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Motivational Factors of Telework

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INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses telework as a motivational option for workers and employers. Telework can be performed as a supplemental or a full-time employment opportunity for local, regional or global work. Teleworkers must be self-starters, able to work with minimal supervision, and, in some cases, rely on technological communications for professional interactions. Teleworkers can enjoy flexibility for work and personal responsibilities (Greer & Payne, 2014) while organizations can gain more satisfied productive, employees (Bloom, 2014; Caillier, 2014). An overview of telework's motivational benefits, incentives, and organizational examples for both employees and management are identified.

TELEWORK IN TODAY'S WORK ENVIRONMENT

Telework is a growing method of employment with a variety of benefits. Telework enables work from anywhere, anytime through information communication technologies (ICT) (Garett & Danziger, 2006). A recent Gallup poll of 1011 adults in the U.S. shows a steady increase in telework, with a short term dip caused by the 2008 economic crash (see Table 1) (Jones, 2015).

Have you ever telecommuted, that is, worked from your home using a computer to communicate for your job?

Based on employed adults

■ % Yes
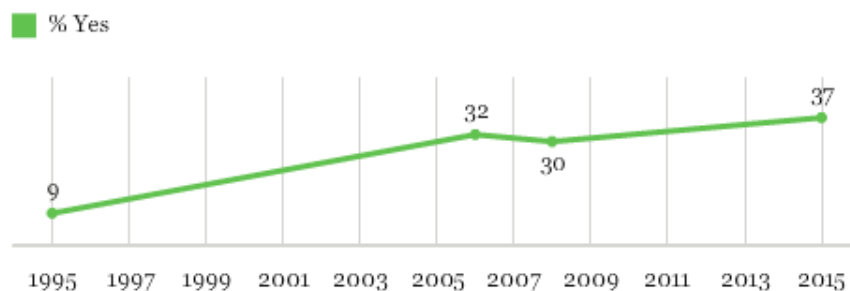
Table 1. Increase of teleworking

Source: Gallup Education and Work poll August 5 - 9, 2015

Forbes analyzed 40,000 jobs posted on Flexjobs 2015 to create the Top 100 Companies for Remote Jobs list (See Appendix A). The 36% increase of listings from the previous year included jobs in IT, medical and health, sales, administration, customer service, education and training, and marketing (Shin, 2016). The variation of jobs permitting telework include full time, part time, contract and seasonal workers. Unexpected were some positions, such as Director of Community Advancement - full time, Physiotherapist - part time, Expert Wellness Coach - part time, and Vice President of Communications and Development - full time (FlexJobs, 2016). Other recently posted positions are listed in Table 2.

Position	Telecommute	Duties	Worker location
Farm Food Safety Manager	Full Time	Develop criteria for assurance & assessment of farm practices to ensure food safety	Anywhere in US
Notary	Part Time	Reviewing, signing, & notarizing documents	Must work in City or State specified
Production Assistant Multicultural Marketing	Freelance for Contract	US Latin American culture & editing software knowledge	Must work in City or State specified
Assistant Architectural Historian	Seasonal	Supports projects through historical research	Must work in City or State specified
Managing Editor	Full Time	Manage city-level writers, perform researching, & edit articles & features	Anywhere in US

Table 2. May 2016 Listings (partial list)
Source: FlexJobs, 2016

Many jobs can be a fit for telework which is considered one of those best practices that allows employees flexible options for improved work/life balance. For organizations, telework is a savvy strategic management plan (Kowalski & Swanson, 2005). Telework brings increased benefits to both the employer and the employee:

Organizational	**Employee**	**Societal**
- Productivity	- Savings	-Work opportunities
- Retention/attraction	- Flexibility	disabled, homebound, distant
- Virtual Workplace	- Work/life Balance	- Ecological – less car pollution
24 hour cycle	- Some autonomy	- Environmental
- Continuity	- Job satisfaction	- less traffic congestion

(Caillier, 2014; GII, 2008; Rhodes, 2009; Telework=better, 2009; Ursery, 2003)

TELEWORKERS

The number of teleworkers is growing in most sectors every year. A breakdown of organizations using telework was done by GlobalWorkplaceAnalytics (2016) based on data from 2005 to 2014 of U.S. telework population. In those nine years, except for occasional small drops in government workers, such as 2013 which rebounded in 2014, all other organizations experienced growth. Table 3 below depicts the figures from 2012 – 2014.

