

# TELECOMMUTING Proposal Answers

*by Nell Taliercio*



Proposing the  
Telecommuting Option

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## **Do you have the skills to telecommute?**

When it comes to determining whether you are the type of person that is well suited to telecommuting, Phil suggests there are four essential personal traits you must have. Ask yourself whether you are self motivated, well organized, good at managing your time, and a good communicator.

First of all you need to be somebody that is a self starter. Whether you are working part-time or full-time from home, you need to be the type of person who can get work done on your own when you don't have your manager hovering over you. You need to be self motivated and not the kind of person that needs a lot of leadership to get anything done.

Another key personality trait of a successful telecommuter is being well organized. Again, you are going to be working on your own at home and you are going to have a lot of work related documents and materials in your home office.

A lot of telecommuters will work both in their work office and their home office, and you need to be sure you have the right documents in the right place for the project you are currently working on. You need to be sure you take enough resources home from the office for the length of time you are going to be working there.

The third skill that telecommuters need is good time management. One of the main advantages of telecommuting is that you have more control over your schedule. You don't necessarily have to work 9 to 5 as you would in the office, and can plan your work schedule to fit around home commitments. Effectively you gain more hours in the day by losing that long commute twice a day.

This does mean that you have to be able to effectively manage the time that you are working to make sure you achieve at least as much out of the office as you did when you are in it.

Finally, to telecommute successfully you also need to be a good communicator. Whether working from home is a success or failure often depends on how well you communicate with the people that are working in the office; with your manager and with your team members.

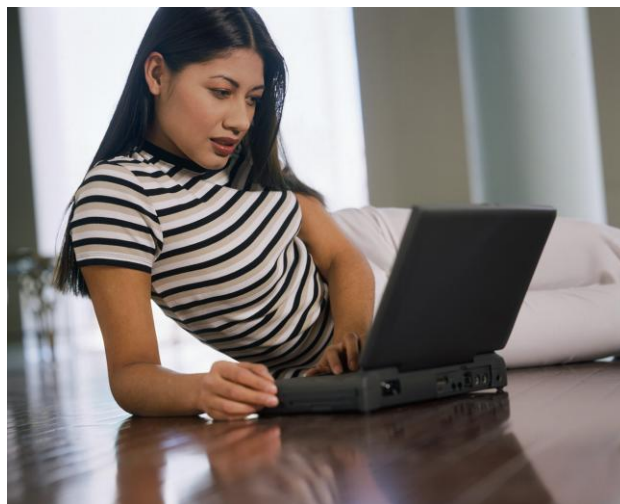
In Phil's experience *"it often falls apart in the communication room because that's your main method of connecting with everybody else and keeping everyone abreast of what it is that you are working on"*.

He suggests that initially you may have to communicate with your virtual team a little more than you usually would. Your team needs to know that you are keeping up to date with work, and your projects are progressing, as they will not see you in the office to be sure of this.

You will also need to communicate regularly with your manager. Many managers are worried when they cannot see what their team members are doing. In order to gain the confidence of your manager you should use frequent and clear communication.

There are some great communication tools available today and you need to be skilled at using email, the phone, and instant messaging effectively. If you are comfortable communicating using these various methods that also makes you more suited to being somebody that could work outside of the office.

So now you have some idea whether you would be a suitable candidate for working from home, we can look at whether you should try to telecommute in your current position, or whether you should look for a new work from home job.



## **Adapt your old job or find a new one?**

It is possible to find a brand new telecommuting job, but it is usually easier and more beneficial to get permission to telecommute from the job that you are already doing.

One of the main reasons for this is the trust you have built up with your current employer. When an employee broaches the subject of telecommuting, one of their managers' biggest fears will be "how can I trust this employee to be doing what they are supposed to be doing when they are at home?"

