Flexible Mobile Employees
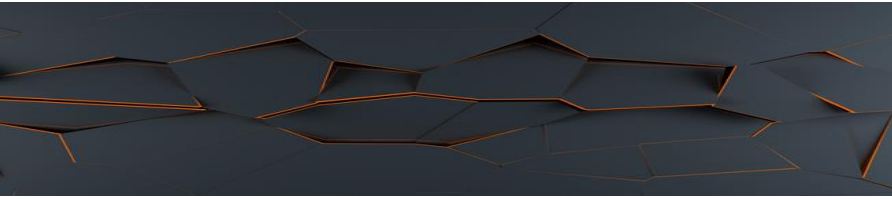
A White Paper by Synel
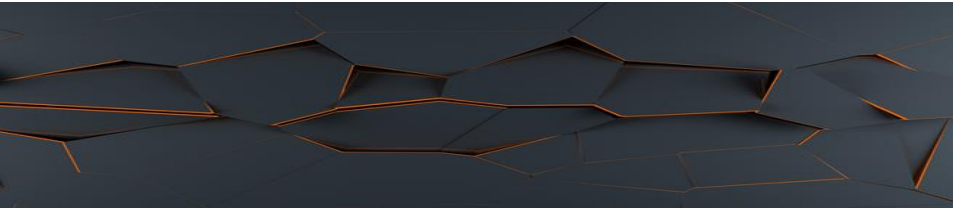
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Laptops, smartphones, cloud computing and Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) have changed how we define a 'job' altogether and, certainly, how we define the very companies that constitute them. Flexibility is the basis, and this innovative technology has delivered two major changes:

1. Employees no longer need to be restrained to the office, and telecommuting has become a reasonable choice.

2. Companies are able to undertake a broader outsourcing strategy, taking advantage of the services of partners in all parts of the world. These two matters mean that employees have higher flexibility in working away from the office environment, either part or all of the time, and in addition that employees are more and more no longer employees, but autonomous contractors.

- 86% of businesses today have some kind of remote working setup, taking advantage of the flexibility technology creates

- 62% now see mobile working as their right and three quarters would rather work unconventionally than be chained to desk

- There are vast advantages to businesses who follow the 'trend of flexible working'. According to iPass Research mobile workers put in 240 hours more per year than non-mobile employees.

- Businesses are planning now for the further growth of the mobile workforce. 81% of CEOs see mobile technologies as being strategically important for their enterprises.

Flexible working covers a range of options. The list below is the types of flexible working in the UK.

- Job sharing

Two people do one job and split the hours.

- Working from home

It might be possible to do some or all of the work from home or anywhere else other than the normal place of work.

- Part time

Working less than full-time hours (usually by working fewer days).

- Compressed hours

Working full-time hours but over fewer days.

- Flexitime

The employee chooses when to start and end work (within agreed limits) but works certain 'core hours', eg 10am to 4pm every day.

- Annualised hours

The employee has to work a certain number of hours over the year but they have some flexibility about when they work. There are sometimes 'core hours' which the employee regularly works each week, and they work the rest of their hours flexibly or when there's extra demand at work.

- Staggered hours

The employee has different start, finish and break times from other workers.

- Phased retirement

Default retirement age has been phased out and older workers can choose when they want to retire. This means they can reduce their hours and work part time.
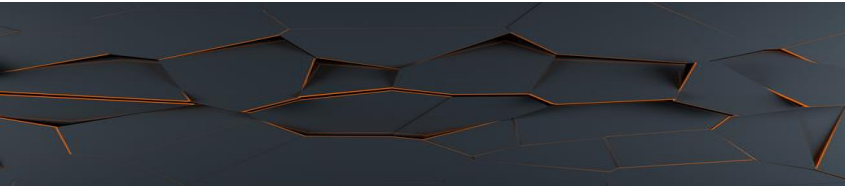
Today's digital world where communication and information sharing is the basis of success, companies should have a more flexible approach in order to remain competitive and prosper. Mobile working is extensively used and is cost-effective. The wide spread of cloud options enables smaller businesses with restricted budgets to profit to high-end characteristics, which empower them to stay ahead of their competition.

Regardless of the size of the organisation the benefits of remote working are:

- Save time

Working away from the office two days per week, can save one hour on the daily commute thus saving in a year 19 working days per year.

