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## Flexible Work: Rhetoric and Reality

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## Flexible Work: Rhetoric and Reality

A White Paper Prepared for Citrix by the Work Design Collaborative

### Executive Summary<sup>1</sup>

Old habits die hard.

In spite of all the hype, publicity, and discussion about how we're now living in a world where people can work "any time, any place," our most recent research suggests that reality for many managers and individuals is lagging well behind that vision.

We recently conducted a survey of over 750 knowledge workers to learn about their work patterns, their use of technology, and their likes and dislikes about the IT tools they depend on. In spite of the time and place flexibility that modern technology obviously makes possible, over 75% of the managers and almost half of the individual contributors who responded to the survey still spend the vast majority of their time inside corporate facilities – and most of that in their assigned offices or cubicles.

We and others have been extolling the virtues and benefits of remote and mobile work for many years.<sup>2</sup> In 2008 the technologies that make remote work not only feasible but also desirable (both economically and organizationally) finally seems to have "come of age." Yet the "take-up" rate still seems to be proceeding at a slower pace than we would have expected.

However, we are encouraged to note that the majority of individual contributors are already mobile, "voting with their feet" and working in a variety of locations, both inside and outside of corporate facilities, over the course of a day or a week – whether or not their companies encourage it. Working remotely and "on the go" is a fact of life in corporate America today – yet it remains challenging to maintain high levels of productivity, largely because corporate business processes and technology capabilities are not keeping pace with the way people want to work.

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<sup>1</sup> This white paper, along with the survey conducted as background research, was funded by Citrix Online. However the ideas and conclusions herein are entirely our own. To their credit, our sponsors at Citrix bent over backwards to avoid influencing both our perspectives and our conclusions.

<sup>2</sup> We tend to use the terms "distributed work," "remote work," "mobile work" and "web commuting" more or less interchangeably. We acknowledge, however, that there are subtle differences in most people's minds between the concepts of "distributed work" and "remote" or "mobile" work.

We generally use "distributed work" to describe work activities that take place across multiple locations – that is, people working "together" even though they are located in different places and often working at different times.

"Remote work" typically refers to people who are temporarily (or even semi-permanently) working away from a corporate office, while "mobile work" clearly refers to individuals who move around regularly from one location to another. "Web commuting," a term introduced into the lexicon by Citrix, is perhaps the most generic, identifying people who "commute" to where their work "is" by relying on the worldwide web to move information rather than moving themselves, or to access corporate servers and local data files from multiple locations.

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This just-completed workforce survey suggests that, even though “any-time/any-place” technologies are readily available, the organizational use of those tools lags far behind what the workforce is looking for and needs to be fully productive. And, given the impending shortage of talent in the U.S. economy, we expect to see many more workers choosing to work for the companies that offer them the flexibility, mobility, and collaborative tools they’re looking for.

These mobile “pioneers” continue to face frustrating – and generally unnecessary – technological challenges when they attempt to “hook up” with their colleagues or access corporate data and other information from remote locations. We think it’s time for employers to catch up with their workforce. The companies that take an aggressive leadership position to enable mobile work will thrive in the future, because they’ll become talent magnets.

## **Background**

As early as 2002 one of our earlier workforce surveys indicated that on average knowledge workers were spending only about 35% of their work time inside their assigned corporate facility. They were spending almost as much time working out of home offices, and the remainder in “Third Places” like coffee shops, libraries, public parks, hotels, and airports.

We believe that in 2008 as many as 22 million people are already working one or more days a week in these nontraditional locations.

This most recent survey suggests that the movement to more mobile patterns of work is not proceeding as rapidly as we had thought.

We still don’t know enough about what kinds of workspaces individuals and work teams need or want, or how they are using the wide variety of collaborative technologies that are becoming more and more available today.

To enhance our understanding we teamed up with Citrix Online to address these questions by conducting a workforce survey designed to tell us more about how both individual contributors and their managers are getting their work done in 2008. But before we report on the results of the survey, let’s first consider why organizations are increasingly encouraging distributed work arrangements, what the value of distributed work is – again, for both individuals and their employers – and why it is not as widespread as we believe it should be.

