

flexible working

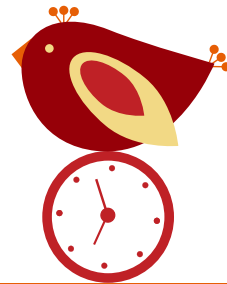
INCREASING EFFICIENCY THROUGH SMARTER WORKING



PUBLIC SECTOR
THE GOVERNMENT
WORKPLACE OF THE FUTURE

RAPID EXCHANGE
THE IRRESISTIBLE RISE OF
MOBILE EMAIL DEVICES

FATHER FIGURES
WHY SUPPORTING FAMILIES
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2010 – the year of flexible working

2010 will be the year when organisations seriously embrace flexible working. The recession has focused minds on the need to do more with less – and that is what flexible work is all about.

Doing more means being more effective. Flexible working can get you closer to customers. This can be by overcoming the boundaries of distance by using new technologies, by having a more location-independent workforce, and by working at times that are better for your customers.

Flexible working also enables your employees to be more effective, helping them to achieve a better work-life balance. It enables companies to align working practices with both business need and employee aspirations. It can help to reduce absenteeism, and improve recruitment and retention. And it's about being more effective while using fewer resources.

The smart and flexible organisation has lower property and facilities costs, as staff work more effectively from a range of locations. It uses less paper, moving processes online. And it reduces the amount of travel, both business travel and commute travel for staff. This means reducing the carbon footprint of the organisation, and doing more for the environment.

The articles in the following pages provide examples of flexible working in practice, and the benefits that the smart and flexible organisation can achieve.

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Government Workplace 2020

How will flexible work make a difference to government workplaces?

By Bridget Hardy, Head of High Performing Property Strategy and Implementation, Office of Government Commerce

The year is 2020: the landscape of government work is transformed. Traditional associations between work and place have gone. The link between person and desk has been broken, and in so doing many people in the public sector across the regions now have access to better quality space and resources.

A flexible and sustainable estate has evolved saving money and giving employees more freedom of choice over where and how they work and live. Flexible distributed working is commonplace.

Public sector workplaces are strategically placed within an integrated network of large campuses, small on-demand spaces plus transient public and private places – all interconnected via ubiquitous wireless connectivity, mobile devices, and real-time interactive networks.

This vision of the future of government workplaces is from Working beyond Walls, the Office of Government Commerce's 2008 guidebook to transforming government workplaces and modernising the way the public sector works.

The pressure to modernise, economise and become more sustainable has never been more urgent. It is essential for the public sector to cut back significantly on the amount of space and

energy it uses. The challenge is to do that while delivering citizens the public services they need now and in the future.

Responding to this challenge will need a radical new approach to integration across government departments and between central and local government. It means breaking down barriers and working, literally, 'beyond walls'. It won't always be easy for individuals and leaders to understand, adopt and manage these changes. It will need open mindedness and a visionary approach to flexibility. But the process of change has started.

In the UK and US there is great government enthusiasm for so-called 'Gov2.0' – using the web to conduct the business of government. Solutions are also emerging to facilitate flexible distributed working, to connect people, promote a sense of belonging and enable collaboration.

The best work almost always comes out of teamwork and the excitement of working with others to a common goal. Excellent public services will more and more rely on cross-sector collaboration and engaging diverse opinion and expertise. But meeting people 'in real life' is no longer so essential, especially for routine tasks. The growing popularity of real-time multi-media

social interaction shows how strong relationships can be built with few if any 'real life' meetings. In the future 'going to work' will not just mean turning up at an office but also 'tuning in' to the network.

By 2020 we will be used to working in virtual places with hosts of people we may or may not have met. I can see a time where the virtual place becomes the constant - 'the office'. It will be the place we go to meet our colleagues and customers, where we know and are known by others, where we have our work and identity.

Meanwhile the physical places we choose to work in will become more diverse, more distributed and our occupation of them more transient. This combination of virtual and radically transformed physical workplaces makes up the government office of the future.

These changes will be hugely challenging but, I believe, essential and inevitable. Government must reduce its use of resources, it must reduce costs, it must continue to recruit the best people, it must modernise the way it delivers services. The next 10 years will see the public sector needing to be more innovative and flexible than ever.

