



**IMPROVE YOUR BUSINESS**

# TELECOMMUTING GUIDE

Increase productivity & improve  
employee morale while improving air  
quality in Bucks County



Timing can be everything. For telecommuting, the time is now.

The Coronavirus pandemic has forced businesses and companies to go beyond simply evaluating the idea of employees working from home and finally implement it.

TMA Bucks has championed the positives of telecommuting for years in an effort to ease congestion on busy Bucks County roads and improve air quality through reduced vehicle emissions. To us, telecommuting has always been a winner.

The benefits of telecommuting go beyond congestion and the environment. According to the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission, companies that implement telecommuting policies not only help reduce single occupancy vehicle travel to the work site, but also save on office space and overhead. Studies have shown that employees who telecommute even occasionally are more likely to fulfill workday time commitments, take fewer sick days, and report higher morale. Offering this type of flexibility can also increase employee retention and attract new employees.

Technology allows this concept to become a reality. We are already glued to our phones checking emails all hours of the day. In this respect we are telecommuting and don't even realize it. But why not, here and there, ditch the long commute and start your day by hopping on your computer rather than be stuck at a traffic light?

If easing congestion and improving air quality weren't enough, a world with the Coronavirus has finally gotten us to react and is finally getting us to look at telecommuting as a way to be productive and also safer: a win-win.

Businesses that had implemented telecommuting prior to the Coronavirus were able to keep their employees safe, maintain uninterruptedness of operations as best they could, and get ahead of a reality where buildings were closed off.

We understand that not every position or company can perform its duties remotely, but the benefits for those that can are plentiful! Now is the time to take a look at your businesses telecommuting policy to refine it or simply implement one. Let this guide serve as the first step in helping your business organize, function in all environments and flourish, increase employee morale and productivity, and ease congestion on the roads while improving air quality!

## Telecommuting Benefits

# Employers & Employees & Environment



**\$11,000**

in savings per year,  
per employee.



**20%**

more  
productivity.

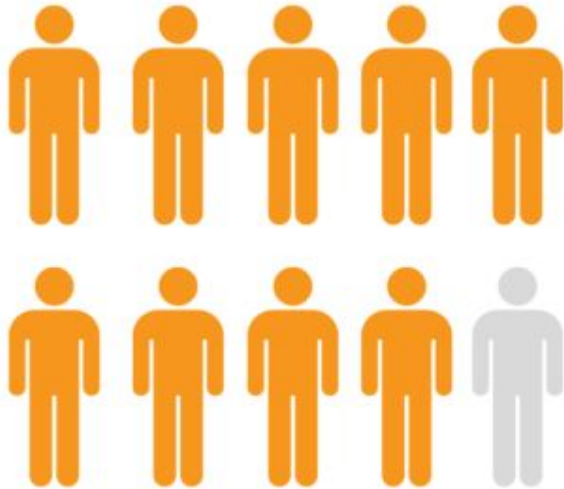


**73%**

telecommuters satisfied  
with their company.

Forbes

**PROVIDING TRANSPORTATION LEADERSHIP, SAFETY & SERVICE**



**90%**

of employees say more flexible arrangements would increase morale

CareerBuilder

## Environmental Impact of Telecommuting

The current US telecommuting workforce annually saves:



Energy consumption of 7.8 billion miles of travel



529 million vehicle trips worth of pollution



Electricity use of 500,000 homes



Carbon emissions equal to offsets of 91 million trees



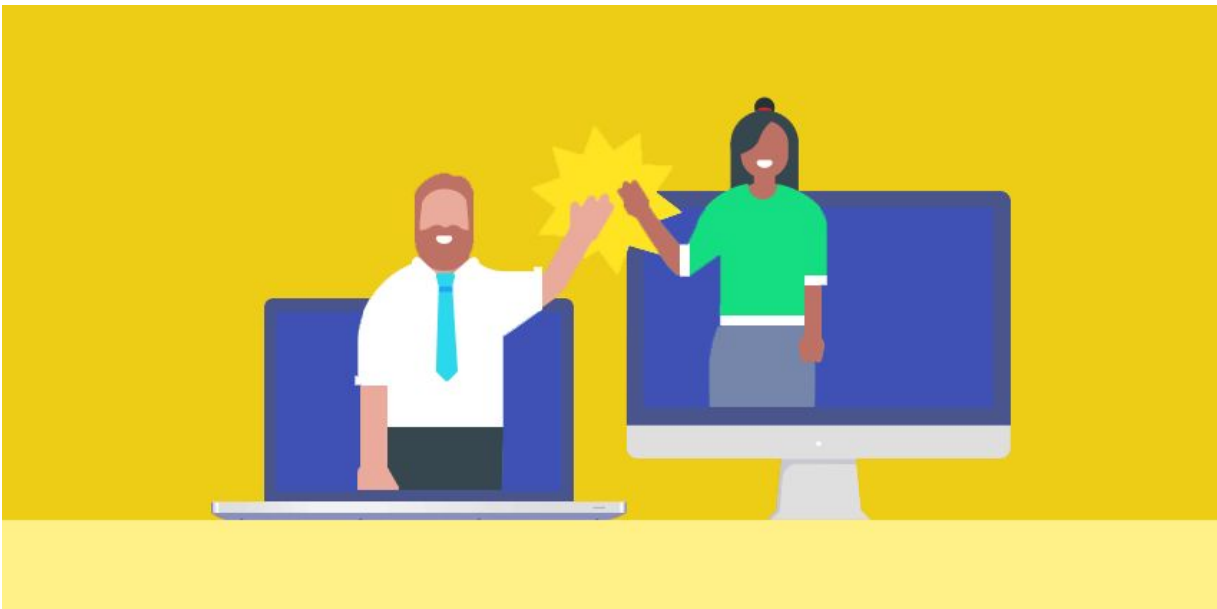
46,000 tanker trucks of gasoline

Forbes

## Telecommuting Defined

**Telecommuting:** An arrangement for employees and managers to work remotely from outside the corporate office. Telecommuting employees can work from a home office, coffee shop, hotel, airport, or satellite office located closer to the employee's home. Telecommuting can be done on a permanent basis, temporarily, or as-needed under a formal or informal arrangement between the employer and employee.

**Telecommuter:** An employee who works away from his/her central workplace all or part of the work week, either at home or another designated or approved alternate work location.



**Central Worksite:** An employee's work headquarters or official duty station where he/she would normally report to work if not telecommuting or working from home.

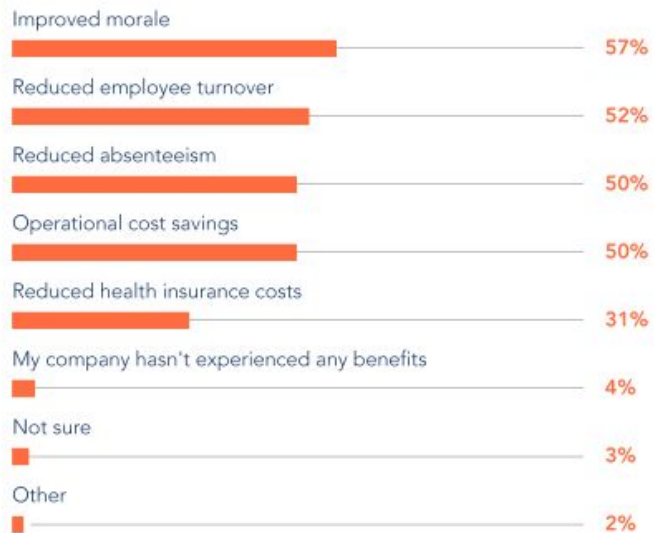
**Alternate Work Location:** Approved work sites that include the employee's home or other locations where official business is performed.

## Why Consider Telecommuting?

The most common objectives that businesses mention for introducing a telecommuting program include:

- Attract new employees
- Retain key and quality employees
- Provide better service to customers, business partners and suppliers
  - Increase productivity and efficiency
- Provide a solution for peak periods and inconvenient working hours
- Ensure continuity of operations in emergency situations and major disasters
  - Reduce office space
  - Reduce operating costs
- Establish a flexible, virtual networked organization
- Fulfill environmental responsibilities by decreasing the number of employees who may be commuting alone by car

### Benefits of remote work according to employers



Source: Indeed



## Telecommuting Cost & Savings

As you add up the start-up costs of your telecommuting program, it is important to remember the long-term benefits the program will provide your business. Cost savings & productivity increases will most likely repay your initial investment & continue to save the company more money in the future.