## **The Value of Enabling Remote and Flexible Work Arrangements**

Our own research over the past seven years, along with a number of real-world company experiences, confirms that an Alternative Workplace Strategy and an aggressive remote/distributed work program can reduce workforce-support costs by 40% or more. That is not an exaggeration: the biggest and most obvious source of those reductions is real estate and corporate facilities costs. Companies like Sun Microsystems, Cisco Systems, and IBM have been able to reduce their investments in real estate and facilities by up to 50%, driving costs down by \$50 million or more per year.

Sun Microsystems’ iWork program was based largely on the discovery that over one-third of Sun’s office-based employees did not “badge in” to their assigned office building on any given day. They were already working at home, traveling, or attending meetings in other Sun facilities.

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The obvious conclusion was that there was simply no need for Sun to maintain all those empty offices, and the iWork program<sup>3</sup> was created to move thousands of Sun employees into shared workplaces, or “touchdown” facilities that many different people would use over the course of a day or a week.

But there are other, more subtle workforce support cost-savings opportunities that go well beyond real estate and facilities. In almost every infrastructure area, from IT to HR to Administrative Support to management span of control, remote/mobile workers generally operate more independently and need less support than do traditional office-based workers. In order to survive “in the field” remote workers *have* to learn to work on their own, and to solve their support problems quickly and inexpensively.

True, there are usually also some increased technology costs as remote workers go online, making greater use of laptops, cell phones, PDAs, and collaborative software that provides remote access to corporate applications/data and virtual team meetings, but in our experience these added technology investments are minuscule relative to the potential real estate and facilities cost savings.

### **Increasing Workforce Productivity**

While the measurement of knowledge worker productivity is a difficult and complex subject, we are convinced from our own research and consulting work with individual organizations that remote/mobile workers are significantly more productive than their office-bound colleagues. We have conducted numerous studies of the productivity differential at both the individual and the group level, and they have consistently shown gains of 15% or more for “out-of-office” workers.

Just think of the time-wasters that remote workers can avoid: commuting (and the fatigue and stress that goes along with it); inefficient meetings; long lunches and coffee breaks with peers; and the distractions, interruptions, and disturbances that inevitably come from one’s cubicle neighbors in traditional office settings. Even a change as simple as commuting to the office in mid-morning (after handling email or a conference call from a home office or local coffee shop) instead of rush hour can produce obvious improvements in individual productivity.

We’ve also tracked the time that remote/flexible workers spend “on the job” and there is no question that they almost always give back to the company more than 50% of the time they save by not commuting. Moreover, they typically achieve their work goals and produce agreed-on results in fewer hours – and it’s usually of higher quality as well (as reported both by themselves and by their supervisors).

The benefit of being able to participate in meaningful group conversations from “wherever” without having to spend unproductive time traveling is certainly easy to grasp. Technologies that enable remote workers to access critical data files, technical manuals, and active “work in progress” enable them to spend their precious time with important clients, doing research, or preparing reports rather than fighting freeway traffic just to get to a distant office facility – where they’d be doing the same thing.

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<sup>3</sup> Sun Microsystems recently renamed its distributed work program “OpenWork” to avoid any confusion with Apple’s line of “i-” hardware and software products like the ipod, the iPhone, iLife, and so on)

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We recently heard two comments that highlight just how effective “web commuting” can be – for both the employer and the employee. In one case a newly-remote claims processor called her manager (who was still working out of the corporate facility) to ask for more work; she was completely finished with her daily quota (and she also commented that she didn’t want to come into the office one day every other week, as she was required to do, “because it’s so incredibly unproductive in there.”). And one of her co-workers commented that he used to spend \$10 for gas every two days, but since he started working from home several days a week, he was spending “less than \$10 every two weeks.”

Flexible work programs really do produce a win-win for both the company and its individual workers. It’s truly a case of getting more done with less effort, and at far less cost.

### **Not All Jobs Can Be Distributed**

Unfortunately not everyone can be a web-based commuter. We have to acknowledge that some information-based jobs cannot easily be conducted remotely. There are often special circumstances that “bind” an individual to a specific workplace for at least some portion of his or her work time.

For example, an engineer working with specialized high-tech equipment would most likely not be able to afford multiple installations of that equipment at, say, several corporate locations and a home office. And some knowledge-worker tasks do require physical proximity to other people. While there have been some advances in surgical robotics, we don’t expect to see surgeons performing remote operations from their spare bedrooms in the very near future. And there are plenty of situations where face-to-face interaction remains an essential element of being effective.