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Productivity on the move

The explosion of mobile email devices has generated a diverse range of business benefits, writes Jessica Twentyman.



The West Yorkshire Police access the national crime database while on patrol

For many people, mobile email is a habit they couldn't give up if they tried. And why would they want to? After all, the ability to send and receive emails from their mobile device means that they can stay productive and in touch with colleagues, friends and family, whether they're standing in a queue at the supermarket, downing a quick cup of coffee between conference sessions or waiting for their flight to be called.

In 2009, the number of people who access email from a mobile device hit 139 million worldwide, according to figures from US-based market research company, the Radicati Group. By the end of 2013, they expect that figure to have topped 1 billion.

Canadian company Research in Motion, manufacturer of the Blackberry, has done much to fuel that growth. In the last decade, it has shipped over 75 million devices to a subscriber base of some 36 million people worldwide. Last quarter alone, RIM signed up 4.4 million new Blackberry

users, despite difficult economic conditions worldwide.

But today's customers - whether they're companies or consumers - don't buy the device simply for email, insists Rory O'Neill, RIM's director of solutions and alliances marketing. They're using it as a platform for accessing a whole world of different applications he says - whether that's 'poking' their friends on Facebook or submitting travel expenses directly to their company's back-office financial accounting systems. "Email may be where corporate users start," he says. "But where they go from there is simply a matter of business need - there's a staggering diversity of applications out there that you can access with a Blackberry."

Take Warburtons, one of the UK's top five grocery brands, where managers can approve purchase orders for raw materials used in the company's bakery products even when they're not at their desks. Or West Yorkshire Police, where officers can access data held on the national crime database, the Police National Computer (PNC), via their

Blackberries while they're patrolling the streets of Bradford, Leeds or Huddersfield.

In fact, it's fair to say that access to email while on the move has done much to whet appetites for access to other kinds of collaboration tool, says Andrew Millard, UK marketing director of Citrix Online. "There's a whole new way of working that has opened up in recent years and, as a result, there's a general expectation that efficiency and productivity doesn't necessarily take place within the four walls of an organisation's physical offices," he says.

That's the thinking that has guided Citrix Online's development of GoToMyPC, which allows employees to access their office-based PC - including all email, files, programs and network resources - from any other Internet-connected computer, in any location. The GoToMyPC PocketView feature, meanwhile, enables desktop access via mobile devices.

And for those users who complain that the screen and keyboard on their mobile device

are too small and 'fiddly' to write long emails or successfully navigate browser screens, a company called Celio believes it has an answer. Its RedFly product is essentially an integrated keyboard-and-screen that plugs into a smartphone, enabling the user to circumvent usability issues and offering eight hours of battery life in a lightweight format.

"Sometimes, you just don't want to carry a laptop with you on a business trip. You don't need the horsepower and you don't need the excess weight, but you do want better ease of use," explains Chretien Minke, Celio's general manager and vice president for EMEA.

In November, Celio announced a partnership with RIM, so that the RedFly device now plugs into Blackberries as well as Windows Mobile devices. For those who can't or won't master the art of cranking out emails at lightening-fast speed on their Blackberry Bold, the RedFly could provide a welcome gateway to more pervasive productivity.

Clocking off

Productivity, not presence, is the best way to measure the contribution employees make to their organisation, writes **Jessica Twentyman**.

UK business leaders are utilising remote working technologies to tackle head-on the increasingly old-fashioned notion that the most valuable contributions come from employees who sit at their desks in corporate offices for 40 strictly-scheduled hours per week. In fact, bosses who continue to insist that people go to work at the same time and stick to a set routine may actually weaken morale and business performance, according to Graham Jones, Internet Psychologist. "People generally don't like being told how to run their life," he says. "They feel their boss is controlling them and therefore are actually less motivated." By contrast, he says, bosses who equip staff with the technological means to work flexibly and remotely reap the benefits of a more committed, goal-oriented workforce.

That view tallies with recent findings from a November 2009 survey conducted by Citrix Online, a leading provider of remote work technologies, to coincide with National Commute Smart Week. Almost two-thirds of respondents (62 per cent) reported that they are sick of the daily commute and want to reduce the time they spend travelling to and from work. The most popular solutions proposed by those polled include home working (34 per cent), varying start and finish times (22 per cent) and using technology to enable flexible and remote working (32 per cent).

