

Why Enabling the Remote Workforce Helps Your Businesses Stay Competitive

And how customized communications brings tailored business processes and efficiencies anywhere your employees are.

Technology has changed how we work, and also where we work. Employees are growing tired of long daily commutes and steep real estate prices in major cities around the country. But with the right communications technology in place, workers can stay connected and productive anywhere across the country or across the world.

The shift toward a distributed workforce is part of a two-sided equation. For businesses, there are benefits such as reduced costs, increased worker productivity, and a wider pool of prospective employees. For employees and other team members, working from home or a satellite office saves time, money, wear and tear on their automobiles, and it supports work-life balance. The current North American job market is very competitive, and finding the right talent is crucial to small, mid-sized, and large business' success.

How can your business avoid falling behind? Here are some easy and cost effective ways to stay competitive, attracting and keeping top talent and enabling them to work remotely.

The future of work means being constantly connected.

Workplace sentiment is changing, and there's an increasing number of comments, such as "It doesn't matter where I do my work as long as it's done."

This mindset is a natural outgrowth of today's digital connectedness. Workers want - and expect - cloud-based technology that can be tailored or integrated into operational systems to enhance business process workflows, peer collaboration, and customer experience.

Here's how businesses and workers benefit from supporting telecommuting and mobility:

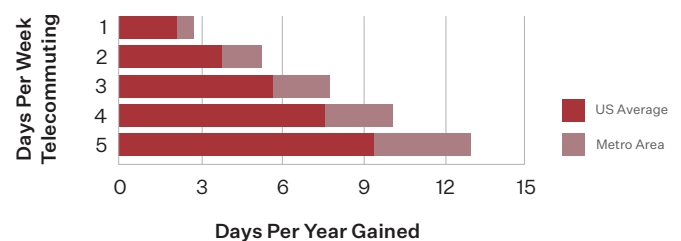
Occasional to daily work from home is now expected.

The latest statistics show that telecommuting is in high demand. According to Global Workplace Analytics, 80 to 90 percent of the U.S. workforce would like to telework at least part-time. This desirability is underpinned by three major benefits that remote workers experience.

- ✓ **Work-Life Balance:** Working from home makes it possible for employees to avoid missing a workday when a sick child stays home from school or when there's a scheduled home maintenance appointment. Surprisingly, about 80 percent of telecommuters report better work-life balance, according to a Staples Advantage study.
- ✓ **Lower Stress:** Working remotely won't completely eliminate stress, but 82 percent do say that it's reduced stress, according to a study by PGI. Countless environmental factors contribute to this, including being able to tailor your personal work environment and having control over distractions such as office chatter and temperature.

- ✓ **Saves Time and Money:** On average, it takes Americans about half an hour to get to work, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. That's over 225 hours each year, assuming a two-week vacation. If a worker started telecommuting full-time, he or she would gain back the equivalent of nine days each year. For those working in larger cities, the impact is even greater, and workers would add the equivalent of 13 days to each year by eliminating a commute.

Time Savings of Telecommuting Workers



Businesses Benefit from Telecommuting

Businesses that have a telecommuting policy have significant competitive advantages.

- ✓ **Attracts Top Talent:** With a workforce that embraces telecommuting, businesses can become more agile and scale easier, hiring the right person for the job regardless of location. According to an IWG report, businesses with flexible work strategies are 85 percent more competitive in the marketplace.
- ✓ **Improves Productivity:** It's a common misconception that workers are less efficient when working outside the office, but the opposite is true. Two-thirds of managers report an increase in productivity from remote employees.
- ✓ **Increases Loyalty:** Telecommuting has a big effect on workers, and as a result, 76 percent of telecommuters are willing to work overtime and feel more loyal to their company.
- ✓ **Fewer Absences:** Enabling remote work results in 63 percent fewer unscheduled absences.
- ✓ **Faster, Easier Hiring:** A telecommuting policy allows businesses to widen their net and include candidates in all regions. In addition, the policy makes the position more attractive to candidates.
- ✓ **Improves Compliance:** A telecommuting option may, in some cases, be a type of reasonable accommodation for your business to achieve ADA-compliance.

What are the cost savings when companies enable remote workers?

Significant financial incentive exists for businesses to embrace telecommuting. In fact, **60 percent of businesses say that cost savings are a major benefit.**

Businesses save an average of \$11,000 annually for each telecommuting employee. Simultaneously, telecommuting workers save between \$2,000 and \$7,000 each year. That adds up to approximately \$15,500 in total savings per employee!