By having a solid history with the company it helps to build that trust. If your managers and your co-workers already trust you, they are familiar with your work style, and they know from past experience that you will get your job done, they are more inclined to support your plans for telecommuting. The trust element is a really big hurdle for some companies to overcome so the more trust you have built up the better.

Telecommuting from your current job is also easier than finding a new work at home job as your current employer has already made an investment in you. You have a particular value to them; whether that is the training they have given you, the experience you bring to your role, or the customers you have built up a relationship with.

Your manager already knows that you are qualified for your job and they know what your skills and strengths are. In many cases they would rather be flexible and accommodate your telecommuting plans than lose you as an employee and have to start from scratch with someone new.

Another reason why I believe it is better to telecommute from your current job is that you are already familiar with the company's corporate culture and you are little bit more plugged into what happens in the office and the way communication flows.

As anyone that has ever worked in an office knows, a lot of communication happens over the water cooler and a lot of information gets shared in subtle or informal ways. By already being familiar with that culture and the various communication flows, I think it's easier for you to make sure that you are still plugged in into what's going on when you are working outside the office. You will know who to contact and the right questions to ask to keep abreast of everything that is happening in the workplace.

The benefits you receive with your job will probably be better if you can convert your current role into a telecommuting one, instead of finding a new work from home position. When you switch to working from home, whether that is full or part time, the benefits you receive should not change very much.

Phil explains that telecommuting is a lot more common today than we realize, and that the location we work from shouldn't affect our benefits. *"If you talk to most people in the office and say do you telecommute they'd say no, and then you say ok well do you ever bring work home at night? Oh yeah yeah I do that. Have you ever worked from a hotel room or airport? Oh yeah I've done that. Have you ever worked from a client's site? Oh yeah I do that. So that's just the norm these days, working from multiple locations. In most cases the company doesn't change their benefits and it's really just an alternative place to work but it really shouldn't change the structure of the job itself."*

This is very different to applying for a new work from home position. Often when you find a telecommuting position online, apply online and get hired online, never having had a history with that company, they don't offer any benefits at all. The benefit that they offer is the fact that you can work at home.

The reason for this is that when you find a new position where you can work from home, you are usually being hired as a freelancer or contractor, where it is more common not to have additional benefits from your employer.

With these types of position you may be working in a completely different state or even country from the company, and you are kind of running your own business and just taking them on as a client. This means that you won't get the same benefits you would receive if you were employed by that company.

I think it is important to understand the difference between the various work from home options. If you are employed by a company and work exclusively for them, but are able to work out of your home, then you are effectively telecommuting, and you should be entitled to the same benefits as if you were working in the office. If you are working as a freelancer or contractor, possibly for multiple clients, then you may be working at home, but not really telecommuting. In this case you are unlikely to be entitled to benefits.

More and more people are turning to freelancing with their own small businesses, largely because advances in technology allow them to do this. Also, people no longer have trust in their employer and believe that they will stick by them. Many people are taking their knowledge and skills and setting up their own contracting business so they feel they are more in control and secure.

There is a lot of information out there on how to do this. It is easy to find advice on becoming a freelancer and setting up your own business, but not everybody wants the stress of doing that. By looking at telecommuting from your current job, you get the benefits of working from home and managing your own schedule, but also the regular paycheck and benefits.

We have seen the advantages of telecommuting from your current job instead of applying for new work from home positions, but is your present role really suited to telecommuting? The next section will enable you to evaluate your job and see if you could do it from home.



## Is your job suitable for telecommuting?

To determine whether your role is suited to telecommuting, Phil suggests you start by breaking down the various individual tasks and responsibilities that make up your position. These are the sort of elements that he believes are well suited to working from home:

*“Your job would be telecommutable if you do a lot of things like preparing reports, if you do a lot of writing and editing, if you analyze figures doing some kind of statistical analyzes or working in spreadsheets/excel type work, if you have to develop plans or coordinate a lot of information, if you write a lot of letters or memos or spend a lot of time on the phone whether it be sales or support or doing research that kind of thing, and particularly research there’s a lot more people doing research these days”.*

To decide whether the tasks you do at work are suitable for telecommuting, you should work out whether they are location independent or location dependent. If some of your tasks are location independent, they are probably suitable for telecommuting.