Smart bosses are listening - and for sound commercial reasons, says Andrew Millard, director of e-commerce for EMEA at Citrix Online. "Flexible working can cut churn rates for employers, allowing them to retain the best talent, maximise their productivity and ensure a motivated workforce as we come out of the recession," he says. In 2009, economic upheaval and concerns over business continuity in the face of a global swine flu pandemic conspired to give the UK PLC's 'culture of presenteeism' a sound beating. In 2010, he predicts, forward-looking companies will continue to invest in remote working technologies as a means to navigate the recovery.

Radio advertising company RadioWorks is set to be one of them. It's already placed flexible working at the heart of its company culture, by giving employees the flexibility to connect to their office PC and work from any location,

including their own homes. Using GoToMyPC from Citrix Online, they can view, access and use all their files, applications and email as if they were sitting at their desk, while avoiding the rigours of a daily commute across London at peak times.

The technology has been instrumental in ensuring the company can maintain a highly flexible, talented workforce, says Rob Chew, RadioWorks' media director. "Flexibility is essential to business success for us, and through GoToMyPC, we can provide our employees with the work-life balance they are demanding, while operating a competitive business that instills loyalty from our staff, boosts productivity and promotes client satisfaction," he says.

But remote access to a corporate PC is only one part of the picture for employees working from home, on the road, or at a customer or partner site. Citrix also offers a web conferencing

"Flexible working can cut churn rates for employers, allowing them to retain the best talent"

and collaboration suite, so that these employees can still attend online meetings (GoToMeeting), view webinars (GoToWebinar), participate in high-definition audio conferences (HiDef Conferencing) and create and share recorded content with their colleagues (GoView). And if they run up against a technical problem while working remotely, GoToAssist provides an easy way for them to reach out to skilled helpdesk staff to fix it.

These are affordable, easy-to-use technologies that help businesses of all sizes provide flexible working options to their workforces quickly and easily," Millard says. They will be ideal solutions for the many businesses interested in embracing new and more flexible ways of working in 2010, while keeping a sharp eye on cost and complexity.

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Smaller spaces, bigger business

To achieve the best productivity, businesses should operate from an increasing variety of workplaces, writes Andy Lake



Organisations can now expand into smaller space. Growing the company does not mean growing your premises

With the increased mobility of work comes some key questions. What are offices for? Why are they located where they are? And what is the point of having offices that are half empty all the time?

After salaries, offices are the biggest cost for organisations. In a traditional office with an assigned desk for each employee, space audits typically find average occupancy rates of 45 per cent or less. A staff survey will typically show that over 80 per cent of staff want more flexibility in where and when they work. And around 60 per cent are keen to work from home 1-2 days per week, or in an office closer to home.

Research by Regus plc, the leading provider of flexible workspace solutions, has found that the length of employees' commute journeys is closely linked with company loyalty. The further someone lives from the office, the more likely they are to think seriously about changing their job. And analysis of workplace surveys shows a strong link between

commuting distances and the desire to work from home or a local office.*

According to Mark Dixon, Chief Executive of Regus, "Work is becoming something you do from anywhere, from the most appropriate place, wherever you can be most productive".

The most appropriate place could be in a central office. But today it is just as likely to be at a local office, at home, on the move, at the nearest touch-down centre, in cafés, hotels or at client sites. In this context the role of the office changes. It becomes more a centre for collaboration, and for access to specialist resources. The days when offices consisted mainly of ranks of fixed desks is fading away. Smaller offices that are hubs for larger groups of people are the way forward.

Key to making this happen is that organisations do not own all the spaces in which employees work. Some are personal (the home, or car) some are public (cafés, or public transport) and some are shared (the local work hub).

EXPANDING INTO LESS SPACE

Organisations can now expand into smaller space. Growing the company does not mean growing your premises. In the worlds of planning and economic development, they are starting to refer to this as 'spaceless growth'. As we emerge from recession this will be an increasingly important concept.

