

Employer Case Study

Downtown Bellevue



Telework increases productivity at The Rainier Group

The Rainier Group, Inc. helps individuals and private companies facing complex financial decisions. With unique processes and proprietary modeling, Rainier helps businesses navigate ownership change and management transitions, and provides individuals with investment management and planning services through Rainier Group Investment Advisory. Due to growth in the company, The Rainier Group began investigating telework in 2009 by participating in the Telework Bellevue program.



"Over half of our people use what we've built for opportunistic telework; managing travel, illness and personal schedule conflicts. There's really little difference between working at home or at the office."

- Glen White, Principal

Getting Started

With free assistance from the Telework Bellevue program, The Rainier Group received information, consulting and online tools to implement a telework program at their Downtown Bellevue location. The primary goal for a telework program was to provide office space flexibility and reduce the need for additional space in the future. Providing flexibility and work/life balance for employees were also motivating factors for implementing the telework program.

The Rainier Group worked with the Telework Bellevue consultant, the Telecommuting Advantage Group, to implement a company telework policy and an employee telework agreement. They also utilized resources such as the Work Sustainability Assessment, an online, interactive program that allows an employee to look at their job tasks and collaboration needs in terms of suitability for a telework agreement. Managers were provided training about the new telework program in order to address questions and concerns, as well as provide guidance on new types of situations that they may encounter. The program began in 2009 and is open to all employees. These services will be reviewed as structure is added to the program.

Program Components

- Company Telework Policy
- Employee Telework Agreement
- Telework is one component of The Rainier Group's business continuity program

Best Practices

Be Tech Savvy

Rainier tested the hardware and software teleworkers would be using before roll out, particularly in regard to speed and data security, to ensure everything would work correctly from the beginning. They learned that hardware-based firewalls and dedicated access systems were the most robust and reliable options.

Increase in-office productivity

Servers supporting telework also bolstered resources available to workers in the office. Employees can open a "telework session" while in the office, and assign it tasks which would otherwise bog down their office computer.

Learn from the experience

Tech savvy employees devised various ways to bridge gaps between the network performance they got while teleworking with the performance they experienced in-office.

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Telework at The Rainier Group

Challenges

Speed and security were the biggest hurdles for this successful telework program. After The Rainier Group determined it needed more internet bandwidth to handle increased demand, an upgrade was completed during the summer of 2009. Security, critical to a firm in the service sector, is provided by extending “in office” protocols to teleworker’s network access requests regardless of location or device, and by delivering network access through secure, encrypted connections. If any employee lives in an area without high-speed internet, or doesn’t have a computer that can access all of the security systems, that employee isn’t allowed to telework until those issues are addressed.

Program Evaluation

- The Rainier Group views its telework program as a complete success. The program is ongoing and open to all employees, two of whom telework full time, four of whom telework weekly, and five of whom use it on a per-project basis.
- Telework hours are flexible and employees can either choose to work on a fixed schedule, or when the job tasks are more suitable for the arrangement. Employees may also telework when they are ill or injured, and a large number of employees use it to manage travel, illness and personal schedule conflicts.
- Telework enhancements such as netconferencing technologies are being tested to improve collaboration on teams whose members work remotely.
- As The Rainier Group grows, the program will be used to provide office space flexibility, reduce the need to lease additional office space, and support more full-time teleworkers.