Take research as one example. If you are doing research on the internet, that can be done from just about anywhere so it is location independent. If you need to trawl through books and printed reports that are only available in your office, then that type of work is location dependent and would not be suitable for telecommuting.

If you work on some kind of specialized machinery and that machine is located in the office then obviously you need to be there to do that, or if you need to greet people as a receptionist when they come in the door, telecommuting is not for you. These types of tasks are location dependent.

Due to recent advances in technology, a lot of intensive computer work such as data entry has now become location independent. In the past you may have needed a specific software program or a specific database that you could only access in the office, meaning that you had to work there. These days you can be given access most computer networks remotely from just about anywhere as long as you have internet access. If you need to use a piece of software that is only installed on a computer in your office, you can even gain remote access to that computer. Your boss could even

sit in front of that computer and see the work that you were doing at home, although whether that is an advantage or not is up to you!

When you are analyzing the tasks you do and whether you could perform them at home, be a little open minded to new technologies. With a little investment in a few extra tools, there are very few tasks that you would not be able to do just as well from home as from the office.

Once you have analyzed the various tasks that make up your position, you should have a good idea of the percentage of your job that you could do from home. Telecommuting does not necessarily mean working 100% from home, in fact a majority of telecommuting jobs involve you being in the office part of the time and working at home part of the time. That can be anything from one or two days a week in the office, or alternating one week at home and one week in the office.

You should look at the amount of time taken up by location dependent tasks, as well as the regularity with which you need to do these tasks. If there is something you have to do every Friday that requires you to be in the office, the alternate week model would not work for you. If, however, you have a location dependent task that takes three days once a month, you could look at just spending one week a month in the office.

Often, you are so used to going into the office that you can't imagine how your job could be adapted to work partly from home. You probably don't realize how much of your job could be done away from the office environment. However, once you break it down into tasks like this, it only takes a little planning and creativity for you to see your work is flexible enough to suit a telecommuting arrangement.

## Setting up your work space

The equipment you will need to set yourself up as a telecommuter depends very much on the type of work you will be doing, but is safe to assume for most people that you will at least need a computer, printer, internet access and a telephone.

You might also find a high quality scanner invaluable when you need to share printed documents with your team quickly. Having a scanner often means you don't need to invest in a fax machine. A digital camera may be equally useful, you would be surprised how often it is easier to take a photo of something to send to your team than to try to explain it them over the phone. A picture of you working in the garden with a cocktail might not be appreciated however!

If you are frequently involved in conference calls or long telephone calls while you are working on your computer, a telephone headset keeps your hands free for typing. A webcam may also be valuable when taking conference calls with your team back at the office to make them feel like you really are part of the meeting.

If your company is keen on telecommuting and already has a program in place, the chances are they will pay for any equipment you need to set yourself up at home. On the other hand, if your company has not yet embraced telecommuting and you are the first to broach the subject, you may need to be prepared to pay for some of the equipment yourself.

Many companies now issue their employees with laptop computers, and this is an easy way to be able to work from any location, assuming you can access the internet and log in remotely to the company network.

You can negotiate with your employer to find out what they would be willing to pay for, but the chances are you will have to pay for your own internet access. The argument will be that most people now have broadband internet for personal use, so working from home will not add any additional cost in that way. This may just be one of the things you will need to accept if you badly want to work from home.

## Preparing for that all important question

So now for the difficult part; actually approaching your employer to ask about telecommuting. I think this is a big reason why a lot of people don't even try telecommuting; they just don't know how to prepare for that conversation or what to do. It's kind of scary to think about it.

