Supporting your mobile workers

How HR can help employees and managers get the most from their digital workplace
Workshifting, flexworking, smart working...whatever it is called, working 9-5 at a desk in an office is no longer the norm. Thanks to mobile and workspace delivery technologies, people can now work from just about anywhere.

While mobile working brings many advantages, it also creates new challenges when it comes to building team relationships, shaping corporate culture and managing people effectively. Give people the option of mobile working without preparing for these challenges, and you risk losing more than you gain. That’s where Human Resources plays a crucial role.

Since mobile working is first and foremost about people, HR is in a unique position to support mobile workers—from recruitment to onboarding to advancement. And making your processes and policies more mobile-friendly can make your people happier and more loyal.

In this paper, you’ll find out how smart HR teams are using industry and Citrix best practices to help workers and managers take advantage of mobility by:

• Helping managers identify the ideal roles and people for mobile working
• Helping facility planners design office spaces with mobile working in mind
• Finding innovative ways to keep mobile workers engaged
• Working with IT to make sure mobile workers have the tools they need to be productive

The workforce is changing—and the workplace needs to adapt
In the past, companies dictated where and how their people worked—usually on a PC at an assigned desk. But this is changing fast. A new generation of workers that grew up with smartphones and social media is entering the professional world. As Forbes put it, “By 2020 millennials are projected to be half of the entire US workforce. These are people who grew up with the many social media platforms that we use today. They are used to being connected, collaborative, and mobile.”

Of course, there will always be some jobs that tie employees (like receptionists and production line workers) to a fixed location. But most knowledge work can now be done anywhere—from home, to a coffee shop, to a park—and people expect to have that option.

A competitive edge in recruitment
Many organizations, especially those large organizations with aging workforces, feel pressure to change their culture to appeal to young people. And they know that flexibility, collaboration and choice can really set them apart when it comes to recruiting top talent. For example, mention to a candidate that they can work remotely to cut down on commuting, or that you’ll give them a tablet with all the latest collaboration software, and it might be just the thing that makes them choose your company over a competitor.
Better technology, happier employees
One reason companies are becoming more open to mobile working is that new technologies give them greater control over what their people do and see when they remotely access applications. They’re feeling more comfortable about data privacy and security.

Another reason is that they recognize how mobile working can support their strategic goals by making them more nimble as an organization, and making their employees happier and more productive.

Helping managers identify mobile working opportunities
Some managers might be reluctant to give their people the option to work outside the office because they’re worried about overseeing work or keeping sensitive information secure. But the potential benefits make mobile working worth exploring.

Here are some of the benefits that could help convince a skeptical manager:

• Mobile working is a great fit for project teams of experts from around the world as they can meet and collaborate easily, cost-effectively and conveniently—even at the last minute
• It’s also ideal for heads-down, creative focus by letting people work when and where they concentrate best and feel most inspired
• New technologies make it easier than ever for mobile workers be productive, access the right resources, keep their work secure and effectively collaborate

Of course, mobile working might not be right for everyone. Here are some considerations to help HR and managers decide which roles and people are a good fit:

• Their output and performance can be measured regardless of whether they work in the office or remotely
• Onsite equipment or technology is not required for them to do their job properly
• In-person meetings are not required as part of their job
• They should be a motivated self-starter, with good time management skills
• They should be tech-savvy enough to work with video conferencing, online file sharing tools and virtual desktops and apps

HR can also recommend activities that will help people get the most out of mobile working and build good relationships with their colleagues. For example, people who will ultimately work from home or the field could spend several weeks in the office first, getting to know their managers and colleagues in person and soaking up the corporate culture. Once they’re remote, these workers can use video and web conferencing to stay in touch.
The benefits of mobile working to the business and the workers are tremendous. However, even if people do a great job remotely, occasional in-person meetings are still important to keep relationships strong—and build new ones. The goal is to provide many different options—whether powered by technology or old-fashioned in-office interactions—for people to build the connections they need to be productive.

As a Fast Company blog put it, “...nothing galvanizes people more than working within a connected team... it’s this person-to-person interaction that fortifies relationships, enables better project communication, and creates a sense of loyalty that leads people to make sacrifices for one another.”

### Designing office spaces with mobile working in mind

Whether employees are moving around the office or working remotely, their performance and job satisfaction are influenced by the space around them. HR can give both office space planners and mobile workers advice on setting up their workspaces.

