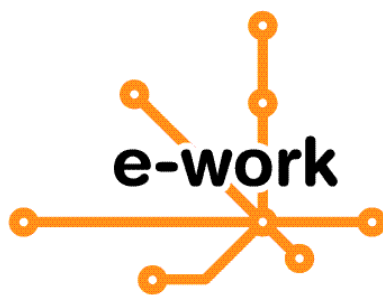




eWork
brief for
managers









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THE BENEFITS OF eWORK



eWork, or electronic working, allows business tasks to be carried out irrespective of location, through the use of modern information and communication technologies (ICT).

The most common benefits of eWork are:

-  IMPROVED PRODUCTIVITY: RESULTING FROM FEWER DISTRACTIONS, LESS NON-PRODUCTIVE TRAVELLING TIME AND BETTER COMMUNICATIONS;
-  REDUCED COSTS: SAVINGS ON STAFF TIME AND SPACE, REDUCTIONS IN TIME TO MARKET AND DEVELOPMENT COSTS, BETTER STAFF RETENTION AND LOWER RECRUITMENT COSTS;
-  IMPROVED CUSTOMER SERVICE: SHORTER RESPONSE TIMES, SIMPLER CONTACT PROCEDURES, NEW SERVICE OPTIONS, WIDER GEOGRAPHIC COVERAGE AND LOWER INTERACTION COSTS;
-  BETTER USE OF FACILITIES AND SAVINGS ON INFRASTRUCTURAL COSTS;
-  IMPROVED STAFF RETENTION AND MORE SUCCESSFUL RECRUITMENT OF WORKERS. IN THE THREE SKILLS AREAS WHERE IRISH BUSINESSES FACE THE GREATEST SHORTAGES – COMPUTERS, FINANCE AND MARKETING – POTENTIAL RECRUITS ARE THOSE MOST LIKELY TO BE INTERESTED IN eWORKING;
-  BETTER MANAGEMENT OF CHANGE THROUGH THE USE OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES AND NEW BUSINESS MODELS (FOR EXAMPLE, eBUSINESS).





Multi-location eWork

Century Homes in Monaghan employs 140 people in manufacturing timber-framed homes and other buildings (www.century.ie), with two other facilities in Dungarvan, Co. Waterford and in Co. Longford.

Due to its choice of location, Century had difficulty in finding suitably skilled staff and office space. It has targeted its sales, customer services and production/design areas for an eWorking pilot, that will address all aspects of eWorker management and motivation and will cover a range of technical eWorking solutions.

Remember that eWorking is a way of meeting business goals, not an entitlement or a privilege for staff.

Jobs that are suitable for eWorking tend to have:

-  A HIGH DEGREE OF INFORMATION PROCESSING;
-  CLEARLY DEFINED OR INDIVIDUAL WORK;
-  CLEAR OBJECTIVES AND MEASURABLE OUTPUTS;
-  MINIMAL REQUIREMENTS FOR SUPERVISION.

For example, professionals and managers, IT specialists, professional and clerical support workers and customer service or sales workers all have jobs that can be eWorked.

As well as selecting appropriate jobs, you need to identify the right kind of managers and employees to eWork. Not everyone can make a good eWorker, even if their job can be eWorked.

The secret of managing eWork is to focus on performance, not on time clocked in. Thus eWorking fits easily within a performance management culture, one that is focused on results.

Combining eBusiness and eWork

The Burren Smokehouse Limited in Lisdoonvarna, Co. Clare, processes smoked food. It employs 17 staff and has a mail-order and corporate clientele. The company faces both recruitment and space problems. It wants to combine eBusiness and eWork, expanding its web-based transactions using staff eWorking offsite. Data security and accessibility are key issues.

Three staff will partake in a pilot project that will cover marketing, accounts and customer service. An integrated solution has been proposed that will allow database access and updating, call tracking and fast ISDN links between eWorkers and a central server.

GETTING STARTED

eWork often begins in small, informal experiments. A more formal pilot is the next step. Once the business case has been proven, wider roll-out can be implemented.



To start find out how much informal eWork is already going on. How many people occasionally work at home for a day? Or log on to your server at night? Or use laptops and mobiles on the road? How effective is it?

Look for examples from other companies. Ask what works and what doesn't.

Assess your company's culture. Would eWorking be accepted? Are there managers and employees who could cope with the challenges? Are there jobs that are suitable for eWorking?

Build a business case with performance targets. Then set up a pilot project; monitor it carefully and assess the results.

For more information about the potential of eWork, log onto <http://www.ework.ie> or contact Enterprise Ireland at 1850 57 2000, or email info@e-work.ie for a copy of eWork: Giving Your Business The Edge -- Guide to Company Use.

Marketing productivity at eircom

Mike Davidson is Head of Marketing and Business Development for eircom's corporate customer unit. Each of his 17-strong team works from home an average of two days a week, writing marketing and communications briefs, spending the rest of the time at the office in meetings and brainstorming sessions.

"The advantages are increased productivity, usually by about 25%, a more motivated workforce, and the opportunity to keep key people who might be going through lifestyle changes."

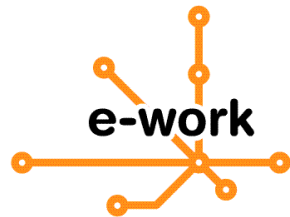


Mr. Noel Treacy T.D.,
Minister of State for Science and Technology and
Commerce

The United States, with near-full employment, has seen its economy transformed by the new opportunities presented by modern information and communications technologies, and the enhanced flexibility that eWorking has provided.

The recent acceleration in Irish economic growth has caused logistical and labour pool bottlenecks. With low unemployment, we must exploit every technological opportunity that presents itself and speed our take up of eWorking.

There is little doubt of the potential that eWorking offers. Our only concern is whether we can bring our capacity for innovation to bear on this significant opportunity quickly enough. Electronic working is a smarter way to work - it is in effect the future of work.



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