Phil believes that many people don't ask their employer about telecommuting because they are worried about their reaction. *"Some people think that if they approach their employer and ask them to work from home they're going to kind of think that they are less than devoted to work and they are just kind of looking for some time off."*

There are a lot of things you can do to prepare for discussing telecommuting with your employer. You need to have very clearly defined goals about what it is that you want, what are the major reasons you want to telecommute and what do you hope to get out of it. Phil suggests that you should go to your employer with a detailed and well researched plan rather than simply an idea or a request.

*"Give your managers some alternatives for how telecommuting might work for your job. Tell them how many days it is that you want to be working remotely, and how the various tasks you need to do fit into this schedule. Let them know how often you'll be checking in and the method of communication you will use."*

Try to emphasize specific skills and mention if you've worked remotely before, or worked on teams or other projects where you weren't all physically in the same location. You want to have all that information together so that you can show that you've really thought this through and you aren't just asking to work from home because you're sick of driving to the office. Having a detailed plan will be a big step towards getting your employer to take your proposal seriously.

The next thing is to try to think like a manager or supervisor does. When you approach your employer you don't want to explain how working from home is going to benefit you, instead you want to focus on how it will benefit the company. Rather than stressing how much money it will save you in gas, you should show how much more productive you can be working from home.

Increased productivity can be a great advantage to your employer in letting you telecommute. Without the daily distractions in the office, such as a constantly ringing telephone and general office gossip, you will be able to get more work done in a shorter time period. You will be less tired as you will not have had that stressful commute to work each day, and can start work earlier when you are fresh and alert, rather than spending that precious time sitting in traffic.

There may be specific factors in your job that will make telecommuting beneficial to the company. Phil uses the example of desk sharing. *“Maybe they are cramped for desk space and by you working from home they don’t have to expand the office so quickly because you can share a cube with somebody every other day when you guys are working outside the office.”*

You should try to be flexible when you first propose telecommuting to your managers. You could offer to begin with a pilot program of a month or two when your productivity and communication levels are monitored to ensure everything is going well. Alternatively you might suggest working from home just one day per week to begin with, and if that goes well, increasing to two or three days further down the line.

Being flexible like this shows that you are willing to prove yourself and gives your employers the comfort of knowing they can decline your telecommuting proposal if the trial period does not go well. Make sure you schedule a meeting with your manager half way through the trial period so you can iron out any issues you both may be having.

Of course, the pilot program is good for you as well as you might start working from home and then decide it is not for you. Many people find they miss the comradery and communication in the office and can’t cope with working alone. You wouldn’t want to change your mind only to find that your cubicle was filled and there was no room for you in the office anymore.

You will need to have a way of measuring your productivity so you can prove to your managers that working from home is effective. This is easy if you have particular targets to reach, or a certain amount of reports to produce over a set period of time. In some jobs, however, you may need to be more creative when setting your productivity targets.

Where possible you want to try to be more productive at home than you were in the office to convince your manager that the system is working.



## Educating your employer

When you approach your employer you should have some information about telecommuting to hand. You can go onto Google or any search engine and do some research on telecommuting. There are plenty of case studies or examples of other companies that are using telecommuting successfully. Finding articles about companies using telecommuting, particularly in the same field as your company, may help to convince your manager that the scheme is worth trying.

For example if you work for an accounting firm and you can find some articles or case studies on the web about other accounting firms that have successfully implemented telecommuting and how it's benefited them, your employer will see that are not trying something completely new. They will see that other companies have done it and they don't have to reinvent the wheel, they can copy what other companies have already done

I've found that a lot of companies don't really have a good grasp of how telecommuting could benefit their company, or even exactly what it is despite the concept having been around since the 1970s. Even so, telecommuting does seem to be moving more into the mainstream now.