The difficulty with generalizations about knowledge workers is that knowledge work is inherently diverse and varied. Almost any definition of a knowledge-based job will include some tasks that are essentially location-independent, but only some jobs have become totally “post-geographic.”

### **Attracting and Retaining Talent**

Our research on working patterns (where, when, and how people get their work done) has been driven by our conviction that knowledge workers today want – no, demand – extensive control over where and when they work. And flexible work programs – enabling them to get their work done from wherever they are or want to be, and on *their* schedule – gives them exactly the kind of control they are looking for.

And those knowledge workers – what Richard Florida dubbed “the creative class”<sup>4</sup> – are increasingly in the driver’s seat. There is no question that the United States (and most other advanced economies) will be experiencing a severe workforce shortage over the next decade, driven largely by the impending retirement of millions of Baby Boomers with far fewer workers in the following generations.

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<sup>4</sup> Florida, Richard, *The Rise of the Creative Class*, Basic Books, 2002.

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Combine that with the increasing criticality of knowledge and innovation as sources of competitive advantage, and you've got a recipe for a "sellers' market" when it comes to labor.<sup>5</sup>

That's one more very compelling reason to embrace flexible work: it may be that the only way to get that scarce talent working for you is by hiring "location-independent" employees who have chosen to live in smaller communities far removed from your corporate facilities, coming into the office only on an as-needed basis for training, group meetings, and so on. As we've said over and over, it's a whole lot less expensive to let the work "go" to the workers electronically than it is to require the workers to travel to the work every single day.

### **Minimizing Environmental Impact**

We are also absolutely convinced there is an obvious environmental benefit to having your workforce operating flexibly. The arithmetic here is simple: if every company in a major metropolitan area encouraged (or actually required) its entire workforce to work from home or a in neighborhood satellite facility just one day a week instead of commuting to the central office, the number of cars on the road, and their energy consumption, would drop by 20%. Just think what we could do for energy independence in the United States if we could shift the entire workforce to flexible work models.<sup>6</sup>

We know that a 100% shift is highly unrealistic, but considering the impact that it could have is a highly useful exercise, and just might help us move to a meaningful percentage.

### **Pulling It All Together**

So the case for flexible work isn't just compelling – in our humble opinion, it's overwhelming. In fact, we are reminded of something Alvin and Heidi Toffler said way back in the 1980s in their landmark book *The Third Wave*: one of the most unproductive things we do in the entire economy is move millions of bodies into central business districts every morning and then back home again every evening – when all that's really needed is their brains.

In the Industrial Era, given the technologies of that time, there was no choice. Factory workers had to be in the factory to work. Not only that, but all the points on the assembly line had to operate in sync (because the predominant source of power was water and/or steam, and all the machines were driven off a central source – they had to be started and stopped at the same time); all the manufacturing activities were tightly interconnected and highly dependent on each other.

Now, of course, that is no longer true. While some knowledge work obviously still needs to be done in real time, and in face-to-face settings, certainly much of it can be done asynchronously, and remotely as well. And collaborative technologies are getting better all the time at simulating face-to-face interaction. While there is still no substitute for "being there," technologies like Hewlett-Packard's Halo™ telepresence and videoconferencing systems<sup>7</sup> are finally beginning

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<sup>5</sup> See, for example, "[Closing the Talent Gap](#)," *Future of Work Agenda*, January, 2005; and "[The Coming Talent Shortage: It's Here, and Will Get Much Worse](#)," *Future of Work* weblog, March 26, 2005.

<sup>6</sup> See "[What Will a World of \\$5 Gas Be Like?](#)" *Future of Work Agenda*, April, 2005, for a more extended discussion of this topic.

<sup>7</sup> <http://hp.com/halo/index.html>

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quite literally to compete with air travel. And in the current geo-political climate video conferencing is just likely to win out, for economic, security, health, climate, and energy conservation reasons.

Today's technologies make it quite literally unnecessary to "go" to work to get work done. As we're fond of pointing out, it's a whole lot cheaper and faster to move "bits" than "butts." And flexible work programs are essential to giving the workforce the opportunity to work remotely and "on the go" as they want to and need to.