Small businesses as well as corporates can benefit from this flexibility of place. 41 per cent of businesses are home based. 60 per cent of new businesses start up at home. But home is not the ideal place for business meetings. A local work hub is the most appropriate place for meetings in a professional setting, accessing facilities such as printing, or tapping into 'virtual office' services. Being able to use a network of hubs has many advantages for both small businesses and corporate employees on the move.

These ideas are also finding a hearing in the government sector. Reducing the cost of government offices by having flexible working

and using work hubs – either government-owned or third party – will be one of the big stories of the next 10 years.

The advantages of shrinking and outsourcing offices are clear. It's a harder task to set the wheels in motion. It requires understanding where, when and how people work, and how this can be changed. It involves changes not only to property and facilities, but also to technologies and – perhaps most tricky of all – the assumptions and workplace culture that underpin traditional working practices.

The organisations that take an integrated approach to workplace change will be able to maximise the benefits on all fronts – cutting costs, increasing effectiveness, increasing employee loyalty and improving environmental performance.

*** For more on this research, visit www.flexibility.co.uk.**

Celio Corp REDFLY Mobile Companion for BlackBerry and Windows Mobile Smartphone



The REDFLY Mobile Companion is not a computer; it's simply a large screen and full keyboard for a smartphone. With the REDFLY, smartphone customers now have the ability to increase their productivity typing long emails, editing documents, browsing web content, accessing existing smartphone applications as well as SaaS based applications at a lower cost and better user experience.

REDFLY will assist you in extending the use of your BlackBerry or Windows Mobile infrastructure whilst realising the benefits of mobile and agile working.

According to IDC, shipments of Converged Mobile Devices (smartphones and wireless handhells) will grow from 124.6 million in 2007 to 376.2 million in 2012 (3/08). These powerful devices bring a capable computing experience to sleek pocket-size designs with access to applications on the Internet and corporate networks. The smartphone continues to evolve into the primary mobile computing platform, providing access to all of a user's applications and data, but it lacks three fundamental aspects — a large screen, touch-type keyboard and all-day battery life. REDFLY addresses all three of the

smartphone's shortcomings. REDFLY delivers to the mobile workforce a solution that unleashes the power of the mobile device by providing users expanded visibility and access to their device.

**For more information, visit: www.celiocorp.eu
or email: info@celiocorp.eu**



CUT COSTS, NOT PEOPLE OR SERVICES !



Employers are under pressure to cut costs and the temptation is to pass the pain on to employees and customers.

Smart working can result in smaller and cheaper offices, improved customer service, less unproductive travel, higher productivity and better staff recruitment, retention and attendance.

In fact employers, employees, customers and the wider community can all gain. And the figures can be impressive - office costs halved, staff absence virtually eliminated and productivity often up by over 30%.

As part of the SmartWork Toolkit, Space Auditor measures how efficiently your office is being used. It provides the evidence for eliminating wasted space and creating a smart work environment. Cost can be as low as £10 per workplace with savings up to £3,000 per employee per year.

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Flexibility to support the growing business

A case study in flexible office space



“You also need an accommodation provider that can partner you in being fast-moving and forward-looking”

More than ever in the current economy, companies need to focus their energies on their core business. The way they use space and organise their working practices should be an enabler of business success, rather than being a drain on resources or a factor that limits their reach.

One fast-growing company that has taken the flexible approach to office space is Investigo. It specialises in recruitment in the fields of finance and change management, working with leading blue-chip companies. Between 2003 and 2009 Investigo's turnover rose from £600,000 to over £28 million, putting it in the 'Virgin Fast Track 100' list for the past three years. And it has grown from 15 to over 60 staff.

Several elements account for Investigo's success, says Managing Director David McDowell. With a background in recruitment, founders Simon Smith and Scott Beckson saw there was potential for a recruitment company where experienced staff could work in a more creative and autonomous environment than many were used to. The flexible work culture is supported by a flexible approach to space use.

FLEXIBLE ACCOMMODATION

In August 2003, Scott Beckson and Simon Smith moved their young company into Regus serviced offices in Cannon Street, London, and they have stayed with Regus ever since. Their reasons were twofold: they wanted office accommodation that could expand in line with their own growth. And they wanted to focus on managing and expanding the business, rather than managing property.

