

How mobile working could help your business

According to research by IDC, this year the mobile worker population will be 1.3 billion – that's 37.2% of the workforce.

Some businesses are actively encouraging staff to take up mobile working.

What does 'remote working' actually mean?

When you think about remote working, what springs to mind? Working from home, maybe sales teams on the road. But it's wider than that, it's working any place that isn't your office.

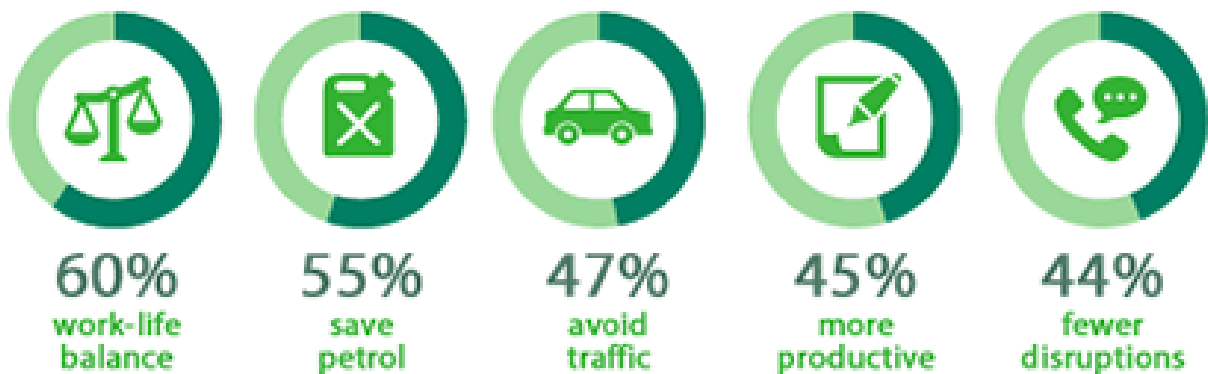
With the new flexible working regulations, there may be more requests to work away from the office – what's in it for you?

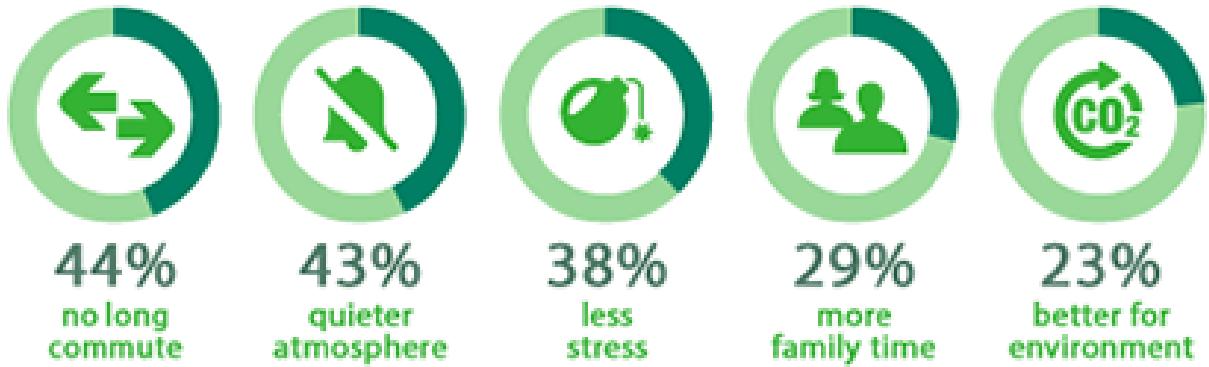


Benefits of working remotely

There are a number of advantages to working remotely, both for your staff and for the business.

A survey by Microsoft found that staff felt the top 10 benefits were:





5 benefits that mobile working can bring to your business:



Cost savings and efficiencies

Allowing staff to work remotely can significantly reduce your overheads.

Having staff in the office costs money. In fact, the average office costs £6,000 per head per year.

It's possible that you may be able to offer mobile working as a benefit and reduce your salary overhead. Research from Arise shows:

- 58% of workers would take a pay cut to be able to work from home
- 25% would be happy with a lower salary if they could avoid their commute

There's good news on efficiency too. Flexible working slashes absenteeism from 8.5% to 3.1% so you'll reap the benefits of healthier employees with less time off work. And if they are sick, they won't be

bringing those germs into the office, which minimises the spread of illness too!



Access to new workers

Do you struggle to recruit qualified staff? Remote working could be the answer.

Many people who don't currently work would consider going back to the workplace if they could work more flexibly.

- 60% of mature workers say they would take up teleworking if it was available. They'd also delay retirement by an average of 6.6 years, so you'd get the benefit of their experience for longer.
- 74% of people who are currently not working would consider going back if they could work remotely.



Hardware that's not hard-wired

Having the right hardware is vital for allowing your staff to remain connected when they're out and about.

Don't automatically assume that staff who work remotely will need a laptop. Many people now use tablets instead – research by Holiday Inn Express found that 58% of mobile workers travel without a laptop.

If cost is an issue for you, consider allowing staff to use their own device to access your work systems.



Software that works wherever you do

With the rise of video calls and shared folders like Dropbox, it's now easier to share information and stay in touch with other people.

As well as using cloud storage and systems like Skype, you'll also need to ensure your software is available. This can be via remote access or over the cloud.

Some software also offers the best of both cloud and traditional hosting.



Effective management of staff

Finally, don't forget about managing your remote workers just as you would with your office staff.

The main thing is to keep communication flowing, with lots of conversations. This can be on the phone, over email, via Skype – whatever works for you and your team.

In terms of work, try to set clear targets so both you and the worker understand what's expected. It helps remove opinions about performance and gives you something clear to measure against.

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