## So What's the Problem?

Okay, working remotely and while on the go is a good thing – economically, socially, environmentally, and for reducing business risk and increasing workplace attractiveness. But it still hasn't taken off like we think it should, or even expected it to.

The simple fact is that in spite of all the rational reasons for encouraging flexible work it remains a surprisingly "young" and immature phenomenon.

We believe there are two primary reasons for the "immaturity" of flexible work programs. First, in spite of all the good objective reasons for embracing flexible work, most senior executives remain attached to old habits and expectations. It's a whole lot easier to feel "in control" when you can see your staff streaming into the building every morning where their managers can stroll up and down the aisles of the ubiquitous cube farms checking up on them all day.

Changing those attitudes and habits is a cultural and organizational change challenge – but it's an eminently achievable task.

The second, and – we think – much more powerful, barrier to change is the frustratingly slow rate of adoption of the collaborative technologies that are essential to making distributed work really *work*.

And that concern is what led us to partner with Citrix Online to examine which collaborative technologies are being used, which are not, and what value both individual contributors and their managers see in the wide variety of technologies that are now widely available.

We wanted to know to what extent technology challenges (and which specific technologies) are actually *preventing* more widespread reliance on remote/mobile work.

Thus we designed a workforce survey to help us understand in more detail:

- ◆ what kinds of workplaces (inside and outside corporate facilities) people use, and how often;
- ◆ how (and how often) they use those workspace – e.g., to work alone, to meet with others, to communicate with people in other locations, and so on;
- ◆ what technologies they use (both individually and to interact or collaborate with others), and which ones they find most valuable;
- ◆ how much time people spend away from corporate office facilities, and what difficulties they encounter as they attempt to be productive in nontraditional settings;
- ◆ what kinds of flexible work policies and programs organizations have in place, and how well those programs meet their needs; and

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- ◆ how (and how well) IT organizations provide tech support to remote and mobile workers.

Our goal in this research has been to develop a “state of the practice” understanding of remote/mobile work and, more particularly, to determine why it isn’t more widespread.

## The Survey

The survey was designed to enhance our understanding of how people are actually working today – how much time they spend in various kinds of workspaces, who they interact with (both face-to-face and remotely), and in particular what collaborative technologies they rely on, how effective those technologies are in supporting their work, and what challenges they face when they are working remotely.

The survey, which consisted of about fifteen multiple-choice questions, was conducted online. Managers and individual contributors were asked the same basic questions about their personal work patterns, technology usage, and assessments of tech support. However, the managers were also asked several additional questions about their companies’ flexible work policies.

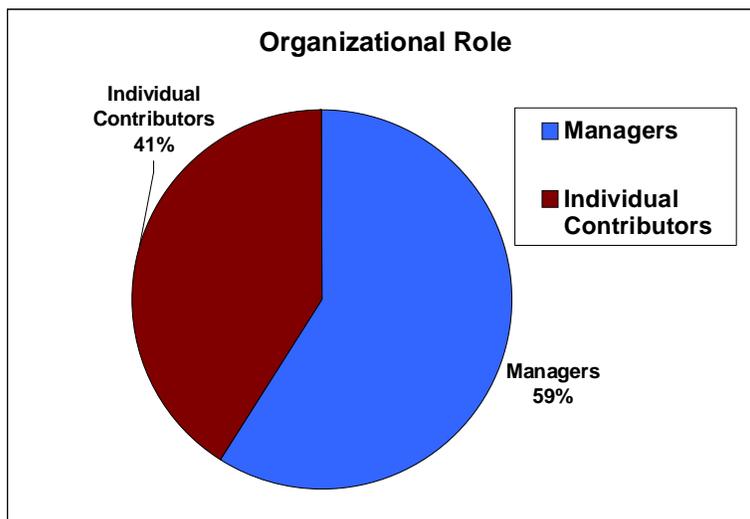
The invitation to participate in the survey included this description:

*Citrix Online and the Work Design Collaborative (organizers of the Future of Work consortium) have teamed up to develop a brief research survey about trends in flexible-work policies and technology. You are part of an important group of professionals selected to participate in this survey, and your opinion is very important to us.*

## The Respondents

We sent invitations to participate in the survey to a randomly selected group of managers and individual contributors. A total of 752 people responded; 59% of the respondents (444 individuals) identified themselves as managers, while 41% of them (308) described themselves as individual contributors (See Chart One).

