

T ELEWORK

Telework is a new employment organisational system. It can be a career opportunity for many persons who have difficulties or do not want to travel to an ordinary workplace, due to any sort of reason.

To be able to telework you only need a personal computer, a modem and a connection to the Internet, although sometimes the company itself provides this connection. From here onwards, the specific needs of each professional vary depending on his or her activity.

In this document you will find ideas and information in order to consider this form of employment as a valid alternative to access the labour world.

Tele-work is a new system for organizing work in which the worker carries out an important part of their tasks away from the company, over the telephone or internet.

Tele-workers are active in almost all professional fields, but there are areas where information technology and the type of activity have meant that tele-work has developed more than in others.

These fields, ordered from the most important to the less important, are:

- ✓ Consultancy and services for companies
- ✓ Programming and I.T. services.
- ✓ Consultancy and financial services.
- ✓ Marketing
- ✓ Services and medical attention
- ✓ Visual and multi-media graphic arts
- ✓ Public relations and advertising.
- ✓ Accountancy and audit.
- ✓ Writers, script-writers and contents creators.
- ✓ Free lance sales people

74% of the professions linked to these occupations are related to information and expertise, both in matters related to data processing, technical subjects and management.

Important matters for the worker

- ✓ Flexible work timetable, adaptable to their personal needs and which therefore improves the balance between personal life and working life.
- ✓ More autonomy and control over one's work and social relations.



- ✓ Travelling is reduced, and this reduces time lost, money spent and tiredness.
- ✓ The worker can select where they live independently of where they work.
- ✓ If the worker has any handicap he or she can work in a place specially adapted to their needs.
- ✓ Globalization, new technologies and European policies are going to encourage this way of working.
- ✓ There are “virtual companies” made up of groups of selfemployed tele-workers who offer services as a co-operative.
- ✓ You must have a lot of self-discipline and be motivated for your work.
- ✓ It is vital that you are able to organize your own time.
- ✓ You must have good computer skills as you will have to solve any technical problems that come up.
- ✓ You must have a receptive, positive attitude towards new technologies.
- ✓ You must be capable of bearing the isolation and separate your working life from your family life.
- ✓ It means making an economic investment: computer, modem, Internet connection, navigators, email, and software.
- ✓ If you are a self-employed worker you will have to pay national insurance contributions and the applicable taxes.

Important matters for the company

- ✓ Reduction in costs, both due to better productivity and the infrastructure.
- ✓ Increased productivity due to the time saved in travelling by the worker and for the work atmosphere they may have at home.
- ✓ Makes it easier to contract personnel as the limitations due to the worker's residence no longer apply. This also means that the tele-workers taken on stay longer in the company has the work atmosphere and professional satisfaction improve considerably.
- ✓ It is more difficult to control the evolution of the work.
- ✓ People who do tele-work are more difficult to motivate.
- ✓ The confidentiality of the information may not be so easy to protect.
- ✓ There is a labour and tax law vacuum.

Types of tele-work

Where the tele-work is done from

- ✓ **Tele-work from home.** The worker's home is the principal “work place”, both if they are working for themselves or for somebody else. A part of the home is specifically dedicated to office functions and has the normal resources of an office, for example, a desk, office telephone, fax and computer, and internet access.
- ✓ **Itinerant tele-work.** Tele-workers who practice this roaming do not have a clearly identified physical place of work. Equipped with a mobile phone and/or a portable computer their office is where they have an adequate telephone connection (any wi-fi place). Their work goes on regardless of where they are doing it.
- ✓ **Tele-work in offices away from the main office.** This is tele-work performed in an office other than the normal work centre. It includes both



activities by the worker alone and work carried out by a team. In these cases the tele-workers normally have remote access to the company's central computers in such a way that working in the office is no different to working away from it.

- ✓ **The digital community or digital neighbourhood.** This is an extension of the term "telecottage" or rural tele-centre and it is related to life styles and preferences. A digital neighbourhood is an entire community conceived around future life styles and work patterns. All the population is connected and every house is totally equipped with an internal and broadband, worldwide internet connection.

- ✓ **Telecommerce.** This is especially for doing business over the net. It uses the most advanced TICs, such as Internet, to sell or buy products or services, to reinforce relations with the client and to reach far off markets without the extra-cost of being there physically. Even though the concept has many similarities with etrade, the latter refers more to effective transactions such as the act of receiving or processing an order.

In contrast, tele-trade encompasses all aspects of the sales cycle and the buyer-seller relationship. For example, it includes advertising new products and services to potential clients through internet. It offers the means to make orders and receive payment by electronic transfer, as well as online support. Above all, it improves the relationship with the client (by email or through electronic communities).

- ✓ **Tele-cooperation,** tele-activity. Work based on tele-cooperation or teleactivity is one application of TICs to the field of the individual or the organizations. It makes it possible to reinforce mutual relationships, information sharing and collaboration. Virtual team work through the internet is a good example.

So tele-cooperation is the collaboration between several people in different places to create a network and collaborate in the achieving of a common objective. As this cooperation becomes more common and formal we can define them as virtual organizations. Tele-cooperation and tele-activity involve new skills and introduce changes into organizations. Specifically, the information and communication flows within a traditional hierarchical organization lose importance; communication barriers are dissolved beyond the organization's limits.

Type of tele-workers. Time dedicated by the workers

- ✓ **Marginal tele-workers.** The worker principally carries out their tasks in the office of the company for which they work but sporadically works from home. In these cases the worker does not usually have much office equipment at home.

This is also the case of the worker who, apart from doing tele-work occasionally at home, also has a traditional job.

- ✓ **Substantial tele-workers.** The tele-work is controlled and combined with work at the company offices. Normally the worker has more technological equipment at home. They keep their link with the company, but in a different way. The relationship is more similar to that between a client and supplier.
- ✓ **Primary tele-workers.** People who work full time from home. This is the only way they work; at the very most they visit the office very occasionally.



Often they are self employed people and therefore have all the necessary equipment for working at home.

Type of workers according to their status

Within the framework of working at home we can define two possibilities:

- ✓ **People who work for themselves.** Liberal professions suitable for tele-work are those which carry out tasks related to data processing, and those which involve study and design.
- ✓ **People who work for others.** Within this group we can define several sub-groups:
 - People who work in a company with a conventional work timetable sometimes need to do their work at home for personal reasons.
 - Workers who are incorporated into the tele-work scheme because it is the company's policy and they believe it to be advantageous.
 - Mobile or itinerant tele-workers; the people who must travel a lot to offer a better service to the client. They are equipped with the so-called mobile office: telephone, fax, laptop computer (examples, maintenance professionals, journalists, politicians, consultants, etc.)

TOOLS

Telecentres are installations with shared I.T. resources and which offer a range of services to the general public, tele-workers or selfemployed professionals, or tele-workers who work for different companies. One of the basic functions of the telecentres is to offer information and knowledge technologies now available to society.

Job offers:

- ✓ Jobs on offer in the network of tele-centres in Catalonia
- ✓ Tele-work companies in Spain
- ✓ Portal for tele-workers sponsored by the main tele-work centre.
- ✓ Portal of services for job offers

