

Telecommuting Technology: Easier Than You Think

In 2013, telecommuting is not new. But today's technical advances allow for less investment with many of the same critical benefits.

We have become a mobile society prone to instant gratification. Smart phones and Wi-Fi have become necessities and there are more households in Connecticut that have an Internet connection than those that do not.

Most homes already have all of the basic technologies required to telecommute. An Internet connection and a working phone, cell or landline, are the basic tools that make telecommuting possible. If you have a laptop or iPad, you most likely have the ability to check email. Making phone calls, checking voice mail and email are the most common remote worker activities. These activities along with individual computer-based work tasks provide the platform to carry out the two most basic forms of work; independent work & collaboration.

This basic home technology for "ad hoc telecommuting" creates a productive environment for the remote worker and enable us to telecommute before or after business hours as well as during "Weather Events" or any other circumstance that keeps us away from the office.

From a business network perspective, there are many options. A company-provided VPN (Virtual Private Network) connection is a common platform that allows remote workers to access files and programs in a

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secure manner. The technology is readily available and a standard in most enterprises.

Phone System Features Capabilities

Many business phone systems that have been installed over the past ten years have features that lend themselves to telecommuting. The capabilities of these systems can be extended to remote workers.

- 1) **Mobility feature**—While it is simple enough to call forward your office phone to your cell phone, many systems provide a mobility feature. This feature will forward your office phone to your cell phone on a “no answer” condition and will also allow for a schedule to be set. In other words, route my unanswered calls to my cell phone during the hours of 8am to 5pm, Monday through Friday.
- 2) **Unified messaging** is another application that many businesses have implemented. This technology allows several types of communications to be unified into one message platform. For example; voicemail messages and faxes can be delivered to your email inbox. Many users prefer this so they only have one place to go to check for messages.
- 3) **Find Me / Follow Me** is another enterprise feature. This feature allows incoming calls to your work number to be received on different phones whether ringing all at once or in sequence.
- 4) **Soft Phone** is a phone that works over your computer as an application. This is a helpful tool if you are involved in direct client contact that requires you to make outbound calls. The application uses the caller ID information that is in place at your company office to make it look like you are calling from your work office.

Telecommute Basic Technologies

There are only a few basic technologies required to telecommute. These consist of broadband Internet, a working telephone and a computer, laptop or desktop. From a business enterprise perspective, these technologies should be readily available.

These technologies plus VPN, Mobility, Unified Messaging, Find Me / Follow me and VoIP are really all that is needed for a business to start realizing substantial benefits. In a telecommuting model, staff has improved flexibility and businesses can lower operational costs as well as attract highly skilled employees regionally.

In summary, telecommuting technology is readily available in most homes and enterprise systems can easily be extended to support the telecommuter. In most cases, initial requirements can be supported with very little or no technology costs making telecommuting an easy option to implement.

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Get free consultations to implement a Telecommute program by calling our Telecommute Specialist at 877-CT-RIDES (287-4337) or by emailing info@TelecommuteCT.com. You can learn more at www.TelecommuteCT.com.

Author Drew Kaliszewski, Director, Partner Consulting, is a Telecommute program consultant and field expert