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work from home. Read with an open mind and ask yourself "how can this work for my firm". Then, talk to your team and find out why working remotely is exciting to them. Talk to them about your concerns and ask for their help in solving the challenges. Think collaboratively.

**Sandra Wiley** • Sep. 03, 2013

*"Productivity and sharing of wisdom will be sacrificed if we allow our staff to work from home. We need everyone in the office, working together physically."* ~ A Managing Partner, Public Accounting Firm, California

Say what? Productivity and sharing wisdom will be lost if we allow our team to work from home?

I would place my bet that right now if you are a firm that has allowed their team to work from home, you are saying "that is not true." If you are a firm that is entrenched in working in a more traditional manner, you are saying "I think that is true."

Where do you go from here? How do you find the new reality for your future?

- *Grow Your Own Wisdom:* Read everything you can get your hands on about companies allowing their team to work from home. Read with an open mind and ask yourself "how can this work for my firm". Then, talk to your team and find out why working remotely is exciting to them. Talk to them about your concerns and ask for their help in solving the challenges. Think collaboratively.
- *Remote Should Be an Option, Not a Directive:* What is good for some will not be good for all. I am not talking about closing the office and having no physical space to come back to, just options that make sense for the group as a whole. Keep in mind that many want to have an office to work in the majority of the time, so remote to

them will be an occasional working experience. Others will desire more remote

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Don't, the fact that not every one must be treated the same is not a strong argument, I agree with this, but as a person trained in Human Resource compliance, I also believe that you must have reasons why you are treating them differently and they must be documented. Now, don't roll your eyes, I'm keeping you out of court! Again, we are back to setting the rules and expectations before you begin the initiative.

- *Technology is vital:* As you think through the remote worker initiative in your firm, a piece that cannot be forgotten is technology. The remote worker should have the ability to sit down at their remote workspace and be able to connect the same way they would have if they were at the office. Think through all the tasks and identify if they can access the programs, answer the phone, see people on webcam, print, scan and see dual monitors. Don't let the technology environment hold the individual back as they work from a different location.
- *Think Benefit:* It is easy for many people to think about the potential problems and the down side to working remotely, but if you go through the process you will see that the benefits far outweigh the challenges. The improvement in staff morale, the increase in productivity and the ability for anyone to improve the blending of their life and work are amazing payoffs for the firm.

Best of luck as you improve productivity and increase your wisdom in 2013.

Firm Management

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