



ICON Clinical Research

Managing Telecommuters and Global Virtual Teams Syamala Schoemperlen

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Agenda

- Definitions
- Statistics on telecommuting
- Benefits
- Building a telecommuting team
- Managing a telecommuting team
- Conclusion



- Terms used to refer to the work done outside of the traditional office work environment.
 - Virtual teams
 - Teleworking
 - Telecommuting

Statistics on Telecommuting (1/3)

Clinical Research

Tremendous amounts of data about where people work has been collected by various US federal agencies and also in some private sectors.

- Public Sector Data
 - Census / American Community Survey (ACS)
 - Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS)
- Private Sector Data
 - WorldatWork

- 1.5% of the US population worked from home in 2005.
- In 2009 this percentage boosted to 2.3%
- Over 75% of work-at-home employees earn over \$65,000 per year.
- Fifty million U.S. employees hold jobs that are telecommute compatible.
- Only 2.9 million consider home their primary place of work.

82% of Fortune Magazine's annual "100 Best Companies to Work For" list allow employees to telecommute at least 20% of the time (February 2011).

Remote work will continue to grow as a result of a number of factors.

- Improving communications and high-speed broadband technologies
- Increasing knowledge about how to manage and work with distributed workers and groups of workers.

Benefits to Employers

- Would be able to recruit and retain the best people
- Save in real estate and related costs
- Decrease in absenteeism and turnover
- Improve continuity of operations

Benefits to Employees

- Achieve a better work-life balance
- Recoup commute time
- Save money
- Suffer fewer illnesses

So, what's the hold up?

- Worker isolation
- Data security
- Concerns about career impact
- Type of job
- The biggest barrier to telecommuting remains management fear and mistrust.



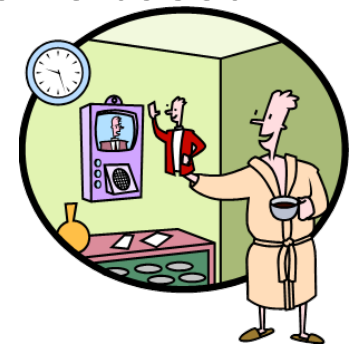
- **A telecommuter should**
 - Be able to work independently and a strong sense of initiative.
 - should be able to focus on what he or she can do to complete the task successfully and on time.
 - Be disciplined, motivated and able to ignore distractions and focus on the work.
 - Be able to communicate effectively with in-office and other work-at-home team members.
 - must be skilled at using the resources at their disposal to solve the problems.



- **A remote manager should have**
 - the ability to develop trusting relationships
 - the ability to develop and maintain a global team.
 - excellent verbal and written communication skills.
 - the ability to clearly define the roles and responsibilities of each team member.
 - the ability to bring together all necessary tools and resources for the team to get their job done on time.

How to manage a telecommuting team?

- **Spell out your expectations**
 - Focus on the end deliverable and not how it was accomplished.
 - spell out your expectations in detail.
 - Hold the employee accountable for the quality deliverables.
- **Schedule regular 1-1**
 - frequent contact with telecommuters is beneficial.
 - use the same management style to manage both home based and office based employees.



- **A centralized online location for work files**
 - A central document system to allow multiple users to view and edit documents simultaneously from remote locations, so that the manager can check on employees' work.
- **Encourage the use of an instant messaging program**
 - make sure you log on every day.
 - It is less intrusive than frequent phone conversations.

How to manage a telecommuting team?

- **Encourage team work**

- It's far easier to procrastinate when working on your own.
- As a manager, asking your employees to work as a team provides a buffer between them to watch each others work.

- **Maintain trust**

- the key way to build high performance across the team is to maintain trust.
- always react on an assumption of trust, not distrust.



Set telecommuting guidelines

Before granting telecommuting status to employees, supervisors need to set telecommuting guidelines.

- try it out part-time for a few weeks.
- agree in advance on a specific work schedule.
- Telecommuting Staff must maintain a standard workload similar to in-office staff.
- Must use sick leave if they are unable to work.
- Must be willing to be on-site as necessary.
- Must use vacation or personal leave.



Telecommuting teams depend almost exclusively on technology and software tools to communicate.

- E-mail
- Instant messaging software
- Telephone
- Teleconferencing system
- Fax/scan
- Office supplies

- Telecommuting is a privileged work arrangement.
 - Build trust
 - Be reliable
- A manager must always react on an assumption of trust, not distrust.
 - Treat all team members fairly and equally.
 - Provide the necessary tools.

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Questions?

