
Time or Task

What are Employees Paid To Do?

There have been several interesting articles and online discussions relating to people working remotely. A couple of points from the various publications are:

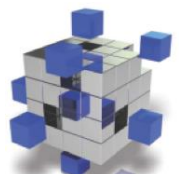
- There's a percentage of people that would prefer to work from home most, if not all, of the time. The percentage varies by age, gender, type of occupation and who conducted the polling, but the overall data suggests that working from home / virtual office situations are going to be part of our post-pandemic adjustments. That data also suggests that the ability to work remotely would factor into people's decisions regarding who they want to be employed by.
- Employers worry about employees not working during working hours. There's a worry that the employees may actually be running a side business while being paid by the employer.
- There are a couple of articles that even suggested that employees may be 'engaging in physical interaction' with others at home during business hours.



With the high probability that the employment norms are now in change mode, it may require management to reconsider what they pay some of their employees for. Are people paid to put in eight hours each workday in the office? Or, are the employees paid to be able to execute their stages of business processes in a timely manner?



- Do you need the person that processes your payables in the office from 8:00am to 4:30pm? Or, do your payable processes need to be executed within one business day?
- Do you need all of your customer service people in the office every day? Or, do you need at least one in the office and the rest can work from home



as long as they are available to communicate as needed and the tasks that are deemed time-sensitive are executed in a timely manner?

If the answer is that people get paid for getting things done on a timely basis, then there's a need to plan how the organization is going to make the transition successfully. It's not just a matter of getting a corporate Zoom or Go-To-Meeting account. There are several sections to the plan:

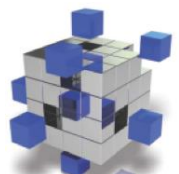
- *Human Change Management* including management's need to see the people at their desks.
- *Process reengineering and management*. This should be done before you get to the next item.
- *Technology*. There are several technologies needed to successfully manage the business when multiple people are working remotely.
- *Resource planning methodology*. This needs to be considered when determining the 'how and what' of the three previous points in this section.
- *Performance evaluation*. Setting performance expectations for people who are "doing their jobs", when they are not visible in the office.



Benefits of the Virtual Office

There are obvious benefits to the virtual office such as reduction of green-house gas while reducing travel costs to employees, enhanced ability to retain / attract excellent people to the organization, reduction of the employer's overhead costs, enhanced work / life balance and reduction of human-based risks to the business.

There are a couple of knowledge capital benefits that were not so obvious to the organizations that we've been involved with. However, these benefits were definitely realized when COVID-19 forced people, with very little notice, to quarantine. In the majority of cases, those employees returned to work after a couple of weeks. In some cases, it was a bit longer due to hospitalization or the need to take care of someone else in the household. Unfortunately, some employees will not return. [Read the Article HRDRP on our website](#)



First benefit: Disaster Recovery Planning. As part of a Virtual Office implementation, plans and documentation are put in place to ensure the quality continuance of business and operational processes during an unplanned absence.

Second benefit: Continued Process Assistance. The best example of this benefit relates to maternity leave. Depending upon the location of the employee and benefit plans of the employer, maternity leave will have varying degrees of financial cost to the employee on leave. This type of leave often means that employers hire temporary staff to backfill the position during the leave which adds cost and process quality risk. As part of a Virtual Office implementation, there are options explored to minimize the potentially negative impacts of this type of event to everyone concerned. [Read COVID-19 & VOPM on our website](#)

Summary

Lots of benefits but, of course, there is risk if the implementation is not set up for success or the ongoing success factors are not understood by both the employer and employee.

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