“If you think about a business in its infancy, it needs flexible accommodation, not long leases that tie it into the same place for years. You also need an accommodation provider that can partner you in being fast-moving and forward-looking,” emphasises David McDowell.

Vital to Investigo's growth has been the availability of offices that fit its current scale and future ambitions. When Investigo has wanted to increase headcount, Regus has provided more space. When it has wanted to expand into new areas, Regus has provided high-quality bases close to clients and candidates. Had Investigo been locked into an inflexible five-year lease for an office for just 15 people, the story and rate of the company's growth might have looked very different.

Initially, Investigo based 15 people in the Cannon Street offices. Then, as the company continued to expand, it moved to another Regus office – New Broad Street House – in the heart of the City. When Investigo expanded into the Home Counties, Regus provided new bases in Guildford and St Albans and Reading.

Investigo uses other facilities at New Broad Street House as and when it needs them. These include a videoconferencing studio, and extra meeting and conference rooms.

MANAGING THE BUSINESS, NOT THE PROPERTY

To add further flexibility, Investigo has started to use the Regus' Businessworld solution. This is a smart card that offers walk-in access to Regus business lounges and offices all over the UK, supporting mobile working.

The flexibility to grow was Scott Beckson and Simon Smith's first reason for using Regus serviced offices. The second was their desire to focus on managing the business, rather than managing property.



Part of Investigo's formula for success is that as many staff as possible are fee-generating. It follows that the company should outsource or minimise non-fee-earning activities.

“No more than a handful of staff do back-office work. The great majority, even the directors, are fee-generating. They're focused externally – on clients and candidates – not on running an office,” explains McDowell.

Using Regus offices means that Regus manages everything from front of house and audiovisual technology to maintenance and security – leaving Investigo's own staff to focus on their own areas of expertise.



Tim Dwelly
Director of Live/Work Network

Q: IS FLEXIBLE WORKING GOOD FOR BUSINESS?

A: Few people realise that over 40 per cent of all UK businesses are now home-based: that was revealed in a DTI survey in 2005, well before the downturn. And in fact two thirds of all UK homeworkers are self employed. So arguably it isn't employees but those who work for themselves who are the flexible working pioneers. They have lower costs and waste less time and carbon commuting.

Q: IS HOME AN APPROPRIATE PLACE TO RUN A BUSINESS?

A: Self-employed people must think so as most make this choice. But you can also run a somewhat bigger business from home by using subcontractors or freelancers rather than staff. This is flexible working at its purest - in hard times there is no need to make anyone redundant or close offices. And when times are good, it's easier to expand a website than a warehouse. However, homes aren't designed for work. That's why live/work property is so important for those who want to expand or professionalise. Live/work is designed for both working and living. Our UK live/work property finder website is free to use and will tell you more: www.liveworkhomes.co.uk.

Q: WHAT ABOUT THE DOWNSIDES OF HOME-BASED BUSINESS?

A: Two main challenges are isolation and low visibility. Home-based businesses can be 'under the radar', hidden from business support and from each other. For this reason they need places like workhubs (the business equivalent of a gym) - a facility they can use to network and collaborate with others, book meeting space and perhaps used shared equipment. We are currently doing research for the government on workhubs, with a survey of hub users on our website www.workhubs.com. In the new low carbon economy, I expect to see live/work properties and workhubs become a common part of the landscape.



www.liveworknet.com



Mark Dixon
Global CEO of Regus

Q: WHAT TRENDS ARE YOU SEEING IN GLOBAL WORKPLACES?

A: The way people work has changed enormously in recent years, and as the survivors emerge from this latest global recession, new patterns are emerging. At Regus, we observe these changes at first hand. Two thirds of our 500,000 customers don't have a physical office. This is probably the single biggest recent change to have happened to the world of work. New technology has made it possible for millions of people to work wherever they want, and naturally enough, most of them choose to work where they are be that home, traditional office or in an alternative workspace such as a business lounge or café.

Q: WHAT ARE THE REAL BENEFITS TO FLEXIBLE WORKING?

A: Flexible working has many real benefits; property costs can be reduced by up to 60 per cent, carbon footprints can be reduced through decreased commuting and improving office occupancy efficiency, productivity can be increased whilst employee stress levels can be reduced, and importantly individuals work life balance can be improved.

