Managing Telecommuters

- It is important to increase the opportunity for employees to be able to telecommute.
- With the opportunity, it should only be done if it is in a position that would either sustain or increase productivity.
- It can also increase the employee's morale as well (Markus, 2006). Morale would be increased because of the flexibility of work schedule.
- Managers should stay in close contact with telecommuters. The contact should be for informational purposes and not to monitor the work schedule as much as possible (Lautsch, 2009). If employer work schedules are closely monitored, these employees are shown to feel unhappy towards their organization for the lack of trust that they are shown.
- This supervisory practice of trusting telecommuting employees is related to reports of less work-family conflict for telecommuters, increased performance, and increased agreeableness with co-workers.
- Behaviors that supervisors have are associated with the telecommuter's ability to be productive and succeed in their work. Using the same monitoring technique for non-telecommuters and telecommuters results in a slight advantage in family-work conflict for the telecommuter.
- When figuring out how to treat telecommuters, it can't be done in a vacuum. The feelings of in-office workers are important too. If telecommuters don't like what they are seeing, they are very reactive to it if telecommuters were treated differently by supervisors during the work. They didn't like it if it was perceived that telecommuters weren't doing their share of the work or were using special privileges that affected them as well (Lautsch, 2009).
- Face-to-face time is lost as well. This can be a challenge because building relationships with coworkers is an important part of making an organization run as well as possible (Thompson, 2012). According to Dahlstrom (2013) the substitute of online relationships just doesn't make up for the loss of face-to-face ones. The essence of the concern is that telecommuters are concerned that they aren't getting to be seen by their supervisors that they will not be considered for promotions or awards. This lack of fairness is of large concern to many in that situation.
- Besides the informal communication, there is also a loss of learning that can happen by telecommuting because individuals can learn how to do their jobs better by just being in the same area as their colleagues and having casual talks about what they do on the job and how they do it as well.

PROBLEMS WORKING AT HOME

- Telecommuting can be an excellent way for employees to deal with work and daily demands to make them both be productive. (Piskurich, 2000), while still helping with family relationships, it is important that the telecommuter has boundaries with the work and the family to reduce conflict. It has also been shown that employers who have that boundary between work and family were less likely to extend themselves to work when the home is the workplace. This could result in those who do not telecommute to have to pick up the slack.
- A lack of identity inside of the organization can result. A feeling of isolation can result that if social interaction that they have at work isn’t filled by anything else (Thompson, 2012). “Telecommuters, then, and employers must bring together home and office workers. Company and department events, parties and outings unite personnel, prompt people to get to know each other, and foster bonding moments. Weekly meetings that cover company updates, department news and individual questions also tighten connections” (Thompson, 2012, Paragraph 10).
- Organizations must use psychological and not tangible aspects of their organization to create a organizational culture for virtual employees (Dahlstrom, 2013). Having an organizational culture is important for keeping employees on staff and not losing them to alienation and isolation.
- Discipline is required in order to work in a telecommuting structure (Thompson, 2012). Distractions are always present, and there aren’t people of authority there to keep you from doing activities that don’t involve work (2012). One thing about being at the office is that when workers go in, they have a mindset that they are going to be doing work in the time, and that only that time is meant for work. When telecommuting, employers can be tempted to procrastinate because they can just work at a different time.
- According to the study by Thompson (2012), it is important to separate work and family when you work from home, and to keep to a set schedule to work from as to avoid procrastination. Another strategy that is not necessarily set up for doing a job and might not foster a availability to do their job. This includes technology that isn’t good enough to do the job along with family distractions.
- Telecommuters often report that they feel lonely and frustrated by their lack of informal work relationships (Dahlstrom, 2014).

THE EFFECT ON PRODUCTIVITY

- The study by Glenn Dutcher (2012) came with conclusions for productivity when telecommuting. For dull tasks that telecommuters are given, their productivity goes down 6-10 percent as compared to workers who don’t telecommute. For creative tasks, productivity increased by 11-25% for those that involve data entry, productivity is likely to decrease.
- More creative work is advantageous to an organization that uses telecommuting because it stimulates the individual’s creativity muscles. The research results and the elements that increase the productivity for the creative aspect of work shows that a less structured workplace is more beneficial for creative work. Companies such as google use this type of loose work structure to stimulate a creative work environment for the employees. The study shows that there is no cut and dry 100% case that telecommuting will be better or worse, and that the different elements of what type of job it is and the individual situation must be taken into account.
- Studies have varying results when it comes to the increase in productivity due to telecommuting. A part of the problem is that the definition of telecommuting is not set in stone, and some jobs are difficult to measure increases in job performance (Westfall, 2004). Of those statistics that are shown though, they usually show an increase in productivity due to telecommuting that are over 15% (Westfall, 2006). This statistic that says most shows that productivity increase over 15% also means that some do not. This shows the need for more studies to be made that clearly show how the data is collected and which is broken down by job.
- The productivity increase based around a decentralization of a company goes against the trend that had been occurring over the past hundred years of centralization due to industrialization (Westfall, 2004). Now telecommuting allows for decentralization to occur without losing productivity, which hasn’t been the scenario before the industrial revolution (Westfall, 2004).
- This conclusion is based on the fact that it becomes more important for organizations to understand this practice, as it can save thousands of dollars in office space and make their employees happy at the same time by allowing them to when they want from home and will even work more productively at the same time.
- Telecommuting is under growing demand by employers and is increasingly being used by the organizations as well. It is important that as this trend happens, that telecommuting does not make use this practice consider and analyze the possibility of what it could do for themselves. Every company and individual employee are different and must be considered on a case by case basis as to whether telecommuting can be used or not. While the definition of what is telecommuting can be debated, and with statistics from different studies showing different numerical results, the trend is that productivity increases with telecommuting. Following that information, I believe it even more important for organizations to understand this practice, as it can save thousands of dollars in office space and make their employees happy at the same time by allowing them to when they want from home and will even work more productively at the same time.
- As time goes, it will be important for continuous studies to occur on how productivity is decreasing due to telecommuting, while also reducing stress and anxiety that can linger throughout a workday for employees. The study of Piskurich (1996) that telecommuting would be more expensive than if they weren't telecommuting. Organizations are always looking for new strategies to cut costs and increase efficiency with their employees.

TELECOMMUTING AND ITS EFFECT

- Telecommuting allows employees to work more as they want from home and will even work more productively at the same time.
- Telecommuting would be more expensive than if the employees weren't telecommuting. Organizations are always looking for new strategies to cut costs and increase efficiency with their employees.
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