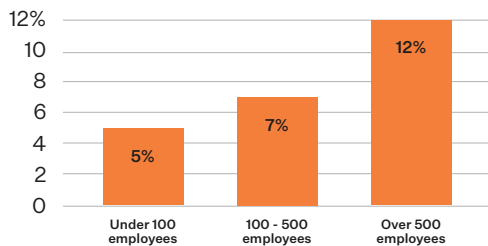
There's also the indirect financial value that telecommuting adds. A Stanford University report found that among telecommuters, turnover rates decreased by more than 50 percent. That avoids the hiring costs of about \$4,000 per position. Additionally, telecommuting can have a positive impact on workplace culture, a metric that's so important, millennials would be willing to take an average pay cut of \$7,600 for a better quality work environment and work/life balance.

How are companies gaining competitive advantages with policies that enable remote workers?

When workers are choosing between a high-paying job and a lower-paying one with better benefits, a work-from-home option is important to about 80 percent of workers, according to HBR. However, remote work options are more frequently available at large companies that gain a competitive advantage in attracting top talent.

Businesses with more than 500 employees are 1.4 times more likely to enable remote workers than businesses that have less than 100 employees.

Larger Companies are Twice as Likely to Offer Telecommuting Options

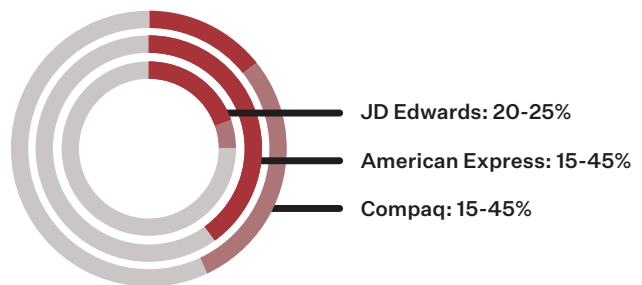


In part, this disparity is driven by large companies already employing a workforce across multiple business locations. This could make it less of a leap to further distribute the workforce to accommodate home offices. Moreover, it's more likely that large businesses would have essential technology in place, such as cloud communications and virtual access.

Because of work-from-home policies, enterprises have seen eight-figure savings in real estate costs. For example, Aetna saves \$78 million annually by cutting 2.7 million square feet of office space.

The productivity increases are also significant. In the case of American Express, their remote workers produced 43 percent more than their peers who work in the office.

Productivity Increase of Telecommuting Workers



“ Both flexible hours and work-from-home arrangements are affordable perks for companies that want to offer appealing benefits but can't afford an expensive benefits package. Both of these benefits typically cost the employer nothing — and often save money by lowering overhead costs. ”

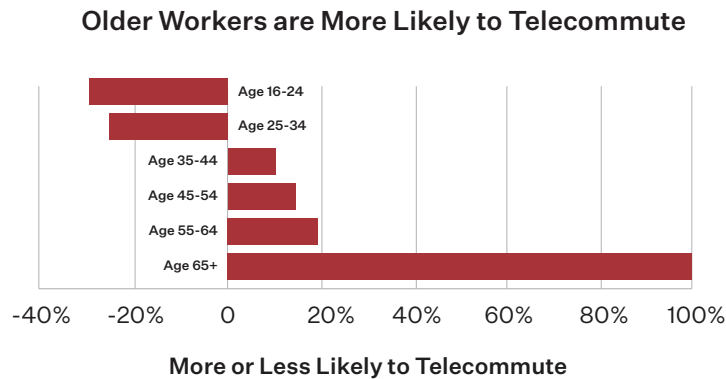
Are these employee preferences generational?

Several factors come into play regarding each generation's opinions and preferences about telecommuting.

For those in supervisory roles, younger managers are more likely to support and enable remote workers. About 58 percent of Baby Boomer managers oversee a team that works a significant portion of time remotely. In comparison, that figure is 74 percent for Millennial or Gen Z managers.

On the other hand, older workers are more likely to work remotely. Those aged 65 and older are twice as likely to telecommute. This location flexibility provides the situational support as older workers transition into part time work or move further away to communities with lower costs of living as they transition toward retirement in future years.

As HBR explains, "Flexibility and work-life balance are of utmost importance to a large segment of the workforce: parents."