Q: WHAT DO YOU BELIEVE TO BE THE FUTURE OF THE OFFICE?

A: I believe the traditional model of the office is dead. In a few years' time many companies are going to look radically different as they rethink the way they recruit, train, motivate and deploy their workforces. Take commuting for example: In the future our children will reminisce about our daily commute to the office in much the same way as we recall life without the telephone. The new flexible workplace will be at the heart of that change, it will be a better, more rewarding world of work, reflecting the way people want to live their lives.



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Good for families, good for business

The government's measures to support families at work are encouraging more comprehensive flexibility policies.



The majority of fathers say that taking time off leads to them playing a greater role in caring for their children

Over the past few years, the government has taken a leading role in supporting parents and carers at work. The 'right to request' flexible working, and new paternity, maternity and parental leave options have been introduced to support parents at work - including fathers. It's good for families, good for equality - and good for business too, says the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills.

Working fathers and mothers with children aged 16 and under have the right to request flexible working. This right is also available to parents of disabled children under 18, and to carers of dependent adults. More than 10 million employees are eligible.

This 'right to request' enables parents and carers to propose flexible working arrangements. Employers must seriously consider the request and can only refuse if they have valid business reasons. According to the 2008 CBI Employment Trends Survey, 95 per cent of all requests from working parents are agreed.

There's a growing awareness that enabling staff to have a better work-life balance is good for business, as it encourages loyalty and increases job satisfaction. With the average cost of recruiting a new member of staff around £6k, it makes sense to accommodate employees' aspirations for a manageable balance.

The most forward-looking employers go beyond the minimum. Rather than have a reactive policy of responding to requests, they have developed comprehensive flexible working policies for all staff, not only parents. Taking a more strategic approach enables them to maximise the benefits, such as reducing property and travel costs.

FATHER FIGURES

Flexible working is sometimes portrayed as a women's issue, and indeed it is contributing to women achieving greater equality. But men are also seeking a better balance and looking to play a more significant role in caring for their children.

According to the Equalities and Human Rights Commission, almost half of fathers have some kind of

flexible working open to them - though only 30 per cent are actually using it. The most common forms are flexitime and working from home but options could also include different start and finish times, part-time working and compressed hours. The overwhelming majority (96 per cent) of fathers who were working flexibly value their working arrangements. Two thirds of all fathers consider the availability of flexible working to be important when looking for a new job.

The vast majority (91 per cent) of dads now take time off around the birth of their child and the majority of fathers say that taking time off leads to them playing a greater role in caring for their children. Currently fathers can take 2 weeks paid paternity leave at a standard rate of £123.06 per week. Many also benefit from contractual paternity leave or may also take annual leave.

Now extensions to paternity leave are on the horizon. The government plans to introduce a new right to Additional Paternity Leave and Pay for fathers of children due from 3 April 2011. This would give fathers a right to up to six months' leave which can be taken if the mother returns to work with

maternity leave outstanding. Some of the leave may be paid if taken during the mother's maternity pay period.

PARENTAL LEAVE

Parents also have the right to up to 13 weeks unpaid Parental Leave. The new Parental Leave Directive agreed last November will increase parental leave to four months. Member States will have two years to make the changes. Also if there is an unexpected family emergency, eg a child falling ill, employees can take a reasonable amount of (unpaid) time off to deal with the emergency and put other care arrangements in place.

The combination of these leave options and flexible working provide employees with a range of options to balance work and family life.

For further information visit www.direct.gov.uk/workandfamilies or www.businesslink.gov.uk/workandfamilies

BIS
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Flexible Business Technology



We know flexible working can work for the employer and the employee, reducing costs and increasing business potential. Yet only 40% of small and medium sized businesses (SMBs) allow employees to work from home, compared with 76% of large companies. So why are SMBs missing out on this opportunity?

A major reason is the perception that the technology to enable effective flexible working is too expensive. According to a new independent survey commissioned by Citrix Online only 43% of SMBs have the technology in place to allow flexible working.

PepperIT, specialist flexible working technology consultants, dispute this. Managing Director, Rob Pearson says "It's a fallacy. Five minutes searching the web proves there's an abundant range of cost effective solutions enabling businesses to collaborate from remote locations."