**Chart One: Organizational Role**



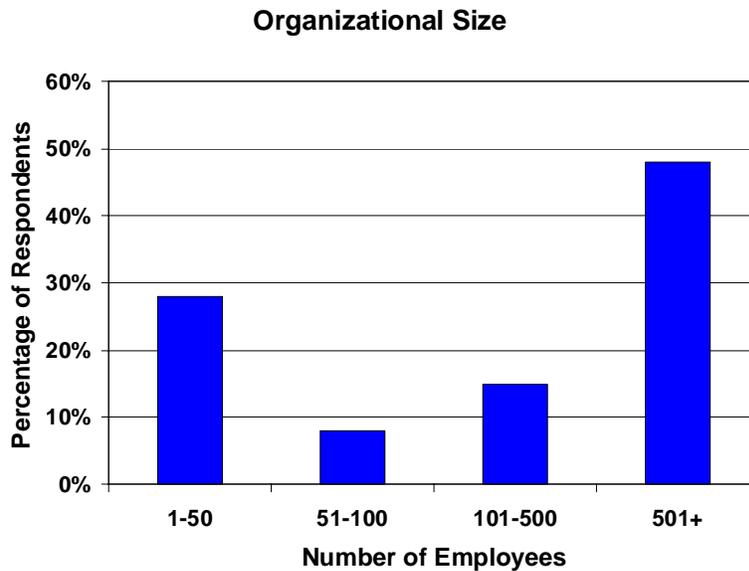
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We'll report on and analyze the responses from these two groups separately.

### Survey Results

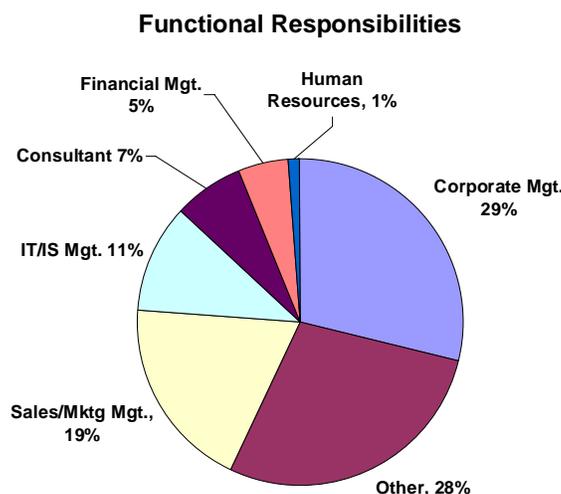
Almost half of the respondents (48%) work in large organizations employing over 500 people. In contrast, 28%, just over a quarter, work in organizations with fewer than 50 employees (Chart Two, below).

**Chart Two: Size of Respondents' Organizations**



As Chart Three (below) indicates, the managerial respondents represent a broad cross-section of functional responsibility areas. 29% of them have “corporate management” positions, while 19% are in Sales and/or Marketing management. But since 80% of them are in non-sales positions we are confident that the majority of both these managers and the individual contributors hold reasonably traditional “office” jobs.

**Chart Three: Managers' Functional Responsibilities**



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## Where Do People Work?

### ***Managers***

These managers are primarily users of primary assigned office space (77%), and they use that assigned space very frequently.

They also used team rooms (27%) and conference rooms (33%) occasionally. This is somewhat unusual in comparison to other data we have seen, where usage of primary assigned office space is often in the low 40s to high 30s in terms of percent of time that it's occupied. Use of video conferencing and shared/touchdown spaces is very low relative to our experience.

The picture that emerges here is one of individuals using a primary assigned office space and not much else.

### ***Individual Contributors***

In comparison with managers, individual contributors show a more distributed, and a more varied, work pattern. 41% of them use a dedicated corporate facility Very Frequently while 26% report using a home office Very Frequently.

## What Do People Do?

### ***Managers***

58% of the managers report that they spend 50% or more of their time working completely alone – a rather surprising statistic. 75% of them report spending less than 10% of their time working with one or more other people.

Again, we see this pattern as somewhat unusual. There appears to be far less collaborative work taking place within this group than we would have expected. On the other hand, almost half of the managers (48%) report traveling on business to other cities or corporate facilities several times a year.

