



Business Briefing

A Great Pairing: The Remote Office Worker and a Potential \$43 Billion Savings at the Pump

Many companies are moving towards providing home office options for staff members, and there are many benefits to this arrangement for both the employer and the employee. A number of critical business, technology, environmental and economic factors come together to drive the expanding work-from-home scenario.

Reader Highlights

- Economics drive the need for more remote office workers
- Technology can support this need—review key support systems
- Consider how more remote workers can benefit your bottom line—and help save the environment.

An Excerpt from:

The Naked Truth About Working From Home

John Wiley & Sons, publisher

Currently, only four percent of the U.S. workforce works from home, but research shows that about 40% have jobs that could be performed at home. Our analysis shows that if they did, these new tele-workers could annually save 625 million barrels of oil (roughly equivalent to 80% of our annual Gulf Oil imports), reduce greenhouse gases by 107 million metric tons of CO₂, and save almost \$43 billion at the pump.

Businesses can now provide the technology to support today's information-age workers in the remote office or work-from-home situation. Indispensable tools are now readily available to enable them to perform their duties – telephones, computers, collaboration software, networks, and fax machines.

Economic and environmental factors are creating urgency to address the fact that these professionals also use high-value resources - gasoline to drive to work, for instance, as well as requiring resource gobbling office buildings and work space.

When these factors come together, and gas prices continue to sky-rocket, why not take a good look at your business operation and consider the remote worker option. You can now leverage the this option to bolster your bottom line?

What's required to capitalize on the remote worker scenario? We say, luckily, a lot less than in times past. For example, remote worker support is no longer the dicey and Herculean effort it has been in times past—you know the technology that was undependable at best. But now, proven mainstream technologies now be can be readily employed to support the remote worker and make the best use of scarce resources. Here are a few most important technologies we think you should review:

Network Technologies

Most home offices today can be equipped with high speed internet access. Cable and DSL Internet access are available at reasonable prices and they are fast enough to effectively support the remote worker. Security and connectivity can be provided by a small device located at the remote worker's home office, with a larger device at the company location. These devices provide a connection that enable professionals to use any of the network resources they would normally access in the traditional office setting. .

Telephone Technologies

Recent changes in the solutions provided by many suppliers, enable a remote worker to have a regular office phone at almost any location. These phones are smart enough to find their home system, register, and behave just like any other extension.

Faxing

Most companies using fax on a regular basis, deploy some type of fax serving technology. When combined with modern telephone circuits, faxes can be sent to individual users as an email. Faxes can also be sent in the same manner – just like selecting a printer for printing.

Summary and Recommendations

Since it is now quite possible to save money, time and other critical resources, as well as giving your key employees a work option they may find very attractive, why not take full advantage? If you want to thoroughly evaluate the remote worker option, and leverage it to your benefit, we recommend that you take these steps:

- Develop a business case so that you can give this new option an analytical and well-balanced evaluation;
- Use an external resource provider to help evaluate your current business communications and technical infrastructure—and make recommendations where necessary;
- Field test the remote worker scenario with a few key employees who can provide dependable professional feedback about how the new situation works. Track their responses to key factors like overall effectiveness, level of distractions and ideas for improvement before you roll out the program out on a more widespread basis

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