PepperIT has an impressive track record deploying cost effective flexible working technologies in SMBs. PepperIT use a simple methodology. First, identify what the business could gain from flexible working. Then identify the technology that best fits the bill. Because PepperIT are completely independent, they can

objectively review all the options and provide the most appropriate solution.

Pearson says "Flexible working is about working anytime, anywhere. If SMBs don't adopt the technology they will lose out to their larger competitors."

You can find how PepperIT has helped other businesses on their website, www.pepperit.com/flexible.



Ready, set, go!

Whether you are deploying a strategy for onsite distributed teams, increased mobility, or formalising a work-from-home initiative, making the transition is no easy task. To thrive in a virtual workplace, organisations, teams, and individuals need new skills, tools, and training. That is what e-Work.com provides: Leading edge, highly interactive, web-based training now being used by small companies, large multi-nationals, companies just beginning, and even companies with the most renowned workplace programs in the world!

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for the Virtual Workplace**



The green view

Flexible work enables companies to be more effective while being less resource-intensive. Andy Lake outlines the key factors for making working practices more sustainable.



The typical office desk is occupied for less than 50 per cent of the working day

“Doing more with less” has always been a mantra for business. Today we should think of this as meaning being more effective while reducing environmental costs, as well as financial costs.

Flexible work is central to reducing the environmental footprint of work. The three main areas to look at are travel, the environmental costs of offices and putting services and processes online to cut down the use of resources.

REDUCING TRAVEL

When introducing flexible work, companies should set targets for travel reduction. A Smith Institute report last year, *Can Homeworking Save the Planet?* (see table), shows what savings can be achieved.

As more than 12 per cent of the workforce already work from home, they are already making a substantial contribution to ‘saving the planet’. Three quarters of the carbon footprint of working practices is made up of the transport energy used by individual workers, most of which is consumed during commuting.

Business travel can be replaced by video, audio and web conferencing, and through online collaboration techniques. The

Department for Transport’s Smarter Choices study concluded that “teleconferencing typically reduces business travel in organisations that promote its use by 10 per cent - 30 per cent”.

OFFICE COSTS

Offices are hungry consumers of energy and physical resources. As the typical office desk is occupied for less than 50 per cent of the working day, flexible working solutions, such as desk-sharing solutions can reduce the carbon footprint per worker considerably.

The redesign of offices to create flexible working environments also provides a chance to introduce energy-saving features and practices. Green Office Week, an initiative launched by Avery, gives advice on how to mobilise the workforce to improve the environmental performance of offices. A YouGov poll commissioned by Avery found that 75 per cent of office workers thought that they were less environmentally friendly in the office than at home. A lack of empowerment, facilities, education, communication and company apathy were all cited as major reasons for this.

Other studies have found that this greater awareness in the home environment translates to home offices. The carbon footprint of the homeworker is generally lower than that of the office worker.

MOVING PROCESSES ONLINE

Nothing tethers people to the office like archaic paper processes. For staff to be able to work from a range of locations and at different times, it is essential that their information and systems can be accessed anytime, anywhere. The network is the office for the truly flexible worker and for the smart organisation.

There are many companies now that can conduct storage audits and convert paper to electronic files, indexed within a document management system. Moving all that filing off the office floor will reduce office costs too.

Measures like this support existing

green initiatives, and the imperative to ‘reduce, recycle, reuse’.

COUNTING THE CARBON

Implementing flexible work enables companies to improve their environmental performance. Sustainability should not be an afterthought, but should be counted in from the outset.

Each change to working practices has an environmental impact. Taking a strategic approach to integrate business efficiency and environmental performance is the way to maximise the benefits.

For more information, visit:

www.flexibility.co.uk/savetheplanet

www.greenofficeweek.eu

	Average employed homeworker (1.5 days per week)	Full-time homeworker (5 days per week)
Distance saved per year*	1175 miles	3915 miles
C02 saved per year	364.5kg	1187kg
Time saved per year	61 hours	202.5 hours

**calculated on basis of 45 working week per year*

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The integrated approach to flexible work

Implementing flexible work means getting everyone working together, reports Andy Lake. Challenging, but the results are worth it.

