

BACKGROUND ON BUSINESS

Avoiding Missed Winter Workdays

(NAPSA)—Missed workdays caused by cold winter winds don't have to blow your budget. That's significant news because Americans miss more workdays during winter than any other season—and that can translate to lost wages for workers and lost revenue for employers.

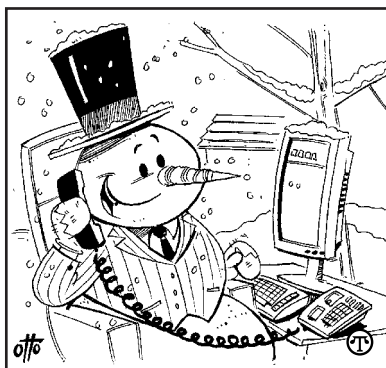
To help put the freeze on lost winter profits, more than 40 percent of today's companies have adopted some type of telecommuting policy and technology. Many of the businesses use the technology to let snowed-in employees telecommute to the office.

An industry leader in conferencing services called WorldCom Conferencing offers the following tips for people new to telecommuting:

- **Equipment**—Make sure your home office has the proper equipment to telecommute (PC with modem, phone, fax and so forth) and the proper applications for the computer (i.e., word processor, e-mail, Internet browser). Keep a list handy of current company, partner and client phone numbers. Carry duplicates of any essential documents in your briefcase in case you're unexpectedly snowed in.

- **Communication**—When you telecommute, it's important to check-in to your workplace regularly, by phone or e-mail. Stay connected with your team members and immediate supervisor. Set up a to-do list and report on progress at mutually agreed upon intervals. Don't forget to check out at the end of the day.

- **Presentations**—If you have a presentation the day you're snowed in, a Web conference may "wow" your client. Hundreds of people can view a presentation at



Forty percent of American companies use telecommuting technology. The technology lets snowed-in employees work from home.

once or collaborate on a document in real time while discussing it on a separate audio conference.

- **Meetings**—If you have a staff meeting planned or want to organize a virtual meeting, there are services that will set up audio conferences—some do it in less than 20 minutes. You can also arrange to have your own conference number and passcode ahead of time. That lets you hold a conference call anytime you wish. Even if there is no staff meeting planned, conference calls are a good way for team members to touch base with their teams.

- **Break Time**—Be sure to take a break every now and then. While enjoying a quick lunch or even shoveling the driveway, let calls go to voice mail. Just be sure to return the calls in a timely fashion.

If you've enjoyed your day working from home, and your company doesn't have a telecommuting policy, try suggesting one. For more information, visit www.worldcom.com/conferencing.