

# 'Homework': Executive Edition

## Key Elements in Developing a Remote Worker Policy

Brief #3

*The rise and extended impact of the COVID-19 pandemic continues to have profound change implications across the social, political, and economic spectrums for the world's population and businesses. This is the third in a series of briefs that offer our perspective on how things will change for companies in the services and solutions business, along with considerations on what will differ from current practices and approaches.*

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### Overview

This is the third of a series of briefs offered by the Executive Leadership Team at The Insight Group. Beginning with our first brief, [\*Rapidly Adapting to the 'New Normal' in Services & Solutions\*](#), our objective is to engage in the development of best practices within the new remote work environment.

**The focus of this brief is on considerations for effective human resources and talent management remote and home worker policies.**

While there are many articles and video tutorials available for managing remote workers, most are more general and not specifically aimed at professional consulting and services solutions sales employees. From our experience and perspective, what such service and solutions businesses need to implement will differ significantly from current practices and approaches.

### Human Resources & Talent Management: It's Still About People

The ability to engage and manage workers in a remote environment may seem as the most daunting of all the transitions in the current 'new normal'. Yet a remote worker policy based in best practices can actually *improve* the efficiency and effectiveness of your workforce. While there may be other elements to include relative to your unique operational needs, here are our key elements for consideration as you transition from in-person to a remote services and solutions environment:

***Determining Eligibility:*** Identify and clarify which positions are eligible for remote work, or whether a "hybrid" remote/on-site model is more appropriate, as not all jobs may be suitable for fully remote work. For example, solutions sellers may be eligible to work remotely, but some sales support jobs might require use of on-site systems, tools, equipment, and support when remote access to them is not available.

*Employee Scheduling:* Set specific work schedule expectations and guidelines to help managers and staff determine the most effective work schedules - e.g. 9 to 5 or flexible schedules - based on the needs of clients and the sales team. It is also important to consider all appropriate Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) and local requirements for tracking time worked and paying employees correctly. Management Coverage and Ongoing Communications – avoiding the “out of sight/out of mind” syndrome to ensure employees feel they are part of the sales team, are valued, treated fairly, and have mentors and champions to ensure continued career growth opportunities. It is also important to ensure appropriate emergency procedures and management processes are in place, well communicated, that clearly indicate “who to call”.

*Professional Development, Education, and Training:* Determine and communicate what, where, when, and how required orientation and qualification training for newcomers and required learning for skills and career growth for more experienced practitioners will be delivered for all remote employees.

*Responsiveness:* Establish guidelines for timeliness in responding to customers, management, peers, and others—both internally and externally.

*Performance and Productivity:* Specify the methods and means of gathering individual and engagement/project assessment data and results to be used to measure contribution, and to assess both required skills development as well as team and individual performance. Many online tools and mobile Apps are available today for peers, engagement leaders and clients to provide real time feedback of both individual and team contributions to the success (or failure) of projects and client engagements.

*Systems/Tools/Equipment:* Identify what elements and access remote employees will need to effectively carry out their job responsibilities. Outline what the company will provide and what the employees are responsible for providing.

*Technical:* Ensure that there is adequate Technical Support to ensure remote workers can solve technical issues and remain effective. This is especially critical for remote workers and remote team management.

*Workplace/Physical Environment:* Set work and safety requirements for remote workplaces. Even though employees work outside the office – you are still responsible for their health and safety.

*Data Security:* Guidelines for accessing, controlling and auditing for compliance in handling confidential information and intellectual property outside the office.

Given the current COVID-19 pandemic and the need for social distancing, an effective remote worker policy is a must; but it is also a trend that we believe will become even more important in the future. Saving on travel costs, reducing office overhead, lessening commute time are just a few of the benefits. Providing the flexibility that employees desire—especially ‘millennials’—can also provide for a more rewarding work environment.

## Charting New Waters

We hope that these practices can help you and your organization accelerate this transformation to a predominantly remote services and solutions business model to drive future success. With our extensive

experience managing and developing effective policies for remote and home workers, we can also work with you to update or develop your Remote Worker Policy.

Our next brief, *Remote Marketing & Market Management*, will help identify additional important considerations and challenges that accompany the remote work environment.

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