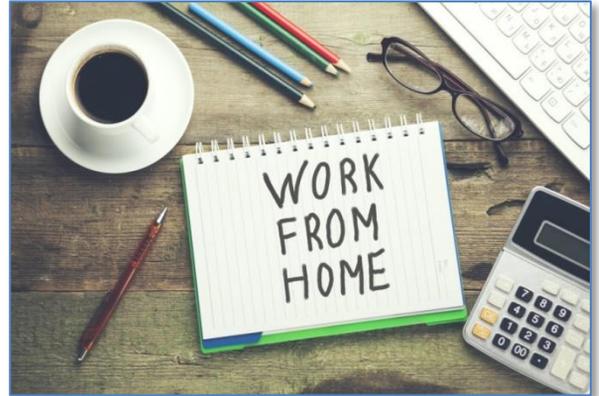




SELLING PROFILE

FILLING THE INSIGHT GAP

Homeworker Assessments for Sales Professionals and Contact Centres



WHAT YOU NEED TO CONSIDER WHEN TRANSFERRING TO HOMEWORKING

During these challenging and uncertain times caused by the Covid-19 crisis, transferring your workforce to homeworking can create a wide range of new challenges for both employees and leaders. This paper examines how “one size doesn’t fit all” and how generating a plan to support the behavioural character traits of the team can reduce stress and improve your chance of success as you navigate this difficult crisis.

WHY ONE SIZE DOESN'T FIT ALL

Business Leaders across all industries are facing a very unique crisis that very few will have had a contingency plan in place for. Therefore, no organisation can assume that having the right technology and processes in place will lead to automatic success in moving to a remote working strategy. In most cases, our working life has been synonymous with the structure of travelling from home to a building or place of work. This structure provides an environment of normality, security and support, and for most people a clear divide between work and home life. So why is it so difficult for many people to make this transition to working from home?

It cannot be assumed that staff will just take their laptops and logins home with them and start work. A 2015 report revealed that 62% of survey respondents said they would have needed to have taken some additional equipment home with them¹. Assuming the task can reasonably be performed from home and an employer is able to provide the tools necessary to do this, the biggest challenge is around the stress and demotivation an individual will experience in dealing with not only the change in working environment but also the emotional effect of dealing with the crisis origin.

The Effect of Change

Change is something that creates an unknown and destabilising effect on many of us. This is therefore potentially very stressful, causing worry, anxiety and in some cases, illness. Transformational change projects in companies are managed by people with specialist skills. The classic resistance we see by a high number of people is only a symptom of not being able to visualise what the next step is and how it will affect them. The combination of these circumstances can generate feelings of insecurity and uncertainty. In many cases this might manifest in such character traits as being unreasonable, stubborn, negative and disruptive. When this behaviour occurs, a company must consider whether it has fully identified and understood the fears and behavioural requirements across the group.

Considerations When Working From Home

There are a number of considerations that need to be taken into account when asking employees to start working from home. The first one is that most people rely on structure, security and interaction with others. Ask anyone experienced in delivering transformational change in the workplace and they will tell you that most people do not like change and find it immensely stressful and destabilising. In 2018/19 there were 602,000 workers suffering from work-related stress, depression or anxiety (new or long-standing). This resulted in 12.8 million working days lost².

Why is this the case? We all have a unique set of behavioural character traits. These traits form the way we think and react to a range of situations. Accepting they exist and identifying them in our employees before commencing the move to homeworking, will enable employers to put the right support systems in place with a tailored set of tools and advice on how to manage the change.

There are many behavioural traits that form part of how we think and react to any given situation. For the purpose of homeworking, these can be grouped into four main behavioural types. Identifying the high-level differences and generating a support plan for each will significantly reduce the stress, anxiety and subsequent fallout of employees throughout this critical process.

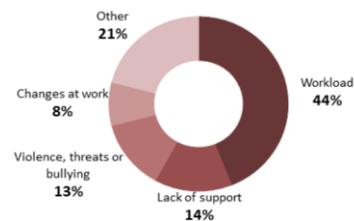
Work-related Stress, depression or anxiety in Great Britain

602,000

Workers suffering from work-related stress, depression or anxiety (new or long-standing) in 2018/19

12.8 million

Working days lost due to work-related stress, depression or anxiety



Health & Safety Executive, October 2019 report

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HOMWORKING GROUP REPORTS



THE FOUR MAIN BEHAVIOURAL TYPES

Group “D”

Primary character trait is “Dominance”

This group will tend to be confident and driven. They will also be quite self-motivated, self-sufficient, and likely to enjoy being more autonomous. This group is likely to transfer smoothly to homeworking.

Suggestions to manage and support this group when working from home

- They can be quite focused and assertive so they will want to quickly understand the process, then get on with the transition so they can re-focus on their work.
- They may be quite demanding on equipment or services they require to support their work goals and objectives in the homeworking environment.
- As they will tend to have an emphasis on their efficiency, they will not require constant communication.
- Any communication during homeworking should be succinct, efficient, time-disciplined and well organised.
- In a homeworking environment this group will tend to set their own demanding work schedule and stick to it.
- This group will tend to focus on their company's reason and facts for needing to work from home, and not their personal feelings.
- In communication, give recognition to their work ideas or successes, not to them personally.