Employer	**2012**	**2013**	**2014**
For Profit	2,501,855	2,689,963	2,860,517
Non Profit	314,984	355,327	355,327
Local Government	119,622	122,530	131,597
State Government	164,382	160,661	170,932
Federal Government	157,682	144,966	158,688
Total	**3,268,525**	**3,480,447**	**3,677,061**

Table 3. Teleworkers by type of Employer
Source: GlobalWorkplaceAnalytics

According to the Telework Advisory Group of World at Work, the representative teleworker is a college educated 40 year old male working from home. And although this credible not for profit organization of 30,000 members in 100 countries, founded in 1995, reported that people who worked remotely one day a month declined, the number working more than one day a month increased (Telework 2011, 2011). Teleworkers often include knowledge workers, a term coined by management author Peter Drucker, who are occupied with analysis and manipulation of data as opposed to production (Knowledge worker, 2010). Today's technology has enabled knowledge workers to work remotely from anywhere in the world be it at home, an offsite office or telecenter, or even a coffee shop. Improved ICT, personal incentives and even employer encouragement will add to the number of teleworkers.

Legislation

In March of 2010, a House subcommittee approved legislation to promote telework in Federal agencies. The Telework Enhancement Act of 2010 (http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/BILLS-111hr1722enr/pdf/BILLS-111hr1722enr.pdf) mandated a government-wide telework policy. Agencies are required to allow eligible employees to work at least 20 hours a week remotely (Rosenberg, 2010).

The law has been successful. In 2009, only 10% of eligible federal workers telecommuted. In Sept 2011, almost 21% were regular teleworkers (Resneck, 2012). It increased in 2012 to 24% and again in 2013 to 27% (2014 Status of Telework, 2014). However, there are still many federal employees who are eligible to telework but are not participating. Some concerns are double-taxation costs for the worker in both their home state and work state (Allen, Golden & Shockley, 2015). The Multi-State Worker Tax Fairness Act of 2014 that would reduce tax burdens for employees and their payroll departments has been under 'committee consideration' since March of 2014 (H.R.4085, 2014). Passage of this bill could raise the numbers of federal and private sector teleworkers.

Many states have their own statutes or executive orders and some simply have policies to motivate telework options for state-agency employees. A growing number of states have tax incentives on percentages of teleworkers or conversion costs for agencies (Allen, Golden & Shockley, 2015).

Another useful part of the Telework Enhancement Act legislation is the requirement for agencies to train managers on properly supervising teleworkers (Rosenberg, 2010), this is something the corporate world must address also ("Managing teleworkers …", 2009). Training managers how to supervise and guide teleworkers may be challenging given some resistance noted by earlier and recent studies of managers unwilling to give up direct control of the visible worker (Clear & Dickson, 2005; Daniels, Lamond, & Standon, 2001; Tuutti, 2012).

Motivation

Beyond legislation, adoption and implementation of telework programs can have a positive effect on job satisfaction (Bae & Kim, 2016). This satisfaction can be a very motivating factor in choosing a position with teleworking as pay and titles are not always the determining factors (Gose, 2013). There can be reduced turnover intention when telework is an option (Bae & Kim, 2016). This attrition factor combined with higher levels of performance, satisfaction and creativity (Vega, Anderson & Kaplan, 2015), should motive managers to implement telework.

If managers deny teleworking requests, it could result in de-motivating workers. In a study of Department of Health and Human Services workers (98% of whom are eligible for telework), the employees who were denied the opportunity to telework reported lower motivation than the employees who did telework (Caillier, 2012). Interestingly, employees who teleworked frequently, more than two days a week, reported less motivation than employees who teleworked infrequently, up to two days a week. According to Golden (2006), this decline of satisfaction with extensive telework is a result of isolation from co-

workers and lack of face-to-face interaction with managers. Hybrid work arrangements of office and telework can offer both face-to-face and flexible options (Sewell & Taskin, 2015).

A positive aspect of being away from the workplace is avoiding office politics and gossip (Ellison, 2004; Fonner & Roloff, 2010; Kurland & Cooper, 2002). Physical distance can ensure contact, such as phone or e-mail, is focused on job related matters, not drama. Of course, avoiding this type of information sharing or wanting to shop talk is a personal characteristic of the employee.

As noted earlier, employees could be motived by savings that can include gas, car wear and tear, clothing, child/elder or even pet care arrangements; flexibility for care arrangements, doctors' appointments, and other chores or business needs; autonomy to meet business/home needs; and contributing to green environmental effects (Caillier, 2012; Caillier, 2014; GII, 2008; Rhodes, 2009; Telework=better, 2009; Ursery, 2003).

Challenge to Management

Managers of teleworkers must motivate and inspire out of sight workers and provide authentic information sharing, from managers to workers and between work teams. An affinity distance problem can result when there are trust issues between team members who have never met one another (Reilly & Lojeski, 2009). Some non-teleworkers can have resentment of teleworkers and perceive doing some of the teleworkers' duties (Greer & Payne, 2014).

