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THE NEWSLETTER FOR VALLEY EXECUTIVES

Telework offers attractive alternative to downsizing

Companies of all sizes are looking for ways to cut costs in an unsure economy. At the same time, employees want job security and are looking for employers who can provide a stable working environment. The good news? There are some companies that have found ways to fulfill both goals using alternatives to simply issuing pink slips. Among the alternatives, telework stands out as an attractive alternative to companies looking for creative and effective ways to cut costs and improve employee morale in uncertain times.

Many employers are finding alternative work options as one way to remain competitive without having to decrease their workforce. Creative job scheduling can include telework, compressed workweeks, flextime and job sharing. Telework is one alternative to downsizing that many companies are finding valuable to sustaining top-notch employees in times of recession.

Telework programs have greatly reduced overhead and real estate costs for companies trying to trim down their bottom line. With employees working off-site on varied schedules, less office space is needed. Sharing workstations among teleworkers that are needed on-site at different times also helps employers save space and money.

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RESEARCH REVEALS THAT TELEWORK IS WORKING

It's no secret that telework is an increasingly popular work option among Valley employers and workers alike. RPTA recently completed a survey of Valley employees – both teleworkers and non-teleworkers – to gauge their attitudes and level of telework participation. You might be surprised at some of the results!

• Thirty-four percent of employed Valley residents who currently don't telework believe the nature of their job would allow them to try it.

• Most Valley teleworkers report increased productivity and job satisfaction. Twenty-six percent of teleworkers say that their job satisfaction increased when they started working from home.

• Twelve percent of employed Valley residents report they occasionally or frequently telework (up from nine percent in 1999).

So who are these telecommuters? While their profile

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TELEWORK Q&A

You asked for it, you got it! We're here to answer your questions, simply submit them via email to ***telework@bjc.com,*** *or write to Telework Questions, 2025 N. Third Street Suite B157, Phoenix, AZ 85004.*

Q. *Your newsletter has provided some great information on telework. Where can I find more?*

A. You can always call us at the RPTA Rideshare office (602-262-RIDE), but there is also a wealth of information about telework on the Internet. Among our favorites:

www.valleymetro.maricopa.gov
www.teleworkarizona.com
www.telecommute.org
www.gilgordon.com
telecommuting.about.com
www.kineticworkplace.com
www.telecommutect.com
www.energy.wsu.edu/telework

Q. *What kinds of jobs and what type of employees are suitable for teleworking?*

A. Many jobs or parts of jobs are suitable for teleworking, and you'll find them in just about any industry (see inset). Tasks that are successfully managed in telework programs are those where the individual already works alone handling information, such as writing, reading, telephoning, computer programming, word processing, and data entry. Employees who are proven self-starters, well organized and get work done on time are prime candidates for telework.

TOP TELEWORKING INDUSTRIES IN THE VALLEY

#1 ***Manufacturing***
#2 ***Healthcare***
#3 ***Distribution***
#4 ***Government***
#5 ***Insurance***

Valley Telework Progress

As time progresses, we are seeing more of our Valley Telework Project (VTP) participants sending people home – home to telework, of course! The consultants are helping companies meet and exceed their original goals. Here's what's happening with a few of our success stories so far.

The City of Mesa

The City of Mesa set out to improve productivity, efficiency and quality of work, increase employee satisfaction, retain quality employees and improve the air quality of the community when it signed up as a VTP participant. On April 1, they kicked off their program, sending 70 employees home, with jobs ranging from Human Resource Analysts, Employee Benefit staff, City Court Collection staff, programmers, and management assistants in the Utilities, Purchasing and Safety Services.

City of Mesa telework coordinator Jenny Sheppard tells us that they have seen "happy employees" in the short time since they implemented the

Valley Telework Progress *(continued)*

program. "Our employees are very pleased that the City is offering this alternative work policy," she said.

Community Church of Joy

With 220 employees and limited funds, the Community Church of Joy was looking for a way to implement a telework program to maximize their use of existing office space. They also wanted to improve the morale of employees as well as volunteers, provide greater flexibility and work/life balance, increase productivity, and comply with trip reduction requirements.

The VTP consultants have helped the Community Church of Joy overcome technology issues, establish official guidelines and procedures for the program, and figure out a way to implement a telework program on a limited budget.

Wayne Skaff, General Manager of The Joy Company, tells us that "without the help from the RPTA consultant, we still would have implemented some sort of telework project, but it would not have had all the policies and procedures in place that will ensure success."

With 13 currently teleworking, they hope to have 40 employees at home by the end of 2001.

Carollo Engineers

Carollo Engineers was perhaps the most aggressive in getting its telework pilot program up and running. From the start, their telework coordinator and senior principal John Heckler has been the driving force behind establishing a formal pilot program. His efforts include gaining program approval among fellow principals, getting technology up and running, and tracking the program's progress. Carollo's engineering-based theory while establishing its pilot program is to "test it to failure," according to Heckler. They selected employees to represent a variety of job capacities, including architects, accountants, engineers, data entry, CAD operators, marketing, software specialists, project managers and management.

Carollo Engineers employees meet with Peter Valk, Transportation Management Services on the pilot project. Seated clockwise around table, from far left: Diane Lockwood, Boni Schultze, Peter Valk, Jeff Alband, and Jane Anderson (facing away from camera: John Heckler).

At the printing of this newsletter, Carollo has ten of its 75 employees teleworking as part of its pilot program.

Alternative to downsizing

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With 78 percent of employed Valley residents (2001 TDM Annual Survey) owning PCs at home, and advances in technology simplifying connectivity, the way has been paved for a more mobile workforce, making telework much more viable for many employers.

When the economy starts to slump, many companies tend to do away with "perks" that provide balance between employees' work lives and their personal time. While telework does provide more work/life balance and helps to retain valuable employees, it can also achieve a company's cost-savings goals. Companies that downsize lose valuable employees, and when the economy turns around those employees are no longer around to rehire. More money must then be spent to hire and train new employees. Instead, wouldn't it make more sense to retain key individuals and find alternatives to downsizing that benefits everyone?

An individual's on-the-job success has less to do with the location, and more with the ability to work effectively. Telework provides an alternative to reducing your workforce that can help balance your company's bottom line.

RESEARCH: TELEWORK IS WORKING IN VALLEY

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closely follows that of the employment base as a whole, they are more likely to have a college degree or some graduate-level experience than those who have never telecommuted, and their average annual household income is significantly higher.

How is the telework trend affecting air quality and traffic congestion? A majority of teleworkers (81 percent) report driving the same number or fewer miles during regular business hours on their telework days – this in addition to the miles saved by not commuting.

Managers should take note: two in five of those surveyed feel that telecommuting is an important benefit that they would seek out when looking for a new position.

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