Best Practices – Working from Home

Define Expectations

Be sure to set clear expectations for all remote workers. For some employees, you may have to do this on a daily basis.

Expectations include the hours they put in and communication via instant messaging, video chat, or phone. Inform employees of meeting schedules and always be available for communications, priorities, and updates.

Set expectations for the quality and output of every employee's work. Identify the attitude and skills that will enable remote employees to perform work to your standards. To ensure remote employees stay busy, set reasonable deadlines or quotas wherever possible.

- The workweek for all full-time regular employees is 40 hours, divided into five days, Monday through Friday, with employees scheduled to work eight hours per day.
- Employees must be available to their supervisors and co-workers during core work hours. There are two core periods each day. The first runs from 9:30 a.m. to 11 a.m. and the second from 1:30 p.m. to 3 p.m.
- Employees must be available to attend scheduled meetings and participate in other required office activities at the home office as needed. Except for extraordinary circumstances, EMPLOYER normally provides at least 24 hours' notice for such events. *

Clearly state what the purpose of this policy is, both in terms of the document itself and what you hope to accomplish by offering work-from-home opportunities. Ultimately, your work-from-home policy should improve your employee value proposition (EVP), enhance your team members' experience at your company and align with your core values. Convey the value of the policy as well as how the statement will be utilized going forward. ***

<u>Choose Means of Communication</u>

Effective communication is one of the biggest challenges in managing virtual employees.

Since remote workers are only reachable by digital means, they might miss important messages when they're engrossed in a task or dealing with connectivity issues. Instead of relying on textual exchanges, there should be multiple forms of communication in place. Encourage remote workers to keep their phones charged and close at hand, and to attend regular meetings via video conferencing software.

Remote employees also need to understand that phone calls, emails, and meetings still have to be part of their work day just as they are in the company offices. Without open communication, collaboration and work relationships become difficult.

<u>Ensure Data and Device Security</u>

One concern with a telecommuting workforce is digital security. Employees using their own devices may inadvertently introduce viruses to the company network. Even if you supply the device, they might still be tempted to download files or apps from home that have hidden malware.

Your IT team should ensure that every device that accesses your network has sufficient levels of protection in place. This includes firewalls, anti-virus software, encryption, and other forms of software protection both on each user's device and your servers.
Make certain to educate remote employees on basic security policies. This includes things like secure passwords, logging off when away from their devices, and avoiding public WiFi. Public WiFi is insecure and can compromise the safety of corporate data. Consider using a VPN (virtual private network) to ensure a secure channel for remote workers who like to work from a coffee shop.

You should also install remote-wipe solutions. This way, you can erase the hard drives of any lost or stolen device.

Clarify What Expenses You're Going to Cover

Be sure to clarify in writing all expenses and limits you'll provide to remote workers.

Final Thoughts

In summary, telecommuting can be a competitive advantage. However, you need to establish who can work from home as well as provide effective technologies for cyber security and communications. Be clear on your expectations for performance and which expenses you intend to cover. With a work from home policy working smoothly, both you and your employees will be happier. **

Resources

*ThinkHR.com

**Timesheets.com

 ***Builtin.com