Once persuaded of the benefits of flexible working, organisations need to set about the practical task of implementing it. To achieve the full range of benefits means working across several disciplines – HR, Property, Facilities, IT and environmental policy.

It means developing a strategy, setting up a project team, and project managing an implementation that may incorporate audits of current working practices, consultations, developing the business case, moving or refurbishing property, workplace design, deploying new technologies, training, culture change and developing new policies and protocols.

That can be challenging. But partial approaches can be costly without delivering the benefits. For example, an implementation that introduces flexible working time options but not flexible place options may have work-life benefits, but not deliver cost savings or environmental benefits. Introducing home working and desk-sharing without addressing workplace culture would probably be a disaster.

One organisation that has adopted an integrated approach is Islington Council. Like many councils, Islington has been under pressure to increase efficiency over a number of years – delivering better services, more sustainably, and with fewer resources. The Smart Working programme began there in 2005, and has ramped up from departmental initiatives to have an integrated framework that guides Smart Working throughout the Council. 2,400 staff are now set up to work more flexibly, working on a desk-sharing basis.

Starting from a portfolio of around 40 office buildings, the Council has now released 12 of them, and refurbished 13 as Smart Working environments, where the focus is on collaboration rather than working at fixed desks. This has led

to a 10 per cent reduction in accommodation running costs. According to Paul Savage, Smart Programme Manager at Islington, “In an organisation like a Council, there is no one-size-fits-all solution. So, while building up an integrated framework for delivery, the roll-out of Smart Working in each service has to take account of the particular needs of that service, and where they are starting from.”

Paul feels that Smart Working is more relevant than ever in the current economic climate. “After salaries, property and facilities are the biggest costs to councils. We need the people much more than we need desks, and the more we can cut our overheads, the better we can maintain services.”

Because of the need for integration, flexible work, or ‘smart working’, implementation is now perhaps emerging as a discipline in itself, with experts who can combine managing multi-faceted projects with a strong understanding of the emerging new ways of working.

According to Halbyn Rich, of flexible work specialists Peoplespace, “A truly integrated approach saves so much time and money. The return on investment period is cut dramatically, and the ability to create better working environments and flexibility for staff is increased”.

Further case studies on the integrated approach are at www.flexibility.co.uk/cases



INTEGRATING ENVIRONMENTS

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More and more companies these days are looking to maximise the time that their sales and technical staff are "in front of the customer". On the face of it, this makes perfect sense as it improves customer relations and increases sales. However whilst it makes economic sense, the reality is that these individuals become disconnected from the information in the business and soon become islands of information on their own.

Email, Blackberries and other mobile devices go some way to re-connect them, but the central information pool, the Customer Relationship Management system (CRM), is rarely updated and business processes suffer as a result. Many corporates throw large amounts of IT resources to resolve this problem, but for the small to medium sized business they have neither the expertise nor the cash to easily overcome the issues.

A technology that delivers a way forward for smaller companies is the software as a service model (SaaS) or cloud computing- the software provider delivers their solution through a web browser. There is no hardware, no software and more importantly no hassle.

A UK based CRM company that offers one of the best solutions is Workbooks. With extensive SMB experience, they understand the frustrations of trying to make applications work together and to centralise important information to make it accessible to everyone.

Workbooks offers a comprehensive CRM system that can be accessed anywhere with an internet connection- you can even use it out on the road with a 3G card!

What is surprising about their offering is that unlike many other solutions, Workbooks CRM is no lightweight – it delivers incredible insight into what's going on in your business – from creating and delivering effective marketing campaigns, tracking customers, appointments, prospects, opportunities, competitors, and managing post sales support. The user interface feels familiar and is very easy to use, whilst it is web

based, the interface is more "Windows-like" than most others. Whoever you are in the organisation, you have access to information that you need and for managers, Workbooks provides a powerful reporting engine to ensure your business is on track. More importantly, for the health of your business, all the information is retained centrally and not in the heads of your employees, thus increasing the knowledge management that so many small businesses lack. Whilst this will never do away with all those emails, it will mean that everyone can access the same information, and that has got to be good for business of all sizes.

In short it's not just the sales and technical people who can now be more customer-facing, the Marketing Manager, Sales Director and the MD can get out there too.



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