Even though the digital natives of Gen Z and Millennials prioritize workplace flexibility, the rate of telecommuting among these age groups is actually lower than average. To some degree, this trend is influenced by the rate at which people ascend into the knowledge worker roles where telecommuting becomes feasible. Yet, there are also trends showing that younger workers prioritize in-person interaction such as collaboration and mentorship, and surprisingly, 53 percent of Gen Z prefers face-to-face communication.

What's the optimal telecommuting frequency?

The best telecommuting schedule will depend upon your business' situation. Some businesses have found success with workers telecommuting two to three days per week to balance quiet solitary work and collaboration time.

An IWG study found that a part time work from home scenario is most common. Only 11 percent of professionals are full time remote workers. About 42 percent telecommute half of the week, and 17 percent telecommute one day per week.

There may be some cognitive bias that benefits those who balance telecommuting with in-office work. An analysis by MIT Sloan Management Review revealed that in-office workers are seen as more trustworthy or dependable. However, the impact of passive face time varies based on company culture.

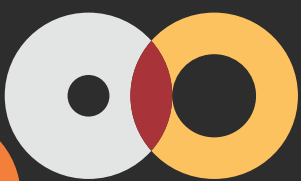
What is the most important technology to enable the remote workforce?

A flexible and customizable cloud-based communications system is critical to supporting a mobile and remote workforce.

For workers to continue to collaborate in a way that drives innovation and growth, they must be able to stay connected to one another. Distributed work environments shouldn't result in a disjointed staff.

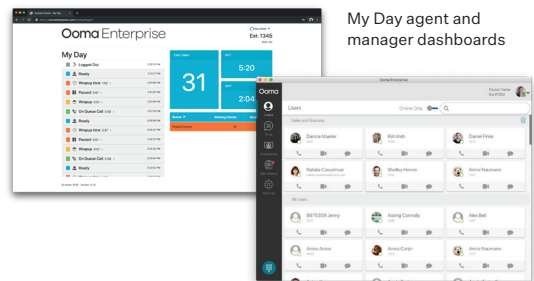
Moreover, telecommuters also need to be readily available to external contacts. Rather than a patchwork solution of different cell phone numbers, business communications should remain consistent and streamlined to maintain business continuity, provide excellent customer service, and to enhance productivity.

Flexible cloud communications meet the needs of today's businesses, providing both remote availability and streamlined access. Rather than the limitations of a traditional on-site PBX, cloud phones provide connectivity via desk phones, mobile apps, web-based softphones, or other connected devices. And, Ooma provides tailored communications that are custom-fit to your business and your customers, providing a better overall experience.





Mobile App enables workers to use their business communications system everywhere.



Desktop Client

Ooma office works with high quality IP desk phones, analog phones, and mobile devices.

Ooma Office for small businesses

- ✓ Top quality, highly rated VoIP
- ✓ Mobile apps for Apple and Android devices
- ✓ Easy deployment; plug in, download, and go!
- ✓ Big business features at a very affordable small business price
- ✓ No contracts

Ooma Enterprise provides call center real-time reporting, desktop and mobile app so you are constantly connected to your team and performance analytics.

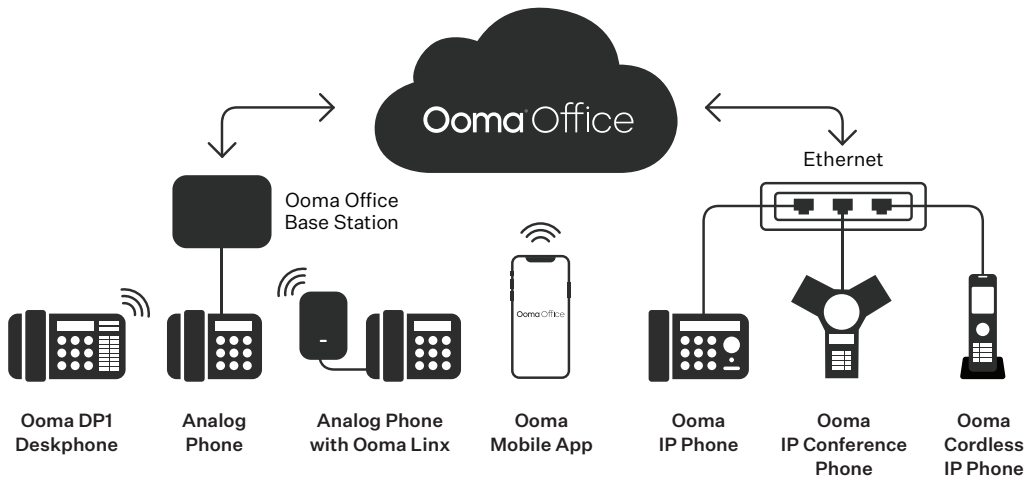
Ooma Enterprise for medium and large business

