



Motivating The Remote Workforce

(NAPS)—According to Global WorkplaceAnalytics.com, 80 to 90 percent of the U.S. workforce would like to telework at least part-time. With the number of telecommuters expected to reach 5 million this year, virtual workplaces aren't the wave of the future, they are already here.

The benefits to virtual employees are numerous, including providing a better work-life balance and increased flexibility, and organizations can take advantage by hiring workers for the best fit, regardless of physical location.

Industrial and organizational (I-O) psychologist Dr. Lori LaCivita, Walden University's Program Director for the M.S. and Ph.D. in Industrial and Organizational Psychology, says that while this trend is on the rise, there are critical steps employers and employees need to take to create a cohesive and productive team of virtual and on-site colleagues.

Expert Advice For Virtual Workers

Research suggests that virtual workers are often more productive than their in-office counterparts, due to fewer distractions in their homes. While working remotely isn't for everyone, Dr. LaCivita shares some expert advice to overcome the challenges for virtual workers:

- Virtual workers need to be able to work independently and prioritize effectively, as well as create structure for their day.

- Working remotely requires a higher level of communication since you can't pick up on nonverbal cues and don't have the in-person social interactions office workers have, so virtual workers need to find ways to communicate more frequently with managers and in-office employees.

- It's critical for remote workers to prove to their employers they're effective and self-driven when not in the office. One way is to create a portfolio of successes and experience working virtually. Performance is based on how successfully projects are completed



Where have all the workers gone? At many companies, a great deal of employees work from home, and properly managed, experts say, they can do a better job.

and how virtual workers can pull the team together, despite the challenge of not being together in the same location.

- Virtual workers should have a good understanding of the technology needed to work from home, and a backup plan, should that technology ever fail.

Tips For Employers And Managers

Employers and managers need to have an understanding of how an employee does the job, both virtually and on-site, and an appreciation for what each person brings to the table. It's a manager's job to create an inclusive, collaborative environment.

- Close supervision is not the key to success. Managers need to look at virtual workers' responsiveness, consistency and successes to determine performance.

- Fostering face-to-face interactions on accomplishing tasks and projects through videoconferencing and encouraging colleagues to connect through social media are important to create increased collaboration at work and decreased feelings of isolation.

- Managers need to recognize and reward both on-site and remote workers to garner trust and appreciation among team members.

Learn More

Find further advice at www.WaldenU.edu/virtualteam.