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Jim Boomer • Sep. 10, 2015



As the number of companies offering workplace flexibility and remote work arrangements continues to grow, the likelihood that your firm will get the request to work outside the office (or already has) is quite high. Ensuring that you're prepared for these requests with the appropriate technology, expectations, criteria and policies will not only become more important in the coming years but also expected by some prospective employees.

It's Not Just About Technology

Technology has advanced to the point that the viability of offering remote work

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provide guidance and hold them accountable. Instilling a culture where everyone in the firm is committed to the work, their peers, clients and the firm is of utmost important to success.

Setting Expectations & Policies

Clearly outlining expectations is an important first step. At a minimum you should document:

- **Where?** – Setting expectations of what is required of the remote workspace (home office vs. kitchen table, home vs. coffee shop, etc.)
- **When?** – Clear hours when the remote worker is expected to be available to team members and clients alike is another important piece of the puzzle.
- **How?** – List out the technology tools and office equipment the remote worker is expected to have as well as expectations about what the firm will pay for and what will be the responsibility of the employee.
- **What?** – The work they are expected to complete and the goals they must achieve should also be agreed upon by both parties.
- **Who?** – Not everyone is cut out to be a remote worker nor does everyone have a role within the firm that lends itself to them working outside the office. You must develop criteria to gain the right to work remotely and a system to hold people accountable.

Clearly defined expectations will allow managers to identify gaps and problems. If remote workers aren't living up to expectations, they may have to bring the employee back into the office environment.

Formalized policies are also important to ensuring that both the firm and remote employee understand what is appropriate and what is not in a virtual work

environment. These policies should clearly address the expectations of the firm and

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Replicating Face-to-Face

Effective communication is critical for the success of remote workers; and an old fashioned phone call just doesn't cut it anymore. Collaboration tools and video conferencing are an important piece of re-creating that face-to-face feeling when you can't meet or talk in person. So much of communication is non-verbal and you give all that up when you rely exclusively on phone calls to communicate.

The rise of the remote worker is already here and will only escalate in the next few years. Your firm's decision to either embrace this trend or resist it will have a major strategic impact on your firm's ability to attract and retain top talent. While it's still viewed as a perk by many, it won't be long before it becomes an expectation. Will your firm be ready?

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