

Hello. It looks like you're using an ad blocker that may prevent our website from working properly. To receive the best experience possible, please make sure any blockers are switched off and refresh the page.

If you have any questions or need help you can email us

Garrett Wagner • Jul. 08, 2019



In 2019, remote workers are not a new trend in the accounting profession or any other. Remote work no longer counts as an innovative perk. Nor is it something that is going to fade away like carrying around large trunks with paper audit files. Nevertheless, organizations in the accounting profession remain slow to adopt the idea of work-at-home, and this needs to change.

Our profession's hesitancy is not because people need to be in the same location, like brain surgeons. That said, even complex surgeries are being performed using robotics half a world away. In today's digital economy, we have the tools, the ability, and the desire from our people for remote work. Our challenge is to get started and take that first step and break free from our traditional box to get started. Moving out of our comfort zone, rather than walking down the hall to see someone at their desk,

now we can click a button for a face-to-face video conference. You can still get a hold

Hello. It looks like you're using an ad blocker that may prevent our website from working properly. To receive the best experience possible, please make sure any blockers are switched off and refresh the page.

If you have any questions or need help you can email us

promeration of easy to use technologies, in fact, remote workers may equate to lower occupancy in crowded cubicles.

The early adopter phase of using remote workers is long past the early adopter phase. Today, it is a common practice across many professions. In fact, several divisions of IBM—once termed “Big Blue” for its Fortune-level formalism—have three out of five employees never setting foot in an IBM facility. Now is the time for the accounting profession to embrace the concept, as well. After all, it is something that is highly valuable among one key demographic of employees: millennials.

Millennial viewpoint

While the millennial generation sees the ability to work remotely as a desirable aspect of any job, it begs the question, what drives this preference among this generation? As Gen X and Baby Boomers do not see work-at-home as a valued benefit in the same way as millennials. When we think about the millennial mind, we find two main trends driving their preference—if not an assumption—that working remotely is acceptable.

The first is the millennial's belief in work-life integration. It is not about a desire to create work-life balance anymore, thinking the work stops at five o'clock. For millennials, work is integrated throughout their daily lives. They embrace the flow between one and the other. This includes a willingness to respond to emails and questions at night and wanting to reduce what they see as wasted time and resources in a dreaded commute. According, to the U.S. Census Bureau, the average American spends over 200 hours per year commuting, and recovering those lost hours is a wish for all of us regardless of generational category.

The second driver is that millennials are comfortable having technology integrated into their lives. In fact, that integration is already ingrained by the technologies they grew up with and already have used to study, do internships, and other jobs. Keep in

mind, this generation was raised and educated in a digital, nearly paperless

Hello. It looks like you're using an ad blocker that may prevent our website from working properly. To receive the best experience possible, please make sure any blockers are switched off and refresh the page.

If you have any questions or need help you can email us

and high school through college. They work this way seamlessly and naturally. They socialize this way, did their homework, pay bills, and most everything else using these tools. Their first jobs probably involved sophisticated point-of-sale systems or doing social media posts to promote an employer's business. Technology and devices are natural extensions of the millennial's life—and this is unique to millennials, something we have never before seen and need to understand.

Ready, set, go

Introducing remote work as a concept doesn't involve creating a new strategic plan or forming a committee. Instead of some major project, get started now with a 30-day pilot program and have each person may work from home just one day a week. At the end of the 30 days, you can pull the team together, take stock, and review how the past 30 days went. Ask these two questions. First, were you able to work effectively from home? Second, what do you and other employees need in order to collaborate and communicate most effectively? Use the answers to improve the process, provide people the right tools and ground rules, then try another 30-day test window. After 60 days, you will be well on your way to embracing remote work, and you will be surprised by how many people want to work from home more often.

At Summit CPA, an office-wide remodeling project encouraged management to test the waters of remote work. Once the remodeling was completed, no one wanted to come back into the office. Fast forward to today, Summit CPA is a 100% virtual firm with employees operating across the United States. It all began with a short-term trial that they had no choice but to try, and they never looked back. As part of your 30-day plan, assign each person a work-from-home millennial buddy who can help them with the technology and get used to the different aspects of working from home. By having your millennial team members engaged as a buddy, you encourage

them to take on a more active role in the organization—and feel they can add value

Hello. It looks like you're using an ad blocker that may prevent our website from working properly. To receive the best experience possible, please make sure any blockers are switched off and refresh the page.

If you have any questions or need help you can email us

CPA Practice Advisor is registered with the National Association of State Boards of Accountancy (NASBA) as a sponsor of continuing professional education on the National Registry of CPE Sponsors.

© 2024 Firmworks, LLC. All rights reserved