



Commuter ChoiceSM Leadership Initiative



Commuter ChoiceSM Leadership Initiative Phone Forum Total Rewards Management and Telecommuting Trends February 21, 2002

Available exclusively to Commuter ChoiceSM Employers, phone forums provide cutting-edge information on a range of topics related to commuter benefits. Moderated by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), these forums feature experts on key topic areas.

One of employers' top concerns today is attracting and retaining top talent, and telecommuting is becoming a key means in accomplishing this task. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) held the Commuter ChoiceSM Leadership Initiative's first "phone forum" on February 21, 2002, featuring guest speaker Lenny Sanicola, Total Rewards Project Manager for WorldatWork. Sanicola described the value of telecommuting as a "business solution" to the challenging economic environment that many employers are currently experiencing. "Human resources leaders no longer consider telecommuting a soft benefit," says Sanicola. During the forum, callers also exchanged ideas on additional commuter incentives and employer tracking methods.

Featured speaker:

Lenny Sanicola, CCP, CBP, CEBS, SPHR, GRP is a Total Rewards Project Manager at WorldatWork. WorldatWork is a global, not-for-profit professional association of more than 26,000 compensations, benefits and human resources professionals. It is dedicated to knowledge and leadership in compensation, benefits and total rewards disciplines associated with attracting, retaining and motivating employees.

Telecommuting Benefits

Attracting and Retaining Employees

Studies have shown that telecommuting positively influences recruiting and retention, which can yield significant business benefits. In many cases, telecommuting is able to save employers money by avoiding costs associated with recruiting, replacing, and training workers to fill vacancies.

A good example of this is in the Washington State Attorney General's Office. They offer telecommuting on a case-by-case basis and it has been successful especially when offered to attorneys with young children. The attorneys reported that telecommuting helps balance their work and family lives.

EPA's Ann Arbor office has a "Flexi Place Policy," allowing employees to work out of the office, which has yielded positive results.

Weathering The Economic Storm

A survey performed by WorldatWork revealed that a majority of workplaces are continuing to offer, as well as implement, work-life benefits, such as telecommuting, despite the economic downturn and the tragedy of September 11th. Work-life benefits are considered more important than ever before, and telecommuting has become an increasingly popular benefit. This survey, in addition to other WorldatWork resources, is available at <www.worldatwork.org>.

Commuter Incentives

Cycling and Walking Benefits

When creating new incentives for employees to choose commuting options other than driving alone, the idea of compensating employees who bike or walk to work surfaces. Northwest Farm Credit Services, based in Washington, pays employees \$1 every time they commute by some other means than driving alone. If employees participate at least 50 percent of the time that they commute to and from work in a month, they receive a stipend up to \$25.

Ingram Micro of California also provides their employees with daily incentives when biking or walking to work. Employees receive their compensation in their paycheck.

Tracking Employee Commute Habits

Accurately and efficiently tracking how and when employees commute to and from work can be rather difficult, not to mention, costly. However, some Commuter ChoiceSM Employers have found ways to work around this arduous task.

For instance, Ingram Micro has taken a technological approach in tracking its employees' commute habits. At present, the company is creating an "in-house" online tracking database system using PeopleSoft software. Ingram Micro's new tracking system would eliminate the need for outside vendor services to help record and maintain employee-commuting patterns. As a result, significant cost savings are generated and database information is readily accessible to the employer.

Additionally, Northwest Farm Credit Services says using expense reports has been a tracking method that has worked quite well for the company.

Online resources

- www.worldatwork.org
Discover up-to-date information about rewards management.
- www.commuterchoice.gov
Hosts a number of helpful guides about the Commuter ChoiceSM Leadership Initiative program.

Next phone forum

The next phone forum will be announced shortly via email.

Contact information for presenter

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