



Case Study: Sterling Research Group, Inc.

"Some people who work for us commute an hour each way and these people are especially appreciative of the telecommuting option. It not only keeps morale high but because they are more committed, it ultimately cuts down on the cost of hiring and recruiting. People can be more efficient on big projects when they are shielded from the ebb and flow of daily office life."

-William Haueisen, Ph.D, President

Telework Program Summary:

The Sterling Research Group is located in St. Petersburg, Florida. It is a full service market research firm specializing in customer satisfaction tracking.

The telework program was formalized in 2003 because several employees were working from home, as needed, and the company felt that it should adopt formal guidelines that would clearly identify employee and employer responsibilities. Ten of 35 employees telework, which means that about 30 percent of the workforce can work at home.

One of the challenges of the program was to overcome the perception that teleworking was considered a day off. This was countered by discouraging people to telework on a Monday or Friday. Additionally, communication between home and work has been facilitated by providing contact information to all staff, and implementing an instant messaging service. Employees use their home computers and Internet connection, and use pcAnywhere to access e-mails and files. To ensure that employees systems are secure, the equipment is configured in the office by the IT Department to make sure that proper safeguards are in place.

FAST FACTS:

Sterling Research Group, Inc.

Industry:

Full service market research firm specializing in customer satisfaction tracking.

Location:

St. Petersburg, Florida

Statistics:

- Ten active teleworkers in the pilot program, 35 employees
- Telework as needed, typically once per week
- Program was formalized in 2003

Business benefits:

- A happier and more committed workforce
- A decrease in the cost of hiring and recruiting
- Reduced commute times for employees
- More efficient and productive employees

Challenges:

- Ensuring communication between teleworkers and non-teleworkers
- Overcoming perception, that teleworking is "a day off"

Transportation impacts:

- Reduced vehicle miles traveled by 34,328 annually
- On average, teleworkers save 90 minutes each day and spend that time with their family, working more, and/or taking care of personal business

Reasons for implementation:

- Improve recruitment and retention
- Reduce employees' commute
- Reduce absenteeism

Telework Program Results:

Productivity: Teleworkers reported an increase in productivity. About 50 percent of teleworkers say that productivity increased an average of 18 percent with teleworking. The other 50 percent thought that productivity had improved. Management thought that productivity had increased by 15 percent as a direct result of teleworking.

The Workplace: Seventy percent of the teleworkers reported increased morale as a result of the program; managers concurred with the statement. Teleworkers do not report any problems with co-workers, and 83 percent thought that management and supervisors are supportive of teleworking.

Program Expansion: About 84 percent of the teleworkers thought that teleworking is "good for the organization." One manager is ready to add three people to the program.

"I think that all businesses that are appropriate for teleworking, should consider implementing a program. It helps reduce traffic, and increases employees' loyalty to the company."

-Sterling Research Group Teleworker

For more information about Telework Tampa Bay please contact Jessica White @ 727-570-5151 ext. 38 or toll-free at 1-888-736-8640.

Visit the *Telework Tampa Bay* website at <http://www.teleworktampabay.org>.

Case Study Prepared by Telework Tampa Bay

Telework Tampa Bay is a program of the Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council, Bay Area Commuter Services, and the Florida Department of Transportation

Sterling Research Group, Inc.

Selection criteria for teleworkers:

- Volunteer to participate in pilot
- Manager approval
- Continuity of providing excellent service to clients
- A home office with proper equipment certified by Sterling IT Department

Staff teleworking:

- Executive Staff
- Professional
- Managers
- Technical
- Clerical/Administrative

Elements of the program:

- Policy and program guidelines
- pcAnywhere

Annual emissions savings (adjusted for 2005 factors):

- VOC (Volatile Organic Compounds): 44,077 grams / 97 pounds
- CO (Carbon Monoxide): 471,632 grams / 1,040 pounds
- NOx (Nitrous Oxide): 68,690 grams / 151 pounds



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