For example, when Citrix redesigned its office in Raleigh, North Carolina, mobile working was top of mind. HR gave the design team insights and employee feedback to make sure the new space took the needs and preferences of mobile workers into account. As a result, the new office features:

- Wifi throughout the building so people can hold impromptu meetings with full access to their applications and data
- Flexible office space that allow for both privacy and teamwork
- Inspiring meeting spaces like a rooftop garden that takes people out of the day-to-day office mentality and stimulates their creativity
- Facilities that help employees become healthier, such as a bike exchange and fitness center
- Walk-in support centers where any tech issues can be addressed immediately
- Guides who give new employees tours of all the features of the office

For remote workers, the Citrix HR and Facilities teams provided guidance on how to set up their own office space, including tips for:

- Choosing the right chair to avoid back strain and tiredness
- Adjusting a screen to prevent eye strain and neck pain
- Using footrests, wrist rests and laptop stands to stay comfortable and healthy
- Taking regular breaks to stretch and change position

### The business case for mobile working

There’s no doubt that mobile working can be good for business—if it’s done right. Here are just some of the benefits:

- Higher productivity as people work where and when they’re most comfortable and motivated
- Lower real estate costs and a smaller energy footprint as space is only provided to those in the office each day
- Access to the best people and teams, even if they’re not local
- More applicants for job openings
- Happier, more loyal employees

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Finding innovative ways to keep mobile workers engaged

Engaged employees will go above and beyond their “official” role to do a great job. Mobile working can cut both ways here.

On one hand, it has the potential to make people feel less engaged because it separates them from their co-workers, which can make them feel isolated.

But on the other hand, mobility can make people feel more engaged because it lets them work where and when they feel most comfortable. Mobile workers can often accomplish more, especially during non-business hours, and respond more quickly to requests, because they have fewer distractions.

But engagement doesn’t stop at quality and productivity. It also helps determine how happy employees are, and how loyal to the company. And just as importantly, the more engaged each employee is, the better your overall corporate culture.

Here are some ideas for keeping mobile workers engaged:

- Invite mobile workers to all-hands team meetings on site
- Hold team get-togethers, whether in the office or at an offsite location
- Encourage regular visits to the office, whether they’re weekly, monthly or quarterly
- Hold focus groups with mobile workers to make sure they have everything they need to do their best
- Introduce a mentoring or buddy system where mobile workers are paired with non-mobile colleagues to keep them looped into everything going on in the office
- Arrange in-person team building activities like volunteering or club sports
- Develop a mobile app for your company that feeds employees useful information as it comes up
- Profile mobile workers on your intranet with an accompanying video, to help people learn more about their colleagues and what they’re working on
- Encourage feedback about mobile working through surveys, or as part of your evaluation process
- Create a collaboration site where team members can share work, documents and ideas

Putting the right technology in place

While HR works to make sure mobile workers get the support they need, managers should work with the IT team to make sure they have the technology they need. In addition to making the mobile devices available to workers, the IT team needs to implement the infrastructure to support high-performance, secure and intuitive mobile workstyles.
Critical enablers for productive, flexible working include:

- Existing wireless and remote access infrastructure to enable people to work from anywhere in your workplace
- Secure delivery of business and productivity apps to any device – employee or company owned – with high performance and an exceptional user experience
- Secure document access, sharing, syncing, and storage
- Web-based collaboration solutions that offer screen sharing, video conferencing and the ability to host scheduled or impromptu virtual meetings
- Remote help-desk services to ensure uninterrupted, high-performance access and availability for mobile workers

Mobile work is working at Citrix
At Citrix, we’ve combined the best practices in this white paper with a BYOD policy and a portfolio of workspace delivery technologies. More than 85 percent of our people take advantage of workshifting at least occasionally, and 13 percent do so on a permanent basis. It’s making them happier and more engaged.

In our 2014 annual global employee survey, 80 percent of respondents said engagement was “favorable,” compared to 75 percent in 2013. And when asked whether “Citrix provides support for flexible work arrangements within the context of my job,” 88 percent agreed.

Learn more about how Citrix solutions can enable your digital workplace at www.citrix.com.

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http://www.fastcompany.com/3033902/work-smart/7-best-practice-tips-for-successfully-working-remotely