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# Flexible Work Scheduling and Telecommuting: Practical Strategies for a Productive Workforce

Presented by:

**Dayna Fellows**

**WorkLife Performance, Inc.**

Monday, May 20, 2013  
1:30 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. Eastern  
12:30 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. Central  
11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Mountain  
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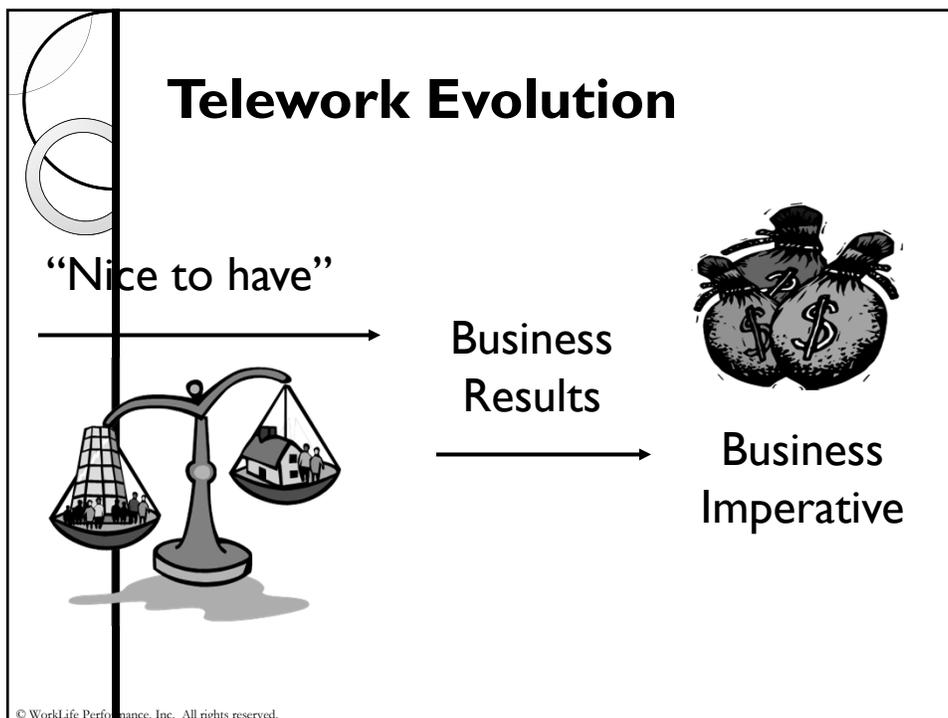
## Flexible Work Scheduling and Telecommuting: Practical Strategies for a Productive Workforce

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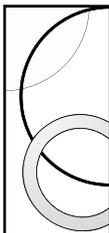
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## Key Question:

“How do we implement a smart telework program that will provide business value as well as enhanced work/life satisfaction?”



## Telework: Three-part Success Strategy



1. Determine your compelling business drivers – which may also serve as your business metrics
2. Create a robust, business-based program and policy
3. Encourage management for results:
  - Focus on performance and productivity
  - Engage the team
  - Coach for success

## Strategy #1

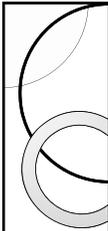
- **Determine the Compelling Business Drivers**

Why implement telework?  
What ties it to your business vision?  
How do you get Senior Management onboard?

## Potential Business Benefits

- Continuity of Service – Operational resilience
- Recruiting and retention
- Productivity and work quality
- Real estate
- Traffic congestion/air quality
- Absenteeism, “presenteeism”
- Health and well-being of employees

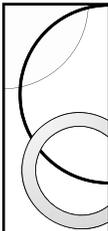




## Recruiting

- Sends a message regarding organizational focus on work/life balance
- Labor pool considerations
  - Women
  - Millenials
  - ADA Accommodation, Wounded Warriors
- Global access to talent
- Provides incentive in light of congestion, commuting costs
- Mitigates relocation costs

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## Retention

- Gives Employees flexibility, control
- Sends a message of respect, trust, accountability
- Increases morale
- Increases loyalty
- Offers critical flexibility to retirees
- Increases internal referrals



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## Productivity & Performance



- Encourages work planning and collaboration
- Reduces commuting stress, delays, and costs
- Increases focus, energy and work quality
- Reduces distractions and interruptions
- Expands accessibility for customers, remote offices