- Reduce Costs

A company can save a minimum £2,880 in travel costs and reduce potential increases in office costs. By the same criterion, with two days of off-site work, the company could save a minimum of £2,880 in the cost of travel, not to mention potential increases in office overhead costs.
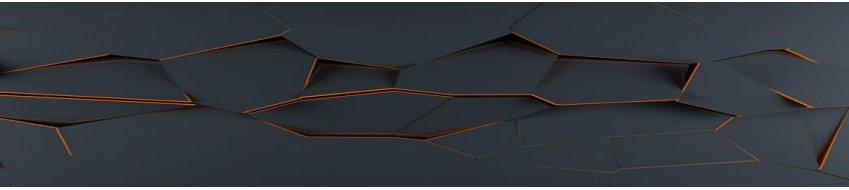
- Lower Stress Levels

Working from home improve general health and can play a big part in reducing your overall stress levels simply by taking your daily commute out of the equation. Being in control of how you manage your time also reduces the need to load work between strict office hours, which only increases stress.

- Enhance productivity

Flexibility in location and working hours increases productivity by 15-31%.

- Happy workers

Employees feel a greater sense of well-being and are more relaxed with flexible and remote working patterns. Working in an office is probably one of the biggest barriers to happy family life. Through flexible working you can use the time you normally waste travelling to the office and spend more quality time with your family instead. The freedom to manage your own time will build your confidence and increase your sense of responsibility to the role and the business. This, in turn, will boost your feeling of ownership, making your job more rewarding and satisfying.

1. Communication

It can get stressful managing many tasks at once, especially when employees are mobile and travel at different locations. Most of the times it can be difficult to monitor who is doing what and where. Instructions can be misunderstood and communication can be disrupted.

2. Tracking Productivity

When you're not able to actually monitor your employees for long periods throughout the day, it can be quite challenging to oversee their progress with each task. Many employees take advantage when there is a lack of supervisor to exam their work and that can influence many parts of your business operations.

3. High employee churn

Mobile employees can experience high employee churn as a result of stress in the workplace. Multitasking with paperwork, low safety standards, and a low first-time fix rate all add to reasons for high turnover and basically, higher costs. Mobile technology can enable flexible mobile employees to function in a friendly environment with less stress, feel more valued and increase the employee retention rate. A stress free work environment is an excellent incentive for high qualified canditates and can attract top talent.

4. Labour Costs

Cost increase is the most important problem people have to deal with when operating a mobile workforce. Your employees become stuck with unneeded tasks, reports, and paperwork that significantly delay their everyday tasks and these finally cost you money. Using a field service management system like Synel's SYQR App offers complete management of mobile employees and reporting via smartphone. The managers are able to monitor when jobs are complete and are able to schedule appointments and work tasks in closer proximity in order to lower transportation costs and travel time.
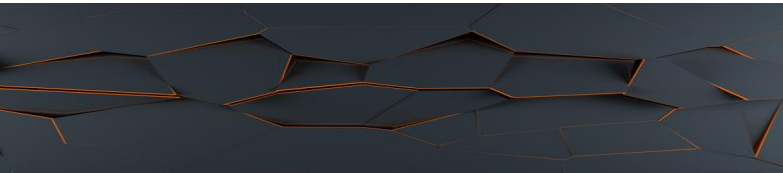
Managing the mobile workforce is a very important. With mobile workers expected to account for a quarter of the world's working population, new research has identified the personality types, cultural influences and management techniques that are critical for success. Many businesses are in danger of missing out on the benefits offered by mobile workers through the recruitment of inappropriate employees, poor management and failure to provide adequate communications resources. Mismanagement in particular can have serious implications on the success of a mobile worker, with both under and over communication damaging employee productivity, performance and well-being.

One the one hand, a lack of regular communication can lead to increased levels of stress and feelings of isolation. But on the other, trying to micromanage remote workers can undermine trust.

But managing employees who don't report to the office also comes with a set of unique challenges, and overcoming them has become a top priority for many employers. Telework experts weighed in on how to solve the biggest problems of the modern mobile workforce.

Communication

Communication is one of the most important factors of managing a mobile workforce. The main problem is not the initial communication of a task but ongoing updates on the projects. In addition to reliable communication solutions it is important how employees communicate with each other. On way of ensuring that employees are online and available is to set specific times that employees are available and respond to each other within a set period of time. Tools such as shared storage and cloud project management software can help a team to work together efficiently.

Tracking productivity

The fact that there is no boss to monitor the work of employees can make some employees take advantage of it and lead them to slack off. Therefore is important to set quidelines and train your employees so they jabe specific things they are focusing on.

Employee trust

Building trust is one of the most important factors for employees who work online. It is important that the employees know that the management is there to help them solve problems, break up workflow obstacles and give them direction as needed.