Costs associated with a telecommuting program will vary according to organizational goals & objectives. Assessing your company's existing technology and equipment will help determine your initial start-up expenditures. The following items should be considered:

Computer equipment: Is it employer issued or will employees need to provide their own equipment?

Accessory equipment: Will an employee need a phone, printer, scanner, etc. to complete work tasks?

Information Technology: Software, e-mail system, server needs, security precautions, etc.

Training: A business may want to invest in on-site training for employees and managers.

Labor associated with program set-up: Configuration of systems to ensure that telecommute is seamless, review of computer/software requirements, HR revisions to employee manuals, development of policy & procedures associated with the telecommuting program.

### The Savings

Real estate costs relating to reducing a company's need for more space because of expansion or a reduction in cost due to a need for less space for existing staff.

Overhead costs related to office space, equipment.

Increased productivity will reduce the need to hire additional employees.

Lower employee turnover.



Increased morale may result in heightened productivity levels.



PROVIDING TRANSPORTATION LEADERSHIP, SAFETY & SERVICE

## Do's & Don'ts For Selecting Who Can Telecommute

### **For those selected:**

Discuss why each employee was selected. Doing so will reinforce the skills and work habits necessary for telecommuting. By selecting this person to telecommute, you are instilling trust. When you take the time to acknowledge their desirable traits, it will help them to understand the expectations involved. The message should be, "You were selected, and here's why you were chosen." If the company does not select everyone to telecommute, it would be wise to ask the chosen telecommuters to keep things private until everyone can be notified.



### **For those not selected:**

Some employees who want to telecommute may not be chosen or may be only eligible after a work probationary period. Some reasons for this are fairly easy to relay to the employee, while others may take more care to explain. The following can help you prepare to deliver the news:

If an employee has the skills to telecommute, but needs more time in their position to be eligible, without making promises, suggest that over a period of time they might be reconsidered—as long as they maintain or improve their skill level.

If an employee simply has not demonstrated the work habits required for self-supervising and telecommuting, then management must be clear about the reasons why the person was not selected. When giving feedback, use clear, concise, descriptive language. This should not be a rare case that they are getting feedback on performance issues. If there are performance problems, then they should have been addressed earlier and separately from a telecommuting selection review. You can reinforce that those issues still affect their job performance, regardless of where the work is done.



## Traits For Successful Telecommuters

Typically, suitable telecommuting candidates are established employees who have demonstrated the following strengths or professional work habits:

- Self-motivated
- Require little supervision
- Successful performance evaluations
- History of dependability
- Function independent of direct supervision
- Can deal with isolation
- Very well organized with good time management skills
- Has an appropriate home work site that includes privacy and few distractions
- Has adequate level of job skills and knowledge
- Does not need a lot of social interaction
- Results-oriented
- Views teleworking as an alternative to traditional work environment
- Volunteers for the program
- Knowledgeable about computer software and hardware
- Mutual trust with their managers
- Understands that teleworking is not a substitute for child and/or elderly care



## Traits For Successful Managers Of Telecommuters

It's equally important to find the right person to telecommute as it is to find the right supervisor to manage employees that telecommute. A boss with a military-style of management is less likely to be an effective telecommuter manager. However, an effective manager that doesn't "micromanage" is likely to be a good manager with telecommuting and non-telecommuting employees. Managers and supervisors should possess the following traits:

- Be skilled with managing and communicating effectively.
- Trust the integrity and professionalism of his or her employees.
- Manage by agreed upon goals, performance standards and deadlines - not by crisis, panic or reaction.
- Assess performance by results, not by face time.
- Use a flexible approach to their management style.
- Understand that employees need balance between work and personal life.
- Believe that employees should work smarter and not necessarily harder.



## Communication Procedure

To help the entire team or staff know what to expect, each telecommuter should complete this sample worksheet and submit it to his or her manager or direct report before starting to telework:

Who needs to know my telecommuting schedule?