Phil believes that certain events promote the idea of telecommuting, but that it is quickly forgotten once the media stops covering that event. *"What seems to happen is that something will happen like rising gas prices or 9/11 or the avian flu or a transit strike and all of a sudden everyone talks about it and everyone pays attention to it for a short period of time – it's almost like a band aid but sure enough once the memory of that fades they kind of all forget about it and go back to the same way of doing things. I think the smart companies are doing it and I think they know what it is and certainly there is more and more press about it and people are getting more educated."*

Educating your employer about the technology available to assist telecommuting such as video conferencing, web cams and instant messaging programs, as well as methods of transferring larger files and those software programs that let you remotely control computers, will help to convince them to give your ideas a try.

You could introduce your employer to the idea of a formal telecommuting program. This way there is no perception of favoritism between employees. Formal programs also benefit from a clear telecommuting policy, with HR input and a signed agreement on productivity levels and communication processes.

I suggest you download some advice on how to make telecommuting work for your employers, from the internet. Phil's site has a series of tips books, including a virtual team tips book that would be appropriate both for telecommuting employees and employers.



## Answering your employer's questions

Before you approach your employer you will want to anticipate some of the concerns your managers may have and be prepared to address those concerns.

One of the first questions they may ask is whether you have a dedicated workspace. As Phil says, "*Nobody wants to think that you will be working on the kitchen table or the coffee table.*" That's okay for occasionally, Phil lives in sunny Florida and sometimes likes to work in the backyard by the palm trees! However, if you are seriously planning on telecommuting you will need a dedicated office space where you can shut the door and have privacy without being interrupted, and where you can take phone calls without a lot of noise.

A second question that may be asked relates particularly to moms looking to work from home to spend more time with their children. If you work at home and your family or children are at home it can be very difficult to try and get work done.

A lot of people think they can just come home and work but it's not quite as easy as you think. I think your managers are likely to ask whether you are planning on having some kind of child care if you have children at home. It's kind of a double-edged sword because many people say the whole reason they want to work from home is to spend more time with their children.

I think the age of your children is a big factor in deciding how to deal with this question. If they are a bit older then they can kind of entertain themselves for much of the day, they may be in school most of the time you are working. By working from home you can cut your work day short by an hour or two to pick them up and to spend some time with them. You can catch up on the work time later in the evening when they are in bed.

With a younger child that needs almost constant attention you will probably need to demonstrate plans for a babysitter or preschool so that you can achieve several hours of concentrated work during the day, if your spouse is not at home to look after the child. Perhaps you can arrange child care for the morning so that you can work solidly then, and then you can spend the afternoon with your child. Maybe you can get some more work hours in once your spouse returns from work, or once your child is in bed.

The one question your employer probably will not come right out and ask you is how they are going to know you are actually working. That is why I think it's good to have a clear proposal for measuring your productivity when you approach them. They are never going to accuse you of being a slacker that is going to be sitting at home watching TV instead of working, but it will be a comfort to them to know they have a way of ensuring that isn't true.

Managers are often afraid that if they can't see you, you aren't working. Everyone's so accustomed to what they call hallway management or eyeball management which is 'I see you in your cubicle so I know you are working'. Well I think we all know that's certainly not true.

Phil admits that he has not always been productive in an office environment. *"Particularly when the internet came out I could sit in a cubicle all day and not get anything done, a quick switch of the wrist and suddenly the excel spreadsheet was there. So certainly physically being in an office is no indication that you are working. Sometimes people confuse activity with productivity."*

## What if they say no?

Of course, you need to be prepared for the possibility that your employer will refuse your request to telecommute, and if this happens it is a good idea to try to find out why this is. Depending on the reason, you may be able to broach the subject again at a later date.

Some companies will have a very good reason for refusing, and if so they will inform you of this. A good example would be that they don't feel comfortable with the security of information leaving the building when you are working at home. If the company works with secured documents, such as legal documents of some nature, they might be worried about them being e-mailed back and forth outside of the office.

In cases such as this, there is little point in revisiting the subject after a period of time, unless a solution to the problem has been found. If however, your company has refused for other reasons, it may be worth waiting six months or so, and asking the question again.

