Telecommuting:
The Future of Work
Part II

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Telecommuting

• Telecommuting Basics
• Employee Advantages
• The Disadvantages
• Suitable Job Tasks
• Teleworker Characteristics
Telecommuting Basics

• Telecommuting is quickly becoming a way of working for several reasons, i.e. cost of fuel, time spent commuting, etc

• However, some organizations still want the staff in the office
  – They aren’t seeing the benefits of telecommuting employees

• So let’s review the telecommuting way of work
Telecommuting Basics

• There are two types of telecommuting:
  1. Routine work which occurs as part of an ongoing, regular schedule
  2. Situational work approved on a case-by-case basis where the hours are NOT part of a previously approved regular schedule
• When one refers to telecommuting, the first type is the one that most frequently comes to mind
Telecommuting Basics

• The concept of telecommuting often carries misleading ideals

– We need to understand the realistic expectations
Telecommuting Basics

• The ability to work from home depends on a trusting employer, space at home, a supporting family, and self-discipline
  – There may be expectations to get house chores done because you are home

Be sure your family understands your work schedule to avoid problems
Telecommuting Basics

• It will be important to communicate with co-workers and your boss
  – Take advantage of tools such as, skype, e-mail and phone for co-worker communications
  – Keep your communications skills honed for professional interaction
  – Your boss may establish a communication plan
  – Anticipate attending mandatory meetings
Telecommuting Basics

• Working from home is just like working in an office – same commitments, same efforts, just a different location

• You won’t have the free time that you think you will
  – Some teleworkers find themselves working more than the standard 8 hours
  – Start off with a standard work week and slowly work up to a flexible schedule
Telecommuting Basics

• Telecommuting is not the means for an end to day care
  – Watching children during work hours will vary with each employer
  – Children coming home after school or home on a holiday is usually acceptable
  – If the child’s care interferes with productivity then you should maintain daycare
Employee Advantages

• It allows for a better work-life balance
  – Provides greater flexibility to schedule doctor visits, parent-teacher days, and other important non-work tasks

• Less Distraction
  – Tasks that require concentration are well suited for teleworkers
  – You don’t have employees stopping by your desk to chat
Employee Advantages

• Cuts down on wasted meetings
  – Conference calls or web based meetings are better planned

• Less Stress
  – Relief from the stress of the commute
  – Eliminates the urgency to get home for family commitments
Employee Advantages

• Social Benefits
  – What teleworkers save in commute time can be spent in after-school or community events
Employee Advantages

• Telecommuting reduces the risk of fatalities and injuries that result from traffic accidents during rush hour
• Reduces wear and tear on your car
• You may qualify for a rate reduction on your car insurance with reduced mileage

Telecommuting protects our environment by reducing toxic fuel emissions
Employee Advantages

• Increases Employee Empowerment
  – Remote work forces people to be more independent and self-directed
Disadvantages

• Social Interaction
  – Feel less like part of the team and miss the office banter
  – Isolation, especially when the rest of the family is out of the house

• Hard to separate work from home life
  – The convenience of having an office so close can make it challenging to stay away from work
  – It is important to have a separate work space in the home
Disadvantages

• Motivation
  – It can be harder to be motivated
  – Distractions at home might tempt you to do other things than work

• Internet Connection
  – Good connectivity is necessary to be productive
  – Down time and power outages can affect your work flow
Suitable Job Tasks

• Routine, repetitive tasks are ideal
  – This type of work requires less supervision or interaction
• Analysis for creating reports or conducting studies
• Data entry which requires concentration for accuracy
Suitable Job Tasks

• General cancer registry tasks suitable for telecommuting are:
  • Casefinding
  • Abstracting
  • Follow-Up
  • Quality Control
  • Database Specific Reports
  • Reports for Studies
  • Cancer Conference Preparations
  • Cancer Committee Preparations
  • Outcomes

• Many management tasks can be done remotely with good communication skills
Teleworker Characteristics

• Self-Motivated and Self-Disciplined
  – Some people struggle with being productive when no one is checking up on them
  – Teleworkers must develop regular routines and set their own deadlines

• Teleworkers must be good performers
  – You must demonstrate you can solve problems on your own and complete tasks on your own
Telework Characteristics

• Organization and Time Management
  – At the office there are subtle cues to keep a person on task when you know someone is watching
  – At home, it is more difficult to manage time and stay on task
  – The more organized your workspace and habits are the more productive you will be
Teleworker Characteristics

• Telecommuting reduces the amount of supervision and feedback immediately available
  – Teleworkers must be adept at making independent decisions supported by supervisors

• A teleworker needs to be confident and resourceful as there will be no one to guide you step-by-step
Remember

• Telecommuting is not an employee benefit
  – It is a management option and an employee privilege

“So will it always be just an office romance for us?”
Summary

• Consider your job tasks and the suitability of doing those tasks remotely
• Identify your work characteristics to determine if you are ready to work remotely or need to develop and fine tune some skills
• Weight the pros and cons of telecommuting based on your home environment and office
References & Resources

• http://www.telecommuting360.com
• http://globalworkplaceanalytics.com/resources/costs-benefits
• http://www.teleworktoolkit.com