Managers too must overcome lack of trust for workers who are miles away (Brown, Smith, Arduengo & Tayolor, 2016; Leonard, 2011). When Marissa Meyer was brought in as CEO to revitalize Yahoo, she stopped the telecommuting program (Cohan, 2013; Gaudreau, 2013). CEO Hubert Joly of Best Buy halted the Results Only Work Environment (ROWE) program a week later, also as a revamping scheme. Both moves, and others, were attributed to a weak job market that gave management tighter controls as these eliminations countered studies of increased productivity, retention and job satisfaction (Cohan, 2013; Gaudreau, 2013; Valcour, 2013).

In a study by Sewell and Taskin (2015) of 31 information technology and research and development teleworkers, 26 teleworked one day a week and 5 teleworked two days a week. The teleworkers perceived more intense supervision and direction, even of tasks that would have been under their authority if still in the office. Technology and customer service has to be combined with human resource management for a productive teleworking program (Blount, 2015).

Management has to have a balance of monitoring while encouraging open communications among teleworkers, site workers and management. This is definitely a challenge and relatively new to many managers. Just as there should be guidelines for teleworkers, more managers should get training. If little more than 17% of organizations with some kind of flexible work program provide training for managers of flexible workers (Sharp, 2013), there is considerable room for improvement.

Today's Workforce Considerations

Premiere Global Services Incorporate surveyed 3,000 knowledge workers in North America (NA), Europe, the Middle East and Africa (EMEA) and Asia Pacific Japan (APJ). Of those surveyed, 79% reported that they teleworked and 54% were without any policies. NA reported the widest use of telework followed by EMEA and APJ (2015 PGi Global, 2016).

Some attribute the rise to 37% teleworkers in the U.S. to the winter of 2014-2015 and record-breaking cold and snow for the Midwest and the Northeast (when snowstorms even had names like 'Juno' in January 2015). Businesses continued to do productive work through telework (Plumb, 2015).

Earlier reports had lower percentage of teleworkers at 9%, the same as Europe, compared to emerging markets: Asia-Pacific, 24%; Latin America, 25%; Africa and the Middle East, 27% each. The highest percentage reported is India with 82% teleworking at least once a week, and 57% are frequent teleworkers, some of which is outsourced jobs (Reaney, 2012).

Some differences certainly relate to job opportunities and cultural norms. Studies of U.S. workers note the social isolation or relational impoverishment of teleworking has negative effects on job performance (Gajendran & Harrison, 2007; Golden, Veiga, & Dino, 2008). But the workforce of today is composed of many generations and what Baby Boomers (born 1946-1964) may perceive as detrimental to their careers, such as being away from the workplace, could appeal to Gen Xers (1965-1980) with families and to the Net Generation's (1981-2001) tech comfort.

For example, teleworkers have reported many benefits that could relate to a new generation of workers who are said to be "less at home with the real world than in the virtual world" (Eisner, 2005, p.2). Combining that technological penchant with the Net Generation's team-orientation (Bridges & Johnson, 2006) would seem to make the virtual team scenario of telework very compatible and its eco-friendly aspect would appeal to these socially conscious citizens (Eisener, 2005; Raines, 2002). Many Baby Boomers have been assessed as reluctant to use new technology which has not really been designed for or marketed to older users (Burdick, 2005). There may be need for additional training and support for those older workers.

Solutions and Recommendations

For teleworkers who are beyond the reach of the office, if there is one, interaction with managers and team members can be critical. Managers need defined meeting times and agendas, and, in the cultural context, learn to communicate in the language of the workforce (Klein, 2008). Infrequent teleworkers, especially those who may be part of an alternate shared workspace arrangement, such as in-office work on Monday/Wednesday/ Friday with the same office used on Tuesday/Thursday by another colleague, should also be connected by management arrangement meetings.

Peter Linkow, president of WFD Consulting, based in Newton, MA, and research leader of the Conference Board's Research Working Group on Managing a Distant Workforce gives 10 recommended guidelines for distant managers:
1. Recruit for character, build fundamentals then develop distance competencies
2. Emphasize relationships as much as tasks
3. Create intra-company collaboration, then assess it
4. Build solid communication infrastructure
5. Secure the upper management support that employees need to be successful
6. Set clear goals and then empower distant employees to determine how to achieve them
7. Focus managers on creating a work environment that enables employee achievement
8. Concentrate on the job environment
9. Approach cultural differences with an open mind
10. Support the distant managers who report to you. (Klein, 2008)

Selection of the right workers for telework as well as setting detailed and specific goals is critical (Wilkie, 2015). Making employees successful will also depend on easy to use technology and readily available support. The older workforce is not as resistant to technology as it is disappointed with its user unfriendliness which limits their use of information communications technology (ICT) (de Koning & Gelderblom, 2006).The younger workforce will demand speed and mobile applications (Tapscott, 2009).