What information do they need to have? (e.g., days of telecommuting, hours taking phone calls, call forwarding, etc.)

How will they be given this info?

Telecommuting location phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

Call forwarding? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

Answering machine/voice mail? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

Receptionist or co-worker taking calls? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

If not receptionist, the name of person \_\_\_\_\_

How will incoming calls be answered on telecommuting days? \_\_\_\_\_

The telecommuter agrees to check in for messages at least \_\_\_\_\_ times a day.



## [Sample Telecommuting Policy](#)

Telecommuting is a work arrangement that allows employees to work at home or at some other off-site location for all or some of their regularly scheduled work hours. Although not all jobs can be performed satisfactorily from other locations, EMPLOYER recognizes that, in some cases, telecommuting arrangements can provide a mutually beneficial option for both EMPLOYER and employees.

### **Employee Eligibility**

Candidates for telecommuting arrangements must:

- Have worked at EMPLOYER past the initial probationary period.
- Possess good time-management and organizational skills.
- Be self-motivated, self-reliant and disciplined.
- Be in satisfactory standing with performance reviews.

### **Position Eligibility**

Not all jobs can be performed from off-site locations. In general, positions requiring face-to-face interaction with customers and office personnel are not suitable for telecommuting arrangements.

### **Arrangements**

While employees and supervisors have the freedom to develop arrangements tailored to employee and departmental needs, the following basic requirements must be met:

- Employees must be able to carry out the same duties, assignments, and other work obligations at their home office as they do when working on EMPLOYER's premises.
- The workweek for all full-time regular employees is 40 hours, divided into five days, Monday through Friday, with employees scheduled to work eight hours per day.
- Employees must be available to their supervisors and co-workers during core work hours.
- Employees must be available to attend scheduled meetings and participate in other required office activities at the home office as needed. Except for extraordinary circumstances, EMPLOYER normally provides at least 24 hours' notice for such events.
- Telecommuting may not be used in place of personal time off or vacation time off
- Employees must arrange for childcare or adultcare during their work hours unless specified or agreed to previously.

### **Equipment & Office Supplies**

EMPLOYER does not provide telecommuting employees with equipment or office furnishings for their home offices. Employees are responsible for equipping and maintaining their home offices so that they can accomplish their work in an efficient manner. Depending on the nature of their jobs, this may require having computers, printers, computer software, fax machines, data and telecommunications equipment, and other equipment available for their use.

**Sample Telecommuting Policy (Continued)**

Employees are responsible for providing office furnishings, such as desks, chairs, file cabinets, and lighting; at their own expense. EMPLOYER provides common office supplies, such as paper, pencils, pens, and paper clips, for employees' use in their home offices.

**Requirements & Restrictions**

EMPLOYER has the right to cancel or suspend employee telecommuting privileges at any time, for any reason or for no reason.

Employee Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Employee Print Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor or Designated Agency Representative \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## **Become A TMA Bucks Air Quality Partner!**



If you decide to establish a formal or informal telecommuting policy please understand that you are contributing to reducing traffic congestion in Bucks County and also improving air quality! This makes your company a perfect fit for our Air Quality Partnership program!

The Air Quality Partnership is our way to increase awareness of the Delaware Valley's air quality problem and educate businesses, governments, and the general public on steps to take to reduce smog-forming pollutants.

We are looking for interested businesses in Bucks County to join our Air Quality Partnership! There is absolutely NO COST to participate and we simply ask that your organization:

- Appoint an individual to receive daily air quality forecasts via e-mail from May until September.
- Alert employees when air quality is forecast to be unhealthy (Air Quality Action Days).
- Display information when possible about the Air Quality Partnership for the benefit of visitors and employees.
- Spread the word about the AQP and steps to take on days when poor air quality is forecast through newsletters, community television, or other available means.

Participation is simple, and becoming a TMA Bucks Air Quality partner is an excellent way to show your organization's commitment to cleaner air at a time when many companies are seeking ways to "go green."

The TMA will highlight your organization as a partner on our website, social media channels and other platforms!

If you are interested in becoming an Air Quality Partner of the TMA please contact us by email at [ashley@bctma.com](mailto:ashley@bctma.com) or [briana@bctma.com](mailto:briana@bctma.com)