

Getting a “YES” from the Boss.

Someone once said telework ‘sneaks silently in the back door’ because one or more managers have the vision, flexibility and courage to try it. Some managers still equate ‘close proximity supervision’ with ‘good supervision,’ despite solid evidence of increased productivity using flexible work programs.

Laurie Harley, IBM Canada’s Director of Diversity and Workplace Programs (20% of IBM’s staff are mobile and teleworking) suggests approaching your employer with a Business-case approach.

State: ‘Here’s how I can do my job offsite’; ‘Here’s what it will mean to my work and to my organization’; ‘Here’s what I need from my boss’; ‘Here’s what I can do to help’; and ‘Here’s how I will work with the team.’ Aside from research available at websites, consider this:

- Show how your work can be conducted offsite, and how you can work without continual face-to-face contact.
- Not everyone is suited to telework, so prove that you are. Good candidates tend to know their jobs and are good performers, self-motivated, well organized and self-disciplined.
- Demonstrate you have a suitable home office environment. You will most probably stand a better chance if you already have the required equipment and connectivity.
- Ask your boss to approve telework a day or two a week for a trial period.
- Find successful case studies elsewhere to show that telework works.
- Show how you can be reached (phone, fax, email, IM etc.) or offer to call in at specified times. Confirm that you will come in to the office during emergencies.
- Few teams require continual face-to-face interaction. Some work can be done alone. Teams can sometimes work together without physically being together, by fax, phone, email, audio conferencing, etc.
- Give your boss some documented examples of how telework reduces costs (increased productivity, motivation, morale, recruitment and retention capabilities, reduced office costs, stress and absenteeism).

Telework is not a perk or a right, but a managerial work option. Choosing who gets to telework can be based on such factors as operational feasibility, personal and job activity suitability etc. It’s called Management!