

Use Teleworking to Rid Your Project of Slackers

Question:

I am a project manager at a very prestigious company, and I have a problem. My supervisors have recently assigned me a very important project - one that I was excited to manage. But much to my chagrin, they gave me a team full of slackers. They have come to me and complained about the commute to work and about automobile pollution. They mentioned something they call 'teleworking' or 'telecommuting'. Frankly I would be happy to not have to see them every day. There is just one problem - I don't exactly know what teleworking is. Can you please give me some information on this topic?

Cecil

Answer:

Cecil

First let me congratulate you on your project! It is easy to see that you have high standards and that you are not afraid to say when team members are not meeting your expectations. It would not surprise me if you are soon promoted into the management ranks.

Let's talk about teleworking. It might be a way to get these guys out of your hair.

Fortunately I have experience in this area. I think I was on one of the first teams in The Republic of Fuuumistan that utilized this cutting edge technique. We initially referred to this as "Far-Away-From-The-Office-Working", but I guess since the staff members talked on the telephone a lot, we decided to call it teleworking.

Basically, this is a way to allow employees to do their work from their homes. This is especially helpful if the employee is annoying or keeps asking you questions. Normally you can get an employee to work at home one or two days a week. Personally, I have managed projects where I have allowed team members to work at home for the entire week! What a relaxing project that was. At times I forgot I was even on the project.

You should make sure your team members fit the right profile to work at home. Make sure that none of the teleworkers have families, because if they do then they will certainly be wasting time at home talking and playing with children or spouses. Also, you need to be sure that the employees will not mind having cameras installed in every room of their house so that you can constantly monitor their progress. If they don't agree to surveillance, it is my recommendation that not only are they not allowed to telework, but they should also be fired on the spot. They obviously have something to hide.

There are things that you can do during the teleworking to ensure that the process goes as smoothly as possible - for you. Many workers are afraid that their work at home might go unnoticed around the office and might lead to them being passed up for a promotion. You need to make sure that you still provide as much negative feedback to the employee as you normally would if they were still in the office. Also, you should make sure that the employees face the same harsh penalties for late "telework" as they would for late "officework".

This will set the stage for these teleworkers to be fired. As you said, they are all slackers, right? It is much easier to fire bad employees if you don't have much of a personal relationship with them.

Yes, I think teleworking might be just the right technique for you. Hard working employees would not want to work from home. They would want to show their commitment by wasting time in traffic to come into the office.

Try teleworking for a few months. If you follow my advice, you should be rid of these slackers once and for all.