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Dial Interactive's iNsights Newsletter

March 2013

Telecommuting - What is the ROI?

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Greetings!

Hello Di Consultant - we are proud to have you as part of our team. We are expanding our marketing efforts and would love your feedback and iNsights. You are the first to receive this newsletter before we send this off to our general mailing list next week. We are adding new features to our marketing outreach and wanted to run a test within our Di community first. This is to assure that the outbound newsletters are in sync with our CRM as well as reconnecting with you too. Please read through the newsletter and share your thoughts. If you would like to add any contacts to our distro list please forward them to aregli@dialinteractive.com. We hope to feature you in our meet the Di team soon. Thank you for your iNsights!



**Telecommuting for your staff, what is the
ROI?**

Looking at both the upside and downside.



Attention

Partners, Customers &

Vendors

DI wants to collaborate with you by highlighting your stories and newsworthy events in our monthly DI iNights Newsletter.

Please contact us

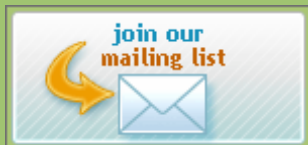
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The topic of telecommuting has caused quite a ruckus lately. Yesterday it was hot and today it is not. Former Google executive, now Yahoo CEO Marissa Mayer stirred up a firestorm debate by bringing remote workers back to the office, and Best Buy followed right behind her. Bottom line, it is all about the ROI, so which is it, telecommute or not?

The big question is whether telecommuting leads to a drop in productivity or creativity. Maybe so. However, keep in mind there is an upside and a downside. Let's take a look.

The Upside

Cost savings to the company: For one, office space doesn't come cheap, especially in major urban areas. AT&T saves \$25 million per year in the cost of office space alone because of telework. Perhaps more surprisingly, AT&T saves \$65 million annually from the increased productivity of teleworkers, according to International Telework Association & Council (ITAC). The time savings inherent in telecommuting (less time lost to travel, getting ready to go to work, and office socializing and distractions) lead to more efficiency.

Telecommuting is part of a decentralized business model in which companies are no longer tied to a single location. As enterprises grow and the economy becomes more global, this model becomes more effective and desirable, decentralization may become necessary for a business to survive and thrive. Telecommuting programs also fit into the growing trend for corporations to offer more job flexibility (incorporating options such as flextime and job sharing) to attract and retain the best workers. Less turnover saves the company money.

Happy employees build more stable work environments. The ability to work some or all of the time from home benefits employees in many ways. Again, cost savings is a big consideration, although many of the costs of commuting to work everyday are hidden and may not be realized at first glance. Savings in the cost of gasoline and parking, or public transportation, are obvious. Telecommuting employees also typically spend less on food (eating lunch at home instead of at expensive restaurants), clothing (working in more casual clothes that

expensive restaurants), clothing (working in more casual clothes that might not be appropriate at the office), and incidentals. More important to many employees is the flexibility to juggle job duties and personal tasks more effectively and, in many cases, to work during the hours that best suit their own biological clocks, instead of during a prescribed 9-to-5 format.

Benefits to society: Less traffic congestion, less pollution, and the ability of employees to work literally from anywhere in the world may help cut down on urban sprawl and overpopulation in urban areas.

Unproductive time becomes productive time. No more wasting hours. Commuting employees can be ready to work at 7:00 AM vs. arriving later because of a long commute. Less time off for illness.

The Downside

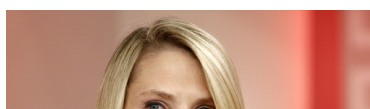
Despite all these advantages, telecommuting can also pose some unique problems for both employers and employees.

Initially there is a significant investment in equipment required, not to mention the time and effort to roll out the infrastructure. Technology issues may create problems when employees don't have access to on-site IT personnel.

Security and compliance issues can be a thorn in both the employer's and the telecommuter's side.

Employers have less control over employees' time. Productivity may be more difficult to measure and report.

Telecommuting can limit promotional opportunities. It is also not for everyone-or every job. There is a loss of accountability that may be hard to measure for management. And Yahoo is saying that telecommuting turned creativity into a sacrificial lamb. So take an inventory of your employees and what your business model is when deciding to use telecommuting as an option.





Contemplating Telecommuting?

Consider The Following:

- The suitability of certain positions for telecommuting.
- Wage and hour requirements. The Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) and state counterparts raise issues for how nonprofits monitor telecommuter work schedules.
- Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA) issues.
- Workers' compensation laws.
- Implications of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). An employer is not necessarily required to permit telecommuting merely because it is the employee's preferred reasonable accommodation.
- Anti-discrimination. Telecommuting typically raises concerns about disparate impact claims, which arise not from intentional discrimination but inadvertent problems arising from company policy.
- Medical leave needs. The most common problem arises when employers use telecommuting to pressure employees not to take medical leave.
- Privacy issues. These can conflict with an employer's need to monitor the employee's performance.
- Protection of confidential and proprietary information. Home office equipment such as computers and other devices containing work product and sensitive information should be dedicated to work-related activities only.
- Income taxes. Complications can arise when an employee telecommutes from a different state.
- Tort liability. Liability insurance should cover the telecommuting employee's home.
- Zoning laws.