Some companies will refuse because they are just a bit apprehensive about telecommuting, or maybe because this is the first time you suggested it and it's kind of something new that they haven't really thought about before. In this case, Phil suggests it would be fine to ask again after six months or so.

*"I certainly don't think there is any reason why you can't revisit it. Obviously don't come back next week and say ok how about now? But I think maybe six months down the line, some time frame and six months is just an arbitrary time frame that I threw out there, I think it would be ok to come back and request it again."*

You can use those six months to build up additional trust with your employer and show consistently high productivity. You can also do some more research on telecommuting so that you have more information to approach your manager with next time. The results may vary. Some people do not like to refuse something twice, whereas some may use the fact that they have refused once as the perfect excuse to refuse again.

You never know what will happen. You may be working for a manager that is against telecommuting and for all you know six months later you may have a different manager with alternative views.

If you are moved to a different department you should certainly bring up the question of working from home again. The decision may have been made by your manager rather than by the company, and the type of work you were doing at that time might not have been appropriate for telecommuting.

Perhaps your original manager had a bad experience once before where someone that worked from home wasn't very effective, or maybe they worked outside the office themselves and found it so hard to concentrate that they assume that everybody is the same. It's always hard to know what's going on in your manager's mind when they make these decisions.

Again, when you approach your manager a second time, I do think that you need to be well prepared to increase your chances of them saying yes because they will see that you have really put in a lot of time with your preparation instead of just going in and saying hey now can I work at home a couple days a week? Make sure you address any concerns that they mentioned when they initially refused you.

Of course, if you are lucky, they may say yes. What do you need to do then?



## **They said Yes! What next?**

The typical process following your employer's agreement to your telecommuting proposal depends on whether they already have a formal telecommuting program in place. You will need to complete a telecommuter agreement that outlines the scope of work that is to be done from home, what you are responsible for, and how your productivity will be measured.

If your company already has a program in place, they will have a standard template for this agreement. If not you may need to put one together yourself. The detail you go into with this will demonstrate to your manager the commitment you have to telecommuting, and the work you have put into preparing for it.

Depending on your job, you may have to set up daily hours of availability while you are at home. Some jobs aren't that specific and as long as you get the work done by the end of the week that's fine. Some other jobs need you to be available for clients and co-workers at certain times.

What you should definitely do is set up a schedule for communication. Define whether your primary form of communication is going to be e-mail, voicemail or an alternative. Make sure your manager and team know when you will be checking your mail. You may think it is sufficient to check your e-mail at midday and then again at the end of the work day, so you are not distracted by messages for the rest of the day. This is fine as long as you make this clear to your team. Otherwise they may be e-mailing you first thing in the morning and wondering why they don't get a reply until the afternoon.

Your telecommuting agreement will also contain details about what resources including software and office furniture will be provided by the company. Are they going to supply you with pads and pens, blank CDs, a laptop, internet access? These details need to be set out in writing.

The agreement could also include a meeting schedule, both to determine how well your telecommuting arrangement is going, and more generally to make sure you have regular updates with your manager and meetings with your team.

The agreement should include some measure of performance so you can prove that telecommuting is benefiting the company as well as you personally.

You can download draft or sample telecommuting agreements from Phil's site <http://www.youcanworkfromanywhere.com>. These will give you some guidance on what telecommuting agreements need to contain.

## Keep your work life within limits

While many managers are worried that their employees won't do much work if they are telecommuting what I've found is sometimes the opposite is true. Phil agrees, saying that *"when somebody starts to work out of their home they find very often that because the computer is always there, and they don't have that commute to kind of mark the end of the day and separate their work from the rest of their life, they sometimes get too caught up in the work and actually overwork rather than under work. My wife's always saying to me oh you just can't get away from that email. I'll walk by the computer and I'll be like oh just let me check, yeah I know it's 9 at night but just let me check."*

This is a little ironic as one of the main reasons people want to work from home is improve their work/life balance, and to have more control over their schedule, spending more time with their family and loved ones.