Group “I”

Primary character trait is “Influence”

Communication and interaction are at the core of this group. They will tend to suffer loneliness very quickly and could become depressed if not kept motivated. Homeworking could become challenging and demotivating after a relatively short period of time.

Suggestions to manage and support this group when working from home

- This is a very positive, enthusiastic and friendly group and will feel the isolation of homeworking more than all other groups.
- They are likely to appear the most enthusiastic of all the groups in the idea of transferring to homeworking, but the lack of team interaction will soon take its toll.
- Being very gregarious and tactile by nature, they are likely to leave their work and gravitate towards others in the house.
- Regular daily contact is essential with this group, not only by the company, but also by work colleagues and those in their team. Constant interaction is absolutely key.
- In communication with them, try not to argue or be negative: instead explore alternative positive solutions. Their greatest fear is rejection, which will be heightened when working on their own.
- Video conferencing should be used for communication with work and colleagues when possible.
- Summarise conversations in writing with what you both agree upon.

BEHAVIOURAL TYPES AND HOW THEY WILL REACT

Group “S”

Primary character trait is “Steadiness (Pace)”

This group is good at dealing with repetitive tasks but could quickly become stressed and anxious at being away from a supportive and secure office environment.

Suggestions to manage and support this group when working from home

- This is a very security conscious group that doesn't like taking risks. You must try to support their worries and concerns about leaving the security of the office.
- Working away from the office will be very stressful as the office is seen as a secure and comfortable environment.
- They will tend to question the transition process, but only in order to clarify and verify.
- Should you disagree with their resistance, do not debate facts and logic. Discuss personal opinions and feelings as their caution is most likely to come from significant worry and insecurity.
- Show them that you are actively listening, and you are open in your discussion.
- They like guarantees that action will involve a minimum of risk; offer personal assurances of support.
- Set clear goals and required levels of achievement for them at home.
- Communication should be via a regular 1-2-1 (not group) and aimed at reassurance that they are doing a good job.

Group “C”

Primary character trait is “Compliance (attention to detail)”

Providing the transfer is structured, thought-out and staff have a specific home office area in which to work undisturbed, the transition to homeworking for this group should not present too many problems.

Suggestions to manage and support this group when working from home

- They are prepared, unhurried, organised and punctual, so they will expect to see the process of moving to homeworking has been thought out and carefully planned.
- They will look for precedents or policies to support the decision that transferring to homeworking is workable.
- Their organised and thoughtful approach will need supporting throughout the homeworking period.
- Being time-disciplined and systematic, they will expect a consistent contact time for daily work reviews.
- They like things in writing, so follow up discussion with a detailed email.
- Do not rush their decision-making process.
- They like guarantees that their actions cannot back-fire.



SUGGESTIONS FOR EMPLOYERS AND HOMEWORKERS

Suggested Process For Employers

To generate confidence across all groups, it is key that a clear and detailed plan is produced and circulated in good time ahead of the proposed implementation date. It should include:

- An understanding and appreciation that whilst this is business as usual, but from a different location, there is a clear recognition of the different emotional requirements of individuals within the team. Time spent ensuring this step comes across as putting people first will pay significant dividends later.
- A clear expectation of work delivery. This should include when and how that should happen.
- A schedule showing a daily contact plan. This will vary depending on which behavioural group somebody is in.
- Regular emailed updates from someone senior, providing information on the current situation and how it is affecting the company. It should also contain feedback on how well people are working in this situation.

For more information on our HomeWorker Assessments, please see below:

sellingprofile.com

Call Derek on +44 (0)7834 303460

Suggestions for Homeworkers

- Try to find a place at home that you can turn into an office. You may be lucky enough to have a separate room in which to do this. If this is the case it will help you to create a more formal working feel to your day. If you are unable to do this, you may be able to use an area of the house, such as a dining room, during normal working hours.
- Create a daily "To Do List". This will help you to focus your activity and time management to ensure you get the work done.
- Build in to your working calendar:
 - ◇ Contact time with your manager to discuss how things have gone during the day.
 - ◇ Regular breaks such as mid-morning, lunchtime and mid-afternoon breaks. These will provide small but important milestones to help you create structure and move through the day.
 - ◇ Gossip time! We all spend an amount of our day chatting with work friends and colleagues, maybe at the coffee machine. This is a valuable part of our personal support mechanism and must not be under-rated in its contribution to our wellbeing. Make sure you agree phone - or better still, video - calls to your friends during the day.

REFERENCE

¹ Deloitte, King's College London, Public Health England.
2015. Willing and Able Building a Crisis Resilient Workforce.

² Health and Safety Executive. 2019. Work-related stress,
anxiety or depression statistics in Great Britain, 2019