



FLEXIPLACE PILOT 2000
IRS INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
SERVICES

OPM Strategic Compensation Conference
“Managing Telecommuter Performance
Using Results”

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Pilot Goals

- ◆ **Identify effective recruitment & retention strategies for Information Technology professionals**
- ◆ **Increase employee satisfaction**
- ◆ **Maximize space utilization**



Overview of Pilot

- ◆ **Open to volunteers who met eligibility criteria & had portable work activities 1-3 days/week**
- ◆ **20 volunteers selected--2 managers & 18 employees**
- ◆ **Survey & focus group data collected**



Overview of Pilot

- ◆ **Telecommuters given cell phones and laptops with remote e-mail access**
- ◆ **Hoteling workstations reserved weekly and equipped with traveling phone system**
- ◆ **Training provided managers & telecommuters**



Overview of Pilot

- ◆ **Selection of telecommuters**
 - **Self-assessment tool “Are You a Candidate for Flexiplace?” to convey characteristics of successful participants**

 - **Tool “Portable and Non-Portable Tasks” to identify work activities suitable for weekly flexiplace**



Overview of Pilot

- ◆ **Portable work activities performed by telecommuters**
 - **Reading and analyzing information**
 - **Researching data**
 - **Preparing documents**
 - **Coordinating meetings**
 - **Providing guidance to others/consulting**
 - **Computer oriented tasks**
 - **Conducting business by phone/e-mail**



Overview of Pilot

- ◆ **Training sessions for managers and telecommuters**
 - **Business case for flexiplace**
 - **Administrative requirements**
 - **Success factors & barriers**
 - **Communication strategies**
 - **Evaluating performance**
 - **Security/legal requirements**
 - **Work team dynamics**



Overview of Pilot

- ◆ **Additional training topics for managers**
 - **Strategies for resolving issues & concerns**
 - **Leadership skills/techniques to manage in a remote environment**

- ◆ **Additional training topics for participants**
 - **Telecommuter responsibilities**
 - **Organizing, planning & scheduling work suitable for flexiplace**
 - **Setting up a home office**



Key Pilot Findings: Communications

◆ Management feedback:

- No communication difficulties**
- “Follow-me” phone number made physical location transparent to customer**

◆ Participant feedback:

- Communications very good/excellent**
- No negative impact on work relationships**



Key Pilot Findings: Remote Management

◆ Management feedback:

- Manage based on results in lieu of observation**
- Employees follow action plan to track deliverables and work independently**

◆ Participant feedback:

- Not necessary to justify work activities on flexiplace days**
- Altered flexiplace schedule to accommodate business needs**



Key Pilot Findings: Performance

◆ Management feedback:

- Productivity either increased or remained neutral**
- 1/3 reported higher standards for flexiplace employees vs. on-site employees**

◆ Participant feedback:

- Fewer interruptions/distractions**
- More focused time to plan and perform work**
- Positive effect of improved morale**



Key Pilot Findings: Employee Satisfaction

- ◆ **93% increased ability to balance professional and personal lives**
- ◆ **88% reduced stress**
- ◆ **82% improved morale**
- ◆ **59% felt more motivated**
- ◆ **53% were less likely to leave organization**

- ◆ **100% of participants' managers satisfied or very satisfied with flexiplace**



Major Issues

- ◆ **IT/technical support biggest stumbling block**
 - **Expertise to solve laptop/equipment problems expeditiously**
 - **Well defined process to support technical needs of telecommuters**
 - **Adequate inventory of laptops**
 - **Remote access to IRS systems/Intranet**



Recommendations for Managers

- With participant, establish communication methods for various types of information**
- Periodically examine communications process to determine whether changes are needed**
- Provide scheduling flexibility**
- Ensure skills to successfully manage based on results are acquired:**
 - Setting goals & expectations**
 - Evaluating performance**
 - Giving feedback/coaching**



Recommendations for Participants

- With manager, establish communication methods for various types of information**
- Periodically examine communications process to determine whether changes are needed**
- Maintain an ongoing rapport with manager & on-site colleagues to avoid misunderstandings**
- Ensure skills to be a successful telecommuter are acquired:**
 - Time management**
 - Planning & organizing work**
 - Setting goals & delivering results**



Recommendations for Organization

- Utilize training to reinforce remote management skills for managers and provide telecommuters with strategies to be successful**
- Encourage more managers to telecommute to promote greater acceptance of remote workers**
- Explore use of digital signature technology for remote work**
- Sponsor networking group among telecommuters to share information**



***FOR MORE INFORMATION
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