If you want to telecommute, you need to come up with a plan to help you maintain that work/life balance. Otherwise you may find that you're quickly losing it because that computer is always there and it's hard to mark a time for you to end the day.

Also you may be so afraid that the company's not going to approve of you working from home that you try too hard and do too much work to prove that it's working. You end up kind of pushing things to the other end. I think it's important to have balance.

Phil suggests that people are more productive when they work at home because they work for longer. *"Some people will argue that the reason employees are more productive when they telecommute is because they are actually working more hours. In some cases that is ok, I mean if I normally spend an hour commuting into work in the morning and an hour commuting back and I want to spend those two hours working because it makes the rest of my week a little easier because I'm not so rushed to try to get everything done, then that's a fair exchange as far as I'm concerned."*

I'm a lot more productive at home, I just enjoy working more when I'm at home and it is easy to get a little bit too crazy about how much you are working. I suppose if it's your business it's one thing because the amount of time you put in really is important but if

you are working on a salary or hourly wage you don't want to push it to hard because you still want to make it worth how much you are making too.

At the end of the day as long as you are happy with the amount of work you are doing and they way you are doing it, working a few extra hours does not matter. The benefits of telecommuting are being able to be flexible and work when it suits you, without having that time consuming journey to work, and without having to deal with office politics every day.

You get to control your working environment without checking with anybody else. You can choose if you have music on, if you want lights on, if you want plants or not, and that is a huge plus. If you want to work in your PJs you can and if you want to take a longer lunch break because it happens to be a nice day & walk around the block you can do that too.

However, telecommuting isn't for everyone. For that reason I've put together a checklist to help you determine if this is the right choice for you. I'm also giving you a telecommuting proposal which you can personalize to suit your situation and present to your employer:



## **Telecommuting Proposal Checklist**

The following checklist will assist you when approaching your current employer concerning turning your position into a telecommuting opportunity. Be certain you have completed each of these steps prior to approaching your current employer for a better chance of receiving a yes response.

### **Self Discipline**

Unfortunately, many people think they have the required discipline only to find out they don't. It's easy to get into the "I don't feel like working today" rut, but not so easy to get out of it. You must be able to get past that mentality and work even when you don't feel like it.

### **Break Your Current Job into Tasks**

Take your current job and break it up into each individual task you are responsible for. Determine which ones can be done away from your current employment location and document exactly how you plan to do so.

### **Equipment**

Make a list of all equipment needed to perform your job in a telecommuting atmosphere. Any equipment necessary needs to be purchased and/or installed in your home office prior to making a proposal to your employer. Only under extreme circumstances should you request that your employer provide these items to you.

### **Objections are the Norm**

Think ahead and be prepared for any and all objections that your employer may have. Create a list of them and memorize what your response will be to each of those possible objections. Follow up on any doubts your employer may have with statistics and facts. Proof with numbers will go far with your current employer.

**Goals are a Must**

Create goals for yourself and your job. Find ways to show your employer how and when those goals will be achieved. Where applicable, compare the rate of completing your goals while telecommuting versus working in the office.

**Keep Your Expectations in Check**

Don't expect full time telecommuter status in the beginning. Many companies are still not sold on the idea of their employees telecommuting. Therefore, assuming your employer will allow you to work from home on a full-time basis is setting your expectations too high. Take it slow and start out with a few days or hours a week and gradually increase your telecommuting time. A probationary period is a great way to propose this part of your plan.

**Keep the Focus on the Company's Needs, Not Yours**

Approach your boss with the company's needs in mind. They will come first in his/her mind and therefore, should with you too. You need to portray that telecommuting is an option that will benefit the company.