Dial Interactive has years of experience designing contact center technology solutions. Call us today at 954.816.3700 to design your contact center.



The Technology for Telecommuting



Technology needs:

- Email
- Web-based application
- Mission critical applications
- Real-time collaboration
- Voice over IP
- Video-on-demand
- Video conferencing
- Remote confirmation and management
- Integrated security
- Resiliency and availability

Home agent must haves:

- Reporting tools
- Remote monitoring
- Quality processes
- Scheduling platform integration and operational processes
- Remote agent communications tools
- Call routing to remote agents
- Agent performance scorecards
- Security
- Remote agent technical support

Management of your remote users:

- Quality monitoring
- Real time data monitoring
- Robust reporting metrics
- Low supervisor to agent ratio
- Constant communication via phone, chat, email, meetings

Features in a remote call center:

- Ability to answer and place calls from a remote location other than the main corporate office
- Ability for agents to answer phone calls as if they were located in your call center
- Ease of use so that agents can be trained and operational in less than 30 minutes
- Same features and functionality that agents would get by working in the call center
- Allowing remote agents to be trained remotely during off peak hours
- Allowing agents to be quality monitored by 3rd party systems
- Web-enablement
- Real-time reporting
- Advanced call routing



Di iNsights Inspired by Don Sutton

Dial Interactive has the opportunity to work in many different environments because we are vendor agnostic. Our end goal is to find the right technology application to meet the business need. DI is able to understand the demands in the board room and communicate in the trenches with the agents too. We specialize in finding nuances in both the business and the people processes that when uncovered and addressed can fix broken systems. These fixes enhance your call center. Bottom line, DI focuses on getting the best ROI for your time, money and resources.

Some unique insights DI has experienced in dealing with telecommuting for contact centers include:

People and process insights:

In rural areas agents prefer to go to the office. They view coming to work as a social event. This does not seem to be true in major cities where agents have to fight traffic and pay the additional fuel costs to get to work.

Another major advantage to finding workers in remote cities is to access

Another major advantage to finding workers in remote sites is to access language skills. Certain parts of the country have hard-to-find languages that can support global customers or a follow-the-sun work schedule.

Technical insights:

Nice and Verint offer software to monitor remote workers' productivity, i.e., how much time they are spending on the PC and what web sites they are visiting and what applications they are using.

One problem with using VoIP on the agent's internet is if the data connection is lost, the call is terminated, i.e., the agent's softphone may reboot. This raises the question of what to do with the caller and whether to route them to a different agent mid stream.

Citrix is a good solution because it provides a buffer between the agent's home PC and the corporate network.

Dollars and cents insights:

Check to see if the calls to the agents are going to be long distance or local. Two cents a minute adds up to an extra \$1.20 per hour or \$2,496 a year.

Call DI today to learn if telecommuting makes sense for your business. DI provides gap analysis, strategic road maps and implementation plans to help you set up your telecommuting strategy.

About Dial Interactive **Meet the DI Team**



Here at DI we are a dedicated team of

professionals that love what we do and really respect each other. Many of you know the founders of DI, Don Sutton and Phil Grosdidier. We wanted to take an opportunity to have you meet the rest of the team in our newsletters. I'm Ali Regli, and I've been writing these newsletters for the past couple of years. I also do the most telecommuting on the team so I thought it would be ideal to start with me

so I thought it would be ideal to start with me.

Where do you live: Sunny South Florida.

What do you like best about telecommuting: For years I worked for big companies like BellSouth and Verizon where you would spend hours away from home. Now that I have a family, I love working from my home office because it allows for work life balance.

Tell us something about your technology in your home office: I won't give up my pots line. Living in South Florida we have experienced many electric outages, especially during hurricane season. Post Wilma in 2005 we lost electricity for six weeks. One thing that always worked when everything else was down was my pots line.

Tell us about your telecom background: I started in the early days of wireless data, the first text messaging devices and smart phones. Anyone remember Simon? I always loved how technology solved business problems and still do. I worked for MCI, now Verizon, in the early go go days of building out the internet super highway infrastructure. My passion to help others bridge opportunities led me to start South Florida Telecom Association. There were a few startups as well as the big boys along my path that led me to Dial Interactive. What I like most about DI is working for a small boutique firm that services enterprise level companies that need complex technology solutions. You get the best of both worlds. Plus I enjoy working with such a great team of professionals.

Warmest regards,

Ali Regli

Director of Sales and Marketing

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TL9000



Call 954.816.3700 or [Email](#) today
to discuss your telecommuting strategy.