that they use for their job. They absorb those expenses as part of their fee.

In addition to the above benefits, the employee also benefits from a telecommuting situation:

Increased free time for workers, leading to improved family life

Telecommuting cuts down on the amount of time spent in the car, driving to and from work. When I'm done working for the day, I just turn off my computer and go upstairs. Twenty feet and I'm back in my "family territory." I'm also happier because I am able to be the primary caregiver for my children, while contributing to the family income. Our budget and our checkbook both look better because I work from home.

Worker satisfaction

I have honestly never been happier than the past few years when I've been working from home. It's not only the money and the fact that I get to be the primary caregiver for our girls, I also get a lot of satisfaction out of doing my job well, in a way that benefits both myself and my family.

These employee benefits also indirectly benefit the company. Happy employees are long-term dedicated employees. The cost to train replacement employees becomes a thing of the past. Telecommuting is a win-win situation.

Even if you prefer not to use full-time telecommuters, with the economy and worldview of the workforce changing, consider using telecommuting as an option for:

1. Minor illnesses
2. Major deadlines or work overloads
3. Weather problems
4. Personal appointments
5. Disabilities

About The Author:

Paula Dodds runs a successful Virtual Assistant business from her home office (www.TheVirtualChoice.com), while caring for her two small daughters. She has articles published on such topics as: family life, finding a great work-at-home job, relationship advice, making a marriage work while building a business, and many others.

Questions or comments are welcome and can be sent to: Paula@TheVirtualChoice.com.