**Move Forward Once Prepared & Not Before**

Approach your employer only when you have a completed plan. Do not take your proposal lightly. The more thought out your proposal the more apt your employer is to take you seriously and consider allowing you to telecommute.

## Telecommuting Proposal

To: Supervisor's Name From: Your Name & Position Date:

XX/XX/XXXX

First, thank you for taking time to review this proposal.

Telecommuting or flex work, has increased in popularity and growth among employers world wide. Allowing employees to work from a remote location, such as their home office or a satellite location, has been proven to increase employee productivity, morale, and preservation, which in turn increases profitability for the companies for which they work.

I am interested in exploring the possibility of telecommuting for the position I hold as (insert your position here) for (insert employer's name here). I would like to schedule a meeting with you at your next available opportunity to discuss the following proposal.

As you will see, I have completed extensive research including not only the options available but also how they would be of benefit to the company. Please consider this request based on more than just the fact that I would not be in the office, because with technology and my previous work history, I believe it will produce positive results for everyone involved.

The first thing I would like to address regarding turning the position I currently hold into a telecommuting one, is that we establish a probationary period of 90 days starting on (insert date) with a review at 30 days to evaluate the arrangement and measure its benefits to the company. I would also like to suggest that a meeting be arranged at the end of this trial period to address any concerns you may have and discuss continuing telecommuting into the future.

Please take into consideration the following elements regarding this telecommuting option before our initial meeting.

### **Duties and Reporting**

List each of your responsibilities, how and where each will be performed, and how you will report to your supervisor/co-workers.

**Schedule**

Days & Times Available at Employer's Location: (list specifically which days or times you will be working at the employer's location.)

Days & Times Available at Home Office/Telecommuting: (list specifically which days and/or times you will be working remotely. Remember don't ask for full time telecommuting at the beginning, start with one or two days a week)

**Equipment**

List the equipment necessary to perform your job at the remote location. Address how you will perform the duties required with the equipment you already possess. Unless absolutely necessary do not request any equipment be purchased especially for the option of telecommuting.

**Location/Availability**

I will be available to supervisors, co-workers, customers, and others during normal office hours via telephone, email or cell phone, while working from my home office. I will arrange for my office telephone to either be forwarded to my home office telephone while working remotely or I will include a voicemail that refers callers to my home office telephone or cellular phone on the days I am not working in the office.

My contact information is listed below and I will make it readily available to anyone who may need to reach me during working hours.

Address: Your physical home address

Mailing Address: Should it be different

Telephone: The number where you can be reached during normal work hours.

Cell phone:

Email:

### **Compensation**

List the compensation and then explain in detail how you came to the amount. Keep in mind this may be less than you are currently being paid. Take into consideration how certain things will change if you are no longer working from the employer's location. Also note that by working from home your employer may only be paying you for the time you are actually working, not necessarily XX amount of hours each day like when you are in the office.

### **Keys to Making Telecommuting Successful**

(list items that are necessary to make telecommuting a success for both you and the company, being sure to put extra emphasis on the company side of things)

### **Benefits to (insert company name here)**

Increased productivity

Cost savings (list specifics)

List others as they fit to your specific situation

Thank you for taking the time to consider the above telecommuting proposal. I look forward to discussing the option more in depth at your earliest convenience. I will be more than happy to address any questions or concerns you may have at that time.

Sincerely,

(insert your name and title here)

## **Recommended Resources**

Legitimate Job Databanks

**Home Job Stop:** <http://www.justonlinejobs.com/hjs.html>

**Jobs Online Toolkit:** <http://www.justonlinejobs.com/jobstoolkit.html>

**Home Job Group:** <http://www.justonlinejobs.com/hjg.html>

**Virtual Assistant Jobs:** <http://www.justonlinejobs.com/vajobs.html>

**Hire My Mom:** <http://www.justonlinejobs.com/hmm.html>

## **Closing**

We wish you the best in your job hunt or proposal efforts.

JustOnlineJobs.com Staff.