

Smart telework options can reduce absenteeism

Telework challenges businesses to ensure that remote employees are working when they're supposed to be.

Yet it's also a way to curb absenteeism.

Advice: Adopt an absence management policy for your organization's virtual workforce that parallels the one in place for on-site employees.

Here are examples of what works, from employers that have fully integrated telework into their operations:

- **MetLife** has a formal, written policy for employees who telecommute or work flexible schedules that defines where and when they are expected to work. It also outlines the procedure for an at-home worker who is too sick to work or otherwise needs time off.

Key steps for success: Document your policies, communicate them frequently and keep in close touch with out-of-sight employees.

- **Raytheon** employees who have been injured, sick or are recovering from medical procedures have the option to telecommute if they are well enough to work but not quite ready to return to the office full time. The perk allows employees to ease back into work after an extended absence, and as a result, gets them working—albeit remotely—sooner.
- **Best Buy** famously introduced its “Results-Only Work Environment” (ROWE) years ago for employees who work at its corporate office.

The concept: Managers focus on the work that needs doing, not the time employees spend doing it or the place where they get it done. So employees can decide where and when they work. And when their projects are finished, then they can decide it's time to stop.