This finding begs for more study; it just doesn't match our experience with managers, whose primary job, after all, is to guide, develop, and supervise the performance of their subordinates – activities that clearly call for high levels of interaction and communication with those subordinates.

### ***Individual Contributors***

The work pattern of the individual contributor respondents fits much more closely with other samples we have examined. 39% of them spend 11-25% of their time communicating directly with others in a different location (same time/different place). However, they also report spending little time working in small groups (51% spend less than 10% of their time in small groups). Similarly, 47% of them report working in larger groups less than 10% of the time.

On balance, these really *are* individual contributors. And we have to wonder just how accurate and complete their self reports of their time allocations are.

## What Tools Do People Use?

### *Managers*

In terms of technology sophistication, these respondents appear to be “moderate” users of technology. Like most of the population, they rely primarily on laptops (89%), high-speed broadband (75%), and cell phones (76%). In addition, we observe that they are low-end users of collaborative technologies (20%) and virtually never use (or don’t have access to) custom wikis (50%), web-based project management (29%), threaded discussions (32%), or podcasts (39%)<sup>8</sup>.

It is also noteworthy that close to half of the respondents (43%) depend on remote access to office-based servers and/or PCs. In our own experience, being able to access, work on, and/or download files from a “homebase” repository is an increasingly critical component of remote/mobile work. The more individuals travel to multiple locations, or simply work away from the primary office, the more difficult it becomes to keep track of all the files they need.

On the other hand, the management respondents also reported that they “couldn’t live without” remote-access programs (54%) and shared-document repositories (32%). The fact that two-thirds of them are not relying on access to shared-document repositories is quite surprising.

We can only conclude that in this particular sample the managers are using the tools they find most useful in getting their day-to-day work done. We ourselves believe in the power and value of the most sophisticated technologies like web-based project management tools, threaded discussions, podcasts, and shared-document repositories, but those tools seem to be lacking widespread acceptance.

### *Individual Contributors*

Like the managers the individual contributors are primarily laptop-based (78%); they rely more on high-speed land-based connections (73%) than WiFi (55%); and they use cell phones (73%) to stay connected while traveling.

It is no surprise that email is the primary means of asynchronous communication (91%), but we didn’t expect to see such a remarkably high percentage of people who never make use of more sophisticated collaborative technologies. For example, desktop video conferencing is never used by (or not available to) almost 70% of the respondents; 80% of them do not use, or do not have access to online chat rooms; over 70% don’t use or don’t have online custom Wiki’s. We were quite surprised to see that 43% have never used instant messaging (and an additional 7% do not even have access to IM software), while 54% have never used web-based project management software.

We believe there is a major business development opportunity in this area for producers and distributors of these powerful but terribly underused tools. Enhancing the productivity of people who travel, move around a lot, or work remotely (even if primarily from one remote location) should pay large dividends to their employers with relatively small investments.

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<sup>8</sup> The percentages measure the number of respondents who checked off each technology as one they rely on when working away from the office.

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## **Flexible Work Programs: The Good News**

Fully 35% of the managers reported that their companies have a flexible work policy that allows them to work elsewhere, subject to managerial approval. This rate is higher than the 15% national average we've identified elsewhere, although we expect that number to grow significantly in the next five years. We also note that slightly more than another third (37%) of the respondents' firms have a case-by-case flexible work program (meaning those companies will consider flexible work programs on a "need to do it" basis).

The one-third of companies that do support flexible work arrangements most frequently cite their belief that such programs: (1) enable people to work more effectively; (2) help attract and retain talent; and (3) increase productivity. In addition a significant minority of the respondents also believe that flexible work programs enable them to provide more effective customer support and help their employees be more involved with their kids.

These are five solid reasons for establishing flexible work programs that we believe can be the core of an effective marketing message for hardware and software producers, and for service providers in this space.

## **Remote Support for "Web Commuters"**

### ***Managers***

The management respondents care most about getting "live" help from human beings. Most of them (75%) report that they use telephone-based Help Desk technical support, while 42% of them believe that it's Nice to Have and 32% Couldn't Live Without It.