A unified company culture

One of the ways to make everybody feel connected is to arrange in-person meetings where people communicate with each other. Another solution is to have the remote workers come for a day in the office once in a while. Even virtual meetings or virtual chat can help employees to improve communication.
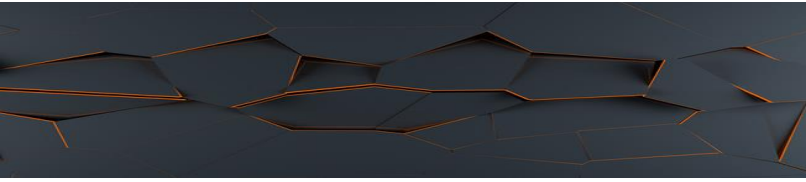
However there are important steps that need to take place before changing to flexible working in order the system to be fruitful and provide the excepted positive results.

1. Train Managers to a new Tech inspired management style

The shift from a traditional way of doing things to new technology, is a challenge that some managers can embrace and others simply cannot and never will. As a first step there will be a need to monitor and assess every step of a business process and avoid delegation of decisions. Maybe these managers, will need to use a wider range of management styles to ensure the best outcome.

For example you can train your managers to manage shifts with TimeLOGWeb's Employee Scheduling Software. It will help you save precious time planning and organising your shifts and assigning the most suitable people on the job.

The employee scheduling software has smart assignment algorithm, which is based on constraint optimisation while taking into account employee, company and customer requirements. This software enables you to maximise your existing human resource and keep your employees and customers happy.

- Save precious time with a user-friendly Graphical Scheduler

- Effective Staffing Decisions according to skills, qualifications or availability

- Control Labour Costs and staff resources within a budgeted environment

2. Investments on new infrastructure and workforce solutions like TimeLOG Web by Synel

The members of your new team will need computers, phone systems, and secure communication and networking tools. Costs like phone and internet access will possibly remain and contributions to electricity costs for remote workers may be unavoidable.

Workforce management software like TimeLOGWeb Online Attendance System enables any organisation's employees to use an internal or external network to access the system. The employee is able to review their own attendance, holiday balance, sick leave balance, while managers can review the changes at predefined levels and give their approval to holiday request or late notifications. That means that a manager at different site or in a different country will be able to access the system in or out of the office and get real time updates to make immediate and effective workforce management decisions.

With Synel's Virtual Terminal the employee can Clock In while he is on line! The online Terminal can also be used to enable employees to clock in and out from their PC when they start and finish work.

3. Adjustments must be made to accommodate different personalities and communication styles

The effective organization of the remote team, the need for social interaction and relationships will still be of paramount importance to specific employees. The adjustment in the new environment, can depend on personalities, need for social interaction, relationships and ability to self-manage.

4. Improve on traditional team building

The technology is only one aspect of the remote working. The success of the remote team is based on trust, collaboration and knowledge sharing. The development of team building skills by all members, is an essential factor for the success of this new working model.

5. Forget the "old" way of doing things, new infrastructure equals new ways of operation

One basic step in this process is to understand how the new infrastructure works, the demands of the managers and the leaders and make the required changes in your operation, from new partners to new contractors or team members. New technology...new world!

6. Recruit employees with new advanced skills

In a remote environment additional and more advanced skills are needed apart from the basic pre-requisites for a job position. For example good written communication skills, time management and self-management are fundamental skills for someone to operate well in this specific working environment.

After all the above steps, be ready to embrace the new remote working era...

7. Use an app to control your Mobile Workforce

Synel's field service solution SYQR offers complete effective Workforce Management of mobile employees and reporting via smartphone. SYQR is leading the way to managing a mobile workforce from any location. The employees can use their smartphone to clock in and out of work from anywhere, allowing the managers to track attendance, activities, breaks, requests, absences and extract valuable data any time-anywhere.

Geolocation technology is a part of most new smartphone devices that use Android and IPhone. When enabled, the software TimeLOGWeb that connects with SYQR app can utilize that technology. Geolocation works best when the device is within reach of the various signals that it uses to determine coordinate. This can be cell towers, or WI-FI networks. To make sure that the device reaches these signals, it is best to clock in and out by a window or outside and avoid tunnels and under structures.

SYQR is a field service solution that offers complete management of mobile employees and reporting via smartphone. Employees can use their smartphone to clock in and out of work from anywhere, allowing the managers to track attendance, activities, breaks, requests, absences and extract valuable data any time-anywhere.

Geolocation

The Geolocation feature of SYQR enables managers to know the exact location of their employees, a very important element for boosting productivity and efficiency as they are more likely to comply with rules and instructions.

QR code

It is also possible to use QR code with restricted Geo Location to schedule the employee to a specific task/customer or office while blocking any option of reporting hours from undesignated location. By creating a unique QR code per location and range of dates and downloading the application to a smartphone from Google store or App store you can start scanning QR codes to record IN and OUT. For example in a big construction site, the app gives you the possibility to scan and upload work permits and site induction documentations.

Synel UK provides top quality
Workforce Solutions for an
engaged & motivated workforce.

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with Israel heritage and top quality standards, Synel
is leading the transition to the future of work and
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