



## Top 10 Teleworking Tips

### 1. Engage all parties up front in the planning process

Involving stakeholders such as IT, HR, and end users ensures that the specific needs of the various constituents are included up front in the planning process. This helps improve user acceptance as the program is rolled out, as they feel that their needs were represented during the decision process.

### 2. Look for solutions that mirror the office work environment

Employees are accustomed to their work environments and rely on the tools that support them. Identify how you can extend these same tools to the teleworker so they have access to all the telephony capabilities they had in the office. For instance, a “softphone” installed on a laptop computer replicates the office phone, including memory presets, allowing teleworkers to send and receive calls just as if they’re in the office. To others, it will appear that they are in the office.

### 3. Minimize remote access costs and complexities

Broadband access has finally reached a point where it is available to nearly every home or office building near major metropolitan areas. Available in either cable or DSL service to the Internet, these connections can be used to remotely access the very same applications that employees in the building access to do their job, with no loss in speed. Extending communications over a secure broadband connection can minimize or even eliminate remote-access costs.

### 4. Use remote support technology to provide improved technical support

Provide technical support to remote employees with technologies that deliver automatic updates to remote worker’s PCs such as security patches, application updates, etc. This helps with the goal of keeping the teleworker feeling like one of the team, in addition to keeping the network secure.

### 5. Develop a remote-worker security policy and implement supporting technologies

This policy should address security vulnerabilities, ranging from use of WiFi within the home environment, to addressing how to secure the data resident on the hard drive on the teleworker’s computer. Make sure that voice and data streams are protected by strong encryption.

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Teleworking, or telecommuting, has been around for many years, but the payoff hasn’t lived up to its promise until recently. Among other obstacles, communications technology left too many teleworkers feeling like the poor cousins of coworkers in headquarters buildings. Leaving multiple reach numbers was a drag, and participating in webinars or receiving large files could be cumbersome or impossible.

Today, the combination of Internet protocol platforms, broadband access, and wireless technologies have evened the playing field. Just within the U.S. government, the number of teleworkers has doubled to more than 100,000 since 2001, according to the Office of Personnel Management.

Companies that embrace teleworking can see increases in productivity, improvements in the quality and size of the available labor pool, happier employees, and reduced real-estate costs.

For the many companies that may be embarking on a teleworking strategy, here are 10 pointers that may prove helpful.

**6. Provide space and services in the office for visiting teleworkers**

Even full-time teleworkers need to come into the office periodically. You can provide a place for these employees to work with “drop-in” offices. For organizations using IP telephony networking and applications, the employee can simply log into the telephone at the desk begin receiving calls made to their extension with full access to their telephony features.

**7. Leverage applications that enable virtual collaboration**

Conference bridges can support small groups as permanent features, rather than “pay by the port” discrete events, and remote participants can share web-based applications and even interact with the presenter or others, using “chat” features. Desktop videoconferencing applications are becoming less expensive and as easy to use as launching an email, particularly in conjunction with Internet-protocol softphones.

**8. Give teleworkers the “presence” they have in the office**

At home, instant messaging allows us to see if friends are “present” and available for text-based chats. This concept is even more powerful in the enterprise, where IM can be integrated with the softphone, offering users the option of instantly linking through either voice or text. Through integrated presence, users can now quickly identify whether peers are available, away, or on the phone, then click to launch a voice call, or send an IM for quick questions and information exchange; or even switch from one to the other, with a simple click of the mouse.

**9. Manage the teleworker program as a project**

The success of any implementation depends on good planning and execution. Manage the implementation of a teleworker program as a project to ensure all the pieces come together to minimize end user disruption or loss of work.

**10. Deploy your teleworker technology broadly to serve business continuity purposes**

The same technologies that support teleworkers can be used to support other employees who aren’t considered teleworkers but who occasionally need to operate from a remote location. And if bad weather or another incident keeps critical employees away from their offices, they can operate effectively from home or anywhere else.

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