

"Don't Quit Your Day Job!"- Convincing Your Boss To Let You

Telecommute, Part 2 of 2

By Sharon Davis

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Ok, so you've determined that you have the right skills and qualities to do your job effectively from home. You're sure that your job is well suited to telecommuting. Now you just need your boss to agree that this is a great idea, but how?

The best approach is to make a proposal. A proposal is a very effective way to sell the idea to your employer because it can be used to highlight the benefits, and presents your request in an organized,

professional manner. A well-written proposal can also show that you can work well on your own (a very important point, since you will be largely unsupervised).

The first thing you need to think about is how it will benefit your employer. It's natural for any human being to want to know what's in it for them. Make a list of the benefits of allowing telecommuting such as:

Can cut costs for office space, equipment, parking, etc.

Can be a valuable employee recruitment tool

Increases productivity by 10--30%, according to the State of California
Telecommuting Pilot Program

Additional savings of productive time are realized as a reduction in the use of company paid time to meet personal or family needs. Not surprisingly, telecommuters report that they are less likely to take a sick day in order to be home for deliveries or repairs, or to take children to important appointments.

May allow work to be done when inclement weather might otherwise interfere

Enhances employee morale

Your employer will also be able to enjoy the benefits that telecommuting can have on the community:

Less traffic

Less pollution

Increased highway safety

Next, think about what concerns your employer might have and address them in your proposal.

Would your employer have to invest in additional equipment for a home office, or do you have the appropriate tools already?

How will your supervisor monitor your productivity?

When will you telecommute? How frequently will you check in?

Would there be a trial period?

If you interact directly with clients, how will they feel about this?

Would you object to your supervisor visiting your home office periodically?

Once you've done compiled this information, you're ready to start putting together your proposal.

Your proposal should have the following structure:

1. Cover Sheet- This will have the date, your name and title, your company name and your supervisor's name and title. You can name your proposal something like "Telecommute Proposal" or "Flexible Work Proposal".
2. Introduction- Here you will outline what your proposal is about. Tell what your goal is and how it would benefit the company. Keep it short and professional.
3. Benefits- This is where your list of benefits goes.
4. Scheduling- You'll want to start off telecommuting 1-2 days a week.
5. Implementation- Explain what is needed, i.e. equipment, phone line, etc. Here you will address the concerns you feel your employer may have by offering solutions in the proposal. Come up with ideas on how your boss can monitor your performance, how you will communicate with clients and co-worker, and what tasks you will be doing from home.
6. Trial Period- Give your proposed duration for a trial period. 60-90 days is a good length of time to determine effectiveness.
7. Review Criteria- Agree that at the end of the trial period you and your supervisor will review your performance and determine whether or not you can continue telecommuting.
8. References- You can include articles, urls and any other materials that you used to do your research. This way, your supervisor can look at them also and get more information on the benefits of telecommuting.

Once you have written your proposal, be sure to spell check for errors. You may want to have someone else read it and give you feedback. Depending on your company structure, you may want to make several copies; one for you, your supervisor, their supervisor, the Human Resources Manager and anyone else you feel would be appropriate. Remember, the more thorough and professional your proposal is, the further it will go in convincing your boss that you have the skills, the motivation, and the work ethic to telecommute.

For more information on telecommute proposals:

====Telecommuting Proposals from About.com

<http://telecommuting.about.com/smallbusiness/telecommuting/library/weekly/aa010599.htm>

====Requesting Telecommuting

http://www.uth.tmc.edu/ut_general/admin_fin/hr/worklife/telecomm.htm

====Telecommuting: the pitch

http://cnfn.cnn.com/1999/09/21/life/q_telecommute/

====Telecommute! Go to Work Without Leaving Home

<http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0471118206/americanhomebase>

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