

stay flexible

Mick Hegarty looks at why, in the current economic conditions, working from home has become a popular option for both employee and employer.



'Flexible working can help retain the best talent and motivate staff'

■ In the last year, companies have really taken the benefits of remote working on board. Today, 3.5m people, nearly one eighth of the population, work from home and nearly three quarters of the UK's small and medium sized businesses already operate some form of home working.

The popularity of home working is only set to increase as both employees and businesses look to find more and more ways to cut costs, and put in place more efficient working patterns.

reap the rewards

Working from home has been hailed as a way to help your business be more productive for a while now, but some key benefits are still often overlooked. Besides effectively removing 'dead time' in the day (by allowing you to work wherever you are, especially when travelling) and enabling employees to more easily integrate their work and home lives, flexible working can also help retain the best talent and motivate staff – especially in the current economic climate.

BT Business research confirms that over half of employees (55%) are working from home more often than before the downturn. Taking a closer look into the reasons behind this shift, the majority (88%) pointed to the need to save money as being the main motivator.

cut costs

Employees have found that cutting the cost of travelling to and from the office can really help them manage their personal finances. Travel

is a significant outlay for almost every UK household, especially as we have seen petrol and train ticket prices climb even higher in recent years. It is no surprise then that nearly half of respondents believe they can save around £10 to £20 per day by not travelling to work. And, that's not the only saving; almost a third (31%) of UK employees also cited that they can save £250 a year as they no longer need to buy as many work clothes.

Anything employers can do to help staff morale in the current climate will be appreciated. As businesses tighten their belts, offering staff the chance to save money via flexible working is becoming a powerful incentive. In fact, according to recent BT Business research, one in three UK workers would choose flexible working options ahead of a pay rise.

supporting enterprises

It's important to keep the UK's entrepreneurial spirit alive so that the UK economy can emerge stronger. Opening new doors by supporting enterprise built on fresh ideas and operating smarter and more flexible working patterns will be central to this. BT Business is seeing an impetus from companies turning to smarter, more streamlined and effective working strategies - and flexible working is emerging on top. With the right technology and know-how, businesses of all sizes can reap the rewards. ■

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