Training for teleworkers should include using technology to accommodate work and communications, creating separations between work and non-work roles and "planning appropriate tasks to maximize daily productivity" (Greer & Payne, 2014, p. 107). Some face-to-face interventions are recommended, but when that is not always possible, video conference, Skype, Facebook, personal blogs and even Second Life virtual meetings have been used to give some connection between teams and leaders (Klein, 2008). Reiterating the mission/vision/goals can help reduce operational distances amongst teams' interpretations of the organizational practices (Reilly& Lojeski, 2009). Results based managers will get the best out of their employees whether they are in the office or miles away (Leonard, 2011).

FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

The value of teleworking programs to organizations and workers must continually be assessed. Before and after comparisons of the effects of telework programs should be analyzed. Are there differences in desirability according to gender, age, distance from work, family composition, culture? Organizations will want to know retention, recruitment, job satisfaction and productivity based on telework options. Are there technology pitfalls to be avoided? Concern for secure data transmissions, customer/client/patient confidentiality, bandwidth capabilities, support and back-up plans could determine what organizations will envision as a cost/benefit investment in telework.

Further studies on the reported curvilinear relationship of telework time for increased satisfaction with limited hours/days and then a decrease of satisfaction with too many hours/days (Golden & Viega, 2005) should be conducted. This could be a critical phenomenon to understand for organizations that can offer varied schedules of telework.

CONCLUSION

Telework already is an indispensable option of working for the myriad benefits reviewed. These include continuity of work functions, attracting and recruiting employees, office space savings, and global extensions for organizations; flexibility, work/life balance, clothes/transportation savings, family care ability for employees; reduced traffic, less emissions, cultural and disability options for society. The difficulties for management of selection, training, security, procedures and connectivity to workers must be met as well as keeping up with the quick pace of changing technology. Clear and open communications can motivate and maintain a thriving workforce from anywhere, at anytime. The organization, managers and employees need to work in a trusting cohesive method to develop a productive teleworking experience (Brown, Smith, Arduenga, & Taylor, 2016).

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KEY TERMS & DEFINITIONS

Affinity distance: emotional separation between virtual team members who have no personal relationship.

ICT: information communications technology.

Knowledge worker: researchers, planners, analysts and/or developers who acquire, manipulate, and analyze information.

Operational distance: psychological gaps regarding workplace issues

Physical distance: variances in space, time and environment.

Telework: Work done remotely from the office using some form of telecommunications; also referred to as telecommuting.

Virtual distance: working and communicating mainly, or exclusively, through technology.

APPENDIX A

Forbes Top 100 Companies for Remote Jobs 2016

1. LiveOps
2. TeleTech
3. Amazon
4. Sutherland Global Services
5. UnitedHealth Group
6. Dell
7. IBM
8. U.S. Department of Agriculture
9. Working Solutions
10. Humana
11. Aetna
12. Intuit
13. Kaplan
14. Kelly Services
15. Cactus Communications
16. Westat
17. Salesforce
18. PAREXEL
19. CyberCoders
20. American Express
21. VMware
22. SAP
23. Xerox
24. First Data
25. US-Reports

26. Oracle
27. CACI International
28. A Place for Mom
29. Anthem, Inc.
30. Dell SecureWorks
31. World Travel Holdings
32. ADP
33. Aon
34. University of Maryland University College
35. Allergan Inc
36. K12
37. U.S. Department of Transportation
38. CSI Companies
39. Robert Half
40. Nielsen
41. Red Hat
42. Adobe Systems
43. Overland Solutions, Inc.
44. BCD Travel
45. Connections Education
46. Deloitte
47. Apple
48. McKesson Corporation
49. Thermo Fisher Scientific
50. Precyse

51. Haynes & Company
52. Pharmaceutical Product Development Inc.
53. IT Pros Philadelphia
54. Cigna
55. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt
56. Sungard Availability Services
57. Infor
58. Sodexo
59. About.com
60. Altegra Health
61. GE – General Electric
62. Western Governors University
63. Grand Canyon University
64. Walden University
65. Vivint
66. BroadSpire
67. Covance
68. Ellucian
69. HD Supply
70. Perficient Inc.
71. Teradata
72. Wells Fargo
73. Symantec Corporation
74. Real Staffing
75. Science Applications International Corporation – SAIC

76. AmerisourceBergen Corporation
77. Appen
78. Hartford Financial Services Group
79. RetailData
80. SYKES
81. SRA International
82. Citizens Financial Group
83. CVS Health
84. Healthfirst
85. American Heart Association
86. BMC Software
87. hibu
88. inVentiv Health
89. Rosetta Stone
90. Erie Insurance Group
91. Worldpay
92. CleverTech
93. Achieve Test Prep
94. Deluxe
95. DataStax
96. CDK Global
97. Teleflex
98. Aquent
99. Parallon
100. U.S. Department of the Interior