

## Implementing 'Hot desking' and 'e-commuting'

### STEPS TO TAKE:

#### GETTING STARTED

Firstly, look at what benefits there are for both employees and your company by introducing more flexible working practices. Consult staff on their views.

#### REVIEW IT & PHONES

Make sure you have the required IT and phone systems for remote and mobile working.

#### SET-UP OFFICES

Offices need to be set-up for visiting staff with meeting rooms, workspaces and, perhaps booking systems.

#### TRAINING

As staff will not always be in the same location management styles need to adapt from management by observation, to management by objectives. Training may be required on for management and staff on these principles.

#### RUN A PILOT SCHEME

Running a pilot scheme will allow you to learn lessons on a small scale first before then expanding the scheme within the company.

### What are Hot desking and e-commuting?

Hot desking describes a set of working practices designed to provide flexible working environments. The term is thought to have originated from naval practices called "hot racking" where sailors would share limited bunk space

With Hot desking workers do not have their own desks in an office, but are allocated work space according to their needs. This system of working is well suited to staff who are frequently out of the office, for example sales people who are mostly on the road, or staff that move between offices such as regional managers.

'e-Commuting' (or Tele-commuting) is a complementary concept to hotdesking and describes the arrangement where workers operate from a home-base. This can either be on an ongoing basis or intermittently when staff are not in a fixed office location or on the road.

### Benefits

Both Hot desking and e-Commuting provide a flexible way of working that has well documented benefits. Whilst these work practices might not suit all staff in all roles, where they are applied these practices can:

- Improve employee satisfaction, retention, and recruitment.
- Reduce premises costs. Savings up to 30% are attributed to companies using Hot desking. These savings can be more with e-Commuting.
- Reduce travel time and improve productivity. Studies have shown that people who work from home tend to use all or some of the travel time they save doing additional work activities instead. In addition, higher satisfaction levels and improved work/life balance which e-Commuters tend to experience also help to increase their productivity.
- With less travel and sitting in traffic jams this also reduces your company's carbon footprint. Any company conscious of their social responsibility should therefore be considering e-Commuting and Hot desking as part of their HR and IT strategies.

**There are clear benefits in greater work-flexibility. But how are these achieved?**



- Make better use of groups such as parents with young children, carers, and disabled. e-Commuting principles give the freedom to work from home which suits these groups (giving the flexibility that employers are in some instances legally obliged to provide).



**e-Commuting reduces a company's carbon footprint. Helping you contribute to a greener planet.**

### Barriers and problems

Whilst e-Commuting and Hot desking practices do offer real benefits, there can of course be problems and barriers to implementation. These need to be considered and overcome to make the implementation of the working practices both feasible and beneficial. These issues, together with some practical solutions. are covered below.

## TECHNOLOGY YOU NEED:

### HOSTED VoIP

Mobile employees require telephone numbers that move with them. Hosted VoIP is the best solution that requires no telephone system infrastructure in your offices but provides flexible solutions, and free calls.

### DOCUMENT SHARING

Document sharing and management services are available through the Internet. Free services such as MS Office Workspace will give you everything staff need to store and access company documents through the Internet.

### EMAIL ACCOUNTS

There are now countless email hosting services available on the Internet that will do the job.

### BUSINESS SYSTEMS

Utilising recruitment software provided on Software as a Service (SaaS) basis provides secure and functionally rich solutions for recruitment businesses, but without IT support overheads. The services you can obtain will be key to ensuring your Hot desking and e-Commuting strategy is successful.

## Implementing 'Hot desking' and 'e-commuting'

### Can you implement these solutions?

Providing a flexible policy can be straight-forward and extremely beneficial, but equally if implemented without sufficient thought and planning it can lead to failure and a detrimental effect on your business. Provided below are 7 tips on how to weigh-up the pro's and con's and make the introduction of hotdesking and e-commuting work for you.



**Do you have the right infrastructure in place to ensure success?**

#### 1. Build the business case:

An understanding of the scope of your aims and objectives will clarify where changes can (and can't) be applied, and also help to communicate and deliver the required changes. Can for instance certain jobs be performed from home/remotely on some days only, all of the time, or not at all? How would remote working benefit the employee and/or the company?

#### 2. Consult staff:

Not all staff will see Hot desking or e-Commuting as a benefit. Consultation will gain you buy in, ensure staff understand the pro's and con's, and allow any issues they might have to be identified and addressed.

#### 3. Define IT systems and infrastructure strategy:

Hot desking and e-Commuting strategies rely on having an IT strategy in place that will facilitate flexible working practices. If you don't have the right IT strategy then it won't be possible to implement changes successfully. For a recruitment agency this will involve addressing the following:

- **Recruitment software** - The best (and most low-cost) solution is to ensure that systems are web-based and can be accessed from anywhere without complex and expensive IT. For a fully flexible solution, this should be access to both front and back-office systems, with reporting accessible across the business.
- **Document storage** – Access to company documents will be required through the Internet. Your recruitment software together with online storage such as MS Office Live will address these needs.
- **Email** – This should be accessible wherever staff are. There are straight forward ways to achieve this with today's technology.

#### 4. Review phone systems:

One traditional issue with Hot desking and e-Commuting is that staff don't have a fixed telephone number. Mobile phones and 'Smart Numbers' are traditional solutions but these can be expensive. With modern Hosted VoIP systems staff can log into handset's in any office (or at home), or even use a 'Softphone' where they make and receive calls through their Laptop (even when overseas). Their company number goes with them wherever they are, and you get the benefit of free calls so your phone system costs less than your present one.

#### 5. Train Managers:

As staff are not always in the office, management style needs to change from management by observation, to management by objectives.

#### 6. Review Office infrastructure:

Office work environments need to be set-up for visiting staff. This may entail providing meeting rooms, available workspaces, and perhaps booking systems for resources. Staff may also require Laptops instead of desktop PC's.

#### 7. Implement a pilot programme:

As with all changes in work practices, it is advisable not to make extreme changes overnight. Run a pilot scheme so you can learn lessons on a small scale first before expanding the scheme.