- ✓ Top quality UCaaS that we custom-fit to your business for a superior experience
- ✓ Cloud Contact Center with easy drag-n-drop call flows for a custom fit
- ✓ APIs enable integration with CRM and other SaaS systems for tailored workflows and improved processes
- ✓ Concierge-level Customer Heroes provide support that's second-to-none

How can Ooma help your business support remote workers to stay competitive?

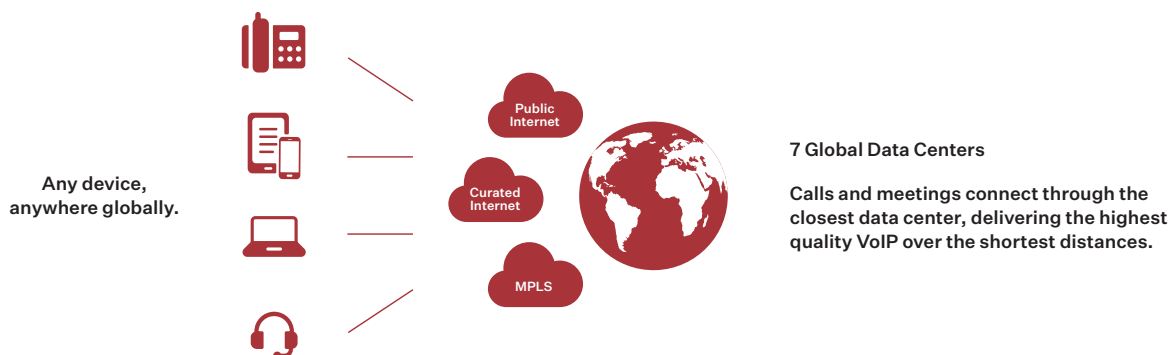
Fifty-four percent of businesses say that technology is the main barrier to workstyle innovations such as telecommuting. Ooma makes it easy to deploy flexible communications technology that remote workers love.

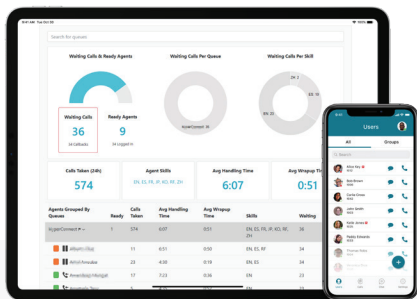
Ooma provides easy, business-class communications on all your favorite desk and mobile devices.



Whether you use your existing analog phones, Ooma's affordable IP Phones, or Ooma's mobile app on your smartphone, Ooma Office can be set up in a variety of ways to fit your business needs.

Ooma Enterprise delivers custom-tailored communications that fit your business needs today and as you grow.





“ The Ooma Enterprise mobile app has always been a huge part of our internal usage here when users need to appear like they’re in the office, even when they’re not. You can be on cellular data or Wi-Fi, and the app lets you make outgoing call comes from DigiFX Networks. There’s no need to worry about explaining that you’re on your cell phone number. No, it’s the office number. ”

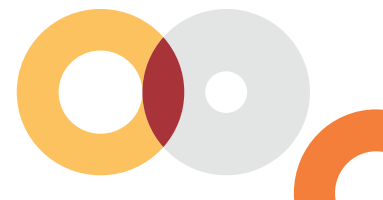
– Rob Harrison

Manages IT for business with Ooma phone lines

“ Our mantra is that their desk at home is exactly the same as their desk in the office, and Ooma Enterprise enables us to hand them a physical desk phone for their home just like they would have here. You can dial an extension on the office and connect to the middle of nowhere and it connects just like you would in the office. ”

– Brian J Anderson

*Systems Administrator at Traction on Demand
450 Ooma phone lines*



With Ooma, businesses and their team members benefit from enhanced flexibility, productivity, and job satisfaction. It’s a win-win!

Learn how Ooma’s highly rated cloud business phone system and tailored communications solutions keep employees connected and more productive from wherever they need to work.

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6 Years Running!

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