

Teleworking.

Increased productivity, decreased absenteeism.

Teleworking eliminates the need for work-related travel by using information technology and telecommunications. Simply put, it means working at home or at a telework center closer to home. Teleworkers can work from home a couple of days per month or full-time, only occasionally coming in to the office. Communication is accomplished by phone, fax, modem, instant messaging and emails, and teleconferencing. In 2005, more than 40 million employees conducted business remotely by simply picking up the phone or turning on their computers.

Good for business, good for employees

Teleworking is one of those rare company policies that is enjoyed equally by the employer and the employee. Here is a sampling of the benefits a company can expect to reap after implementing a telework program:

- Productivity increases by up to 20 percent
- Overhead savings of 25–90 percent
- Absenteeism decreases
- Parking costs are reduced
- Recruitment and retention improves
- Allows for business continuity during a disaster

Nationally, 82 of Fortune magazine's "Top 100 Companies to Work For" offer teleworking.

Why force an employee to waste hours of potentially productive time stuck in traffic?

Employers across the nation have shown a 10–20 percent increase in productivity attributed to their telework programs. Teleworkers experience fewer disruptions, less stress due to the absence of the twice daily commute, and work efficiently at their peak productivity times. By working just one day a week at home, the average metro Atlanta commuter can save 72 hours each year – that's nine work days that could be spent with family, relaxing, or producing more of the company's work instead of being wasted behind the wheel.

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Implementing a telework program

If you are thinking of starting a telework program or expanding the existing program at your company, there are several important steps that can help ensure your success:

- Gain management commitment
- Develop a proposal
- Select a project lead
- Form a steering committee
- Conduct a jobs assessment
- Assess technology needs
- Estimate costs and savings
- Develop policies and agreement
- Select participants
- Conduct training and evaluate

MTS recommends starting with a telework pilot program. A pilot program allows management and employees to ease into the new telework program with a trial period. During and after the pilot period, management can evaluate the program and determine if it is beneficial for the company and should be continued.

A successful telework program depends on management support. And key to gaining that support is having management "own" its telework program by customizing telework policies that fit the company culture, fit the right jobs, and fit the right employees.

At no charge, MTS can arrange a professional telework consultant to meet with decision makers in your office. If your company is considering adopting a formal telework program, contact MTS today to arrange a consultation.