

The Right Fit – Flexible Work: Potential Obstacles

The following are examples of common, potential obstacles that may be encountered when proposing flexible work models. These should not be viewed as a deterrent, but rather, an opportunity to educate oneself so that these obstacles can be thoughtfully addressed and overcome in a successful proposal to management.

- **Management and/or Client Mistrust**

- It is important to establish goals and objectives, and performance-based measurement systems; productivity versus presenteeism attitudes
- A regular communication frequency with co-worker and managers is a necessity for continued collaboration.
- A successful flexible work model must address how customer service (if applicable) will be maintained, and consider how it will be perceived by customers
- The inability to monitor employee overtime may also be an issue.
- Note: 75% of managers say they trust their employees, but a third say they'd like to be able to see them, just to be sure. <https://globalworkplaceanalytics.com/resources/costs-benefits>

- **It's Not for Everyone**

- Employees must be self-directed and capable of working productively without constant oversight and structure.
- They should be comfortable with technology or arrangements should be made for remote tech support.
- They should have a defined home office space, free from distractions.
- Employees need to understand that telecommuting is not a suitable replacement for daycare unless they can schedule work hours around their children's needs

- **Coworker Jealousy**

- Employees need to understand why they were or were not chosen for telework.
 - Employees should see telework as a benefit that is earned, not given.
 - Standards of selection should be uniform.
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- **Security Issues**

- Security issues are easy to solve but must be addressed.
- Security training should be provided for all employees.
- Internet connectivity and vulnerability should be addressed.
- Note: 90% of those charged with security in large organizations feel that home-based workers are not a security concern. In fact, they are more concerned with the occasional work that is taken out of the office by traditional employees who lack the training, tools, and technologies that teleworkers receive. <https://globalworkplaceanalytics.com/resources/costs-benefits>

- **IT Infrastructure Changes/Investment May be Necessary**

- Teleworkers need access to company systems, software, and data.
- Infrastructure changes that support telework improve efficiency for office and traveling employees as well.
- Companies need to address remote technical support issues. Off-the-shelf solutions exist.
- Other potential investments required:
 - Collaboration software to maintain productivity with colleagues.
 - Conference rooms with enhanced virtual connectivity.
 - Hoteling software for reserving office space in all-staff hybrid scenarios.
- Examples of costs to enable enhanced mobility:
 - New laptops (converting desktops to laptops, and replacing old laptops with new hardware suitable for remote work: \$2,000 each
 - Expanded cell phone service: \$1,000 - \$2,000/month (35 phones)
 - IT footprint for remote work: \$2,300 per person for “small footprint” (Laptop, portable monitor, mouse, keyboard and docking station) versus \$3,000 “large footprint” (Laptop, 2 monitors, keyboard, mouse, printer and docking station)
 - Hoteling software: \$2,000 to \$12,000 per year

- **Double-Taxation, Employee Law & Other Concerns**

- Some cities, notably New York City, impose taxes on home-based workers whether they work in the city or not. A Connecticut resident who works at home for a New York company owes taxes to both states.
- Accidents in the homes of teleworkers have raised concerns about employer liability.
- Local zoning issues may be a concern; some communities and homeowner associations prohibit home offices.