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## Reduced Absenteeism

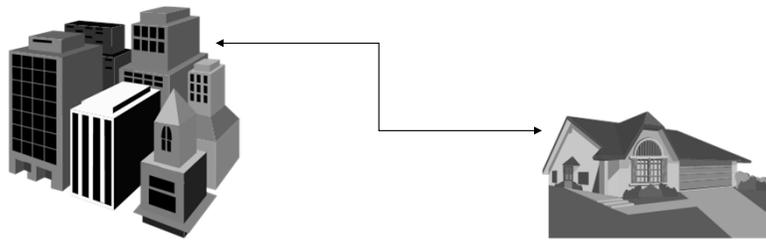


- Definitive savings in reduced absenteeism
- Encourages flexibility and accountability
- Encourages smart use of leave programs

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## Real Estate Expenses

- Reduces real estate, overhead costs
- Enables agility and growth
- Can reduce parking requirements, transportation subsidy expenses



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## Business Continuity

- Infrastructure is in place
  - Technology
  - Roles and responsibilities
  - Know-how
  - “Business as Usual”
- Managers know how to oversee a distributed workforce



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## Strategy #2

### ○ Create a Robust, Business-based Program

The intentional purpose  
The policy  
Supporting documents

## Start With a Clear Definition

**Telework:** The opportunity to complete regular job responsibilities on certain days from an approved alternate work site.

Variations:

- **Regular:** teleworking the same scheduled day(s) each pay period
- **Ad hoc/situational/intermittent:** teleworking as needed, based on work or workplace circumstances
- **Medical:** with physician's approval, temporary full- or part-time at-home work during medical situation
- **Unscheduled:** in response to weather or other circumstances that impact the workplace



## ...and Clear Messages

### Telework

Is...

- A work methodology
- A business strategy
- A management decision

Is not...

- An entitlement
- A reward
- Guaranteed
- Permanent

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## Build a Solid, Practical Policy

Typical Telework Policy elements:

- Business drivers for the organization – with focus on accomplishing work
- Definitions and terms
- Eligibility factors
- Time and attendance practices and recordkeeping
- Roles and responsibilities for supervisors and staff

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## Telework Policy Elements, Cont'd

- Viable remote worksites
- Home office setup, safety, zoning, taxes, liability
- Who pays for what
- Technology aspects (equipment, access, and security)
- Maximum number of days
- Training requirements
- Application/Agreement process
- COOP responsibilities

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## Policy: Eligibility Factors

- Nature of work; portability, customer service
- Performance rating fully successful or higher; no recent formal disciplinary action
- Time in position
- Operational environment
- Security considerations



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## Policy: Alternate Worksites

- Clarify: Approved alternate worksite
  - Free of distractions
  - Conducive to work
- Include safety, zoning, taxes, liability
  - Consider a site safety checklist
- Real estate savings: possibly shared space; “Hoteling” or “Hot-desking”



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## Policy: Emphasize Performance

- Reiterate the performance metrics
  - Like everyone else, a teleworker will perform work responsibilities in accordance with his/her performance plan, objectives, and the instructions of his/her supervisor
  - Availability, accessibility, collaboration and service are critical
- Reiterate fundamental standards and practices
  - Teleworkers are still under organizational standards of conduct and ethics

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## Policy: Not a Substitute for Dependent Care

- Teleworkers should not act as caregivers for dependents or others during working hours
- Dependents may be present but must be under the supervision and care of an appropriate dependent care provider (if you need one while at the office, you need one while teleworking)



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## Policy: Time and Attendance Practices

- Core business hours
- Exempt vs. non-exempt timekeeping
- Leave/Paid Time Off/Comp Time
- Holidays
- Reporting / Timekeeper rules



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## **Policy: Reporting to the office**

- As necessitated by deliverables, staffing, workload requirements, with as much notice as possible
- Due to power outage or other circumstance at the Telework Site that would hamper full work duties
- Alternate/substitute days may be granted

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## **Plan Straightforward Technology Solutions**

- Equipment (e.g., laptops, phones, peripherals)
- Access to cloud-based applications
- Collaboration tools
- Help Desk/Resources



## Integrate Security Messages

- Monitor mandatory training
- Safeguard organization-owned equipment
- Remote access, wi-fi, wireless
- Data Encryption
- Transportable materials
- Paper, printing
- PHI, PII, FOIA



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## Mandate Training

Prospective teleworkers and managers should attend interactive training, including:

Business drivers

Policy and procedures

Performance management practices

Collaboration

Work planning

Problem solving



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## Application/Agreement

- Have the prospective teleworker make the business case of how they will do their job as well or better
- Capture the teleworker details – location, schedule, equipment
- Terms and conditions: echo and/or expand upon policy elements
- Build in a renewal process (annual; new supervisor)
- Include conditions for curtailment or termination

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## Strategy #3

### ○ Encourage Management for Results

Create a shared picture of a successful team in a flexible workplace  
Focus on performance and productivity  
Engage the team  
Coach for success



## **Strategize communications; deliver clear messages**

- All decisions are business-based
- Flexibility and communication are critical
- Quality, performance, and operational resilience are the goals