In contrast, only 57% of them rely on tech support via remote access to their workstations and only 51% depend on on-site visits by technicians (51%). However, 66% of them find training in specific applications and/or systems helpful, while 60% also use the online Help functions embedded in many software applications.

74% report high levels of satisfaction with telephone-based tech support (a combination of "Nice to Have" and "Couldn't Live Without It"), while the other forms of assistance generate satisfaction for between 60% (on-site visits) and 68% (for online help functions within the software) of the respondents. There seems to be little differentiation among these various remote-support options. However, we suspect – but cannot prove – that the immediacy of online software Help makes it more valuable than a time-delayed on-site visit by a real human being.

### ***Individual Contributors***

Feelings about remote support among individual contributors are very similar to those of managers. The data don't really show any meaningful differences in the types of remote support used, nor their levels of satisfaction with any of the forms of support.. Telephone-based Help Desk is again the most popular (used by 70% of the respondents), while 55% of them rely on having a remote tech support personal logon to their PC to conduct remote diagnostics and repair.

Like the managers, about half (54%) of the individual contributors also have access to application-specific training and to online Help functions included within software applications (56%).

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Satisfaction with these forms of support also parallels that of the managers. 66% of the individual respondents found telephone-based Help Desk support either “Nice to Have” or “Couldn’t Live Without It,” while on-site visits and remote access to their PC led to high levels of satisfaction for 62% and 61%, respectively, of the individual contributors.

## What Does All This Mean?

### Some General Observations

As noted earlier, the workforce is already mobile, and eager for more flexibility in the way things get done. But it’s also frustrated. And employers are missing out on major opportunities for cost reduction, productivity gains, and attracting high-quality talent.

One the other hand, managers still appear to be spending much of their time working alone and communicating with team members electronically – but not making significant use of distributed work methodologies and tools (even to communicate with and manage their remote employees).

Our conclusion is that there is a significant need (and therefore opportunity) for education about, and even active promotion of, the benefits that alternative work arrangements can produce. As we suggested above, there are very significant benefits to both individuals and organizations of working remotely. It’s well past time to capture them.

Secondly, the respondents to the survey apparently have little experience with the readily available collaborative tools that enable and facilitate these new ways of working. Overall, then, we conclude that this is an immature market with basic awareness of these technologies but not well versed in its most effective use.

Reviewing the results of this survey we see a major need (and thus an opportunity) for increased use of collaborative technologies in support of flexible work activities like “Keeping Track of the Team’s files.” 14% of the managers and 19% of the individual contributors found that task “A Major Headache” or worse. A similar number in both groups also reported having difficulty accessing their own files while working remotely. That’s tragic, given the ready availability and relatively low cost of remote-access technologies.

In fact, it appears to us that remote access to individual and team files is a major stumbling block to more widespread adoption of remote/mobile work. This conclusion is buttressed by the observation that fully 44% the managers and 41% of individual contributors report that accessing company servers when working remotely is a Moderate Challenge or worse.

We suspect that this number would be even higher if a greater percentage of the sample actually depended on collaborative technologies more often. The tools to solve this problem are certainly available in the marketplace, but do not appear to be as widely used as they could – or should – be.

In our view, even though many of the technologies we are tracking are known as “collaboration tools” most of them are designed to help *individuals* or groups of individuals communicate with each other and work together on common documents. What’s missing are management tools for dealing with an entire team and its performance *at the team level*.

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## Recommendations

Clearly, there is a strong need for more comprehensive and more effective technology support for remote/mobile workers. The respondents to this survey seem to be experienced enough with basic technologies to take advantage of advanced tool sets quickly.

Given that, we can only conclude that the awareness within both groups (managers and individuals) of the tools that are already available is relatively low. This reality implies a need for more marketing communication, awareness building, and active demonstrations of the tangible benefits that collaborative technologies can provide.

We thus recommend more aggressive outreach by the IT function and IT service providers, including the publication of case studies, the development of both on-site and public/professional seminars, and promotional materials emphasizing the individual and organizational benefits of flexible work programs and “web commuting.”

We'd also like to dig into this data a bit more deeply, to help us understand whether there are meaningful differences among the respondents that can be explained by their functional responsibilities, industries, or organizational size. It's been said many times, but the best thing a good research project can do is raise new questions. We've pushed the ball down the field a good bit with this survey, but we're still a long way from the end zone.