

Reasons to Connect and Engage the Remote Workforce

Previous IT concerns about deploying a remote workforce are fading. According to a recent CDW Telework report¹, 84% of Federal IT professionals and 88% of those in the private-sector said that their organization's IT security procedures and systems are effective. This is due in no small part to the enhanced security strategies that are now in play. The latest data² shows that 56% of Federal agencies and 74% of private employers authenticate telecommuters separately from the remote computers they use, ensuring that they know not only what devices are accessing their networks, but also who is at the keyboard. And 70% of federal and private-sector employers supply the computers and other equipment that telecommuters use³ — raising the level of control.

When deploying remote employees through VoIP, there are some network and security issues to consider (such as the number of firewalls present on your network), but these are much more manageable with the latest encryption technologies. Engaging a remote workforce is now much more feasible in terms of time and cost. The expensive, traditional off-premise circuits that were previously necessary for enabling remote employees are now no longer necessary. And thanks to high-speed, broadband connections, reliability and call quality are greatly improved.

And the trends are clear, according to a recent WorldatWork survey⁴ that found:

The number of telecommuters in the workforce increased 39% from 2006-2008, and has actually expanded by 74% since 2005. The study also found:

- That 38% of survey respondents who reported they were not currently telecommuting said they had job-related tasks that they thought they could perform from home
- That 50% of respondents were interested in working from home
- That 35% of respondents would be willing to receive slightly less pay to work from home

With a remote workforce, a business can reduce office space, shrinking leasing costs and property taxes. A company can also cut heating and cooling expenses, while reducing physical infrastructure and maintenance costs. An organization can accomplish this while boosting productivity and employee job satisfaction through benefits such as:

- The ability to work longer hours while mitigating the impact on home life
- The ability to accommodate international calls and unusual meeting times from the comfort of home
- The trend for remote employees to be more self-directed
- Increased opportunities for collaboration through the use of technology
 - Access to a much wider talent pool, and greatly increased outsourcing opportunities
 - Remote call centers that can be deployed much more affordably than traditional call centers
 - Protected continuity of operations in the event of a natural disaster



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The Power of Transparency

The real key to utilizing a distributed workforce is transparency. Remote workers need to be reached using their 3- or 4-digit office extension the same as when that person is in the office. Conference calls, call transfers, and recorded conversations all should be initiated right from the home office extension. And customers should remain completely unaware that the employee is not at the corporate office.

Remote productivity can be enhanced even further by deploying a network with the following features:

- With instant messaging, both corporate and remote workers can text regardless of their location. Employees who are not at their desk can even receive and respond to the instant message using their mobile phone.
- With screen pops, users can be notified on their PC of incoming calls and can direct the call to the extension or device of their choosing anywhere within the transparent network—they can even send the call to voicemail with a simple command.
- With locations-based routing, users can customize the system to deliver phone calls to one or more user-defined destinations at the home, office or even a cell phone. An inbound call can be delivered either sequentially or simultaneously.

A remote workforce is the answer to building a streamlined, cost effective organization. And with VoIP communications, it's an affordable option for organizations of all sizes.

¹ "2008 CDW Telework Report Reveals One Foot on the Gas, One Foot on the Brake; Support for Telecommuting Grows, but is Offset by Security Concerns," CDW Corporation, (March 31, 2008), <http://newsroom.cdw.com/news-releases/news-release-03-31-08.html>

² "2008 CDW Telework Report Reveals One Foot on the Gas, One Foot on the Brake; Support for Telecommuting Grows, but is Offset by Security Concerns," CDW Corporation, (March 31, 2008), <http://newsroom.cdw.com/news-releases/news-release-03-31-08.html>

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⁴ "WorldatWork Telework Trendlines 2009," Dieringer Research Group Inc., (February 2009), <http://www.worldatwork.org/waw/adimLink?id=31115>



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