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## **Managers: Work Out Team Guidelines and Norms**

- Schedules
- Equipment
- Communication technology choices
- Telephone, email, and voicemail practices
- Advance notice for episodic or substitute days
- Notifications (if any), e.g., to colleagues, external contacts
- Meetings – regular vs. unexpected
- Training
- Business continuity expectations
- Communication for Unscheduled Telework
- Regular assessments

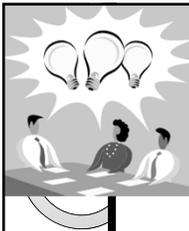
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## Managers: Discuss Performance Expectations

- **Priorities, Goals, Deliverables**  
**AND**
- **Metrics for success**
  - Quantity
  - Quality
  - Timeliness
- **Values**
  - Responsiveness
  - Customer service
  - Teamwork
  - Initiative
  - Innovation
  - Creativity
  - Problem solving
  - Compliance
- **Important:**  
Fair and equitable treatment for teleworkers and in-office workers including
  - Periodic appraisals of job performance
  - Training, rewarding, reassigning, promoting, reducing in grade, retaining, and removing employees
  - Work requirements, and
  - Other acts involving managerial discretion

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## Managers: Make the Most of Face Time

Create smart opportunities to gather, where they can:

- Share from on top
- Listen
- Seek ideas and solutions
- Close gaps and counter confusion that may be disrupting or preventing productivity
- Make decisions

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## Managers: Promote Community



- Be frank: independence requires commitment to the community
  - Clarify coverage, availability, critical timeframes
- Strategize collaboration
  - Exploring, innovation
  - Problem solving
  - Teaching, mentoring, learning
- Encourage peer support
- Be upfront about red flags and remediation

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## Coach: Professionalism

Teleworkers must pay attention to:

- Perceptions
- Responsiveness
- Background noise
- Participation, presence
- In-office follow through



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## Coach: Beware Overwork

Encourage teleworkers to

- Set boundaries and schedules
- Take breaks
- Build a network of telework peers
- Reflect and seek feedback
- Go back to the metrics: Balance quality and quantity



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## Coach: Career Management

It's important for them to

- Make the most of personal face time
- Be vocal and visible in email, meetings, group settings
- Use initiative and creativity
- Stay on top of relationship building



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## Assess Success With the Teleworker

Are you happy with their

- ✓ Work product
- ✓ Responsiveness
- ✓ Availability
- ✓ Accessibility
- ✓ Collaboration
- ✓ Decision making
- ✓ Presence in the office when needed
- ✓ Flexibility



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## Assess Success With the Team

Is everyone happy with

- ✓ Collaboration
- ✓ Communication
- ✓ Accessibility
- ✓ Scheduling
- ✓ Transparency
- ✓ Meetings
- ✓ Workload balance
- ✓ Backups
- ✓ Coverage



## Be Able to End It



- Business comes first
- Canceling party will give advance written notice
- Possible reasons for termination or change:
  - Change in organization
  - Change in work assignments
  - Negative impact on employee's performance
  - Negative impact on work group performance
  - Insufficient office coverage
  - Breach of security policies or procedures

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## Sustain Success

- Measure, refine, and keep it visible as an organizational strategy
- Integrate with human capital strategies, e.g., job postings, and “Employer of Choice”
- Regularly engage managers and employees
  - Q&A, FAQ, Brown Bag Lunch conversations

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## Summary

- Determine the business drivers and measures of success that will mean the most to your organization and senior management
- Integrate your telework program into your business strategies (e.g., Recruiting), your systems (e.g., IT, Facilities), your policies (e.g., Security), and your processes (e.g., Performance Evaluation)
- Create a rollout plan that includes documentation, training, support, and data management

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## Better Employees

- Accountability
- Planning
- Collaboration
- Communication
- Demonstrating Results
- Flexibility



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## Better Managers



- Focused on goals, metrics, results
- Better able to handle difficult performance conversations
- Better organizational systems view
- More cognizant of career coaching

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## Better Organization



- Curb appeal
- Trust and loyalty
- Balanced message of care, quality, and accountability
- Flexibility and resilience
- Performance and productivity orientation: it's about what you get done, not where or when

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Thank you!

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## **Dayna Fellows**

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As founder and president of WorkLife Performance, Inc., Dayna Fellows offers more than 30 years of experience in professional development, performance management, and work/life programs and policies, with particular focus on managing telework and virtual teams. As a consultant, facilitator, and executive coach, Dayna has worked with clients in more than 15 countries. She is a highly rated guest faculty member at OPM's Eastern and Western Management Development Centers, and she is a national spokesperson on the challenges and rewards of a Flexible Workplace.