

October 1, 2023
M23-014

TO: SPEEA Council
FROM: SPEEA Council's Legislative & Public Affairs Committee

SUBJECT: **PRESUBMITTED NEW BUSINESS:** Supporting Remote Work

Background

Some jobs require SPEEA represented employees to be at work to support manufacturing. Other jobs require working with employees at other plants and with suppliers that are scattered across the globe.

Pros:

1. **Better work-life balance**
 - a. A frequent complaint in today's world is the difficulty of striking a good work-life balance. Working eight or more hours a day leaves little time for family -- especially when commutes and sleep are factored in.
 - b. Without the need for long commutes, employees find more time for work and for family.
 - c. On days when employees aren't required to attend video meetings, they can dress any way they choose in more comfortable clothes. This greater sense of comfort and better work-life balance lead to less stress.
2. **Higher productivity**
 - a. Remote workers reported stable or increased productivity while working remotely compared to in an office, according to a Great Place to Work report. During 2020, the steepest productivity improvements came in April and May, during the height of the pandemic. Much of this was due to the elimination of daily commutes and lengthy in-person meetings.
 - b. The absence of time wasted in commuting, distractions in the office and improved focus.
 - c. A study in a travel agency showed that a group randomly selected to Work From Home showed a productivity increase of 13% which was attributed to a quieter work environment and more minutes worked per shift.
3. **Timeliness**
 - a. When working from home, many of the factors that cause tardiness are reduced or removed. Eliminated factors include oversleeping, being stuck in traffic and waiting in a long line at the drive-through to get morning coffee. Being able to roll out of bed and start working is a huge time saver.
4. **Reduced absenteeism and decreased turnover**
 - a. Allowing remote work can help businesses retain employees and prevent absenteeism. When remote workers don't feel micromanaged and believe their employer trusts them, they are more likely to develop positive feelings toward organization leadership. In turn, workers will be less tempted to look elsewhere for employment, promoting a sense of loyalty and dedication.
 - b. Even if workers aren't looking for new jobs, they might be less inclined to call out of work at random.
5. **Cost savings**
 - a. Remote teams enable businesses to rent smaller office spaces -- or even move to a remote, cloud-based operation completely. This saves organizations money on rent, utilities and other office supplies.
 - b. Employees avoid the cost of commuting.
6. **Flexibility**

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- a. Remote work means employees can work from anywhere -- not just their home. Coffee shops, and other states are now options. If asynchronous work is appropriate, organizations can even extend operations beyond a typical 9 to 5 workday. Flexible working hours can be a godsend to employees who are night owls, or to those who have small children. This freedom is invaluable for companies looking to stretch their working hours with a limited staff. It is also an attractive benefit that enables employers to draw from a deeper candidate pool in the hiring process.
- 7. Incentive to improve workplace technology**
 - a. Organizations scrambled to put the right tools in place to enable remote work when the pandemic began. Many companies were using outdated tools, forcing them to upgrade their systems. At the time, some businesses were already experimenting with telework and were better able to meet this challenge.
 - b. Companies needed businesses messengers, video conferencing platforms, timekeeping software, task management systems and cloud services to replace legacy systems and physical office processes. Then they needed VPNs and other cybersecurity tools to secure these systems. In the end, this technology investment helped organizations join the modern business world and put them on more equal footing.
 - 8. Organizational Design**
 - a. Remote work encourages horizontal interactions with increased equality. In a teleconference, there is no privilege on seating order or physical presence.
 - 9. Reduced expenses**
 - a. Reduced spending on business clothes
 - b. Reduced spending on lunch and snacks
 - c. Reduced spending on commuting
 - d. Reduced spending on daycare or afterschool programs
 - 10. Improved opportunities for diversity and inclusion**
 - a. Women during childbearing years
 - b. People with physical and mental disabilities or chronic health conditions
 - 11. Careers for Women**
 - a. Women frequently carry the burden of child raising. Many women exit the workplace for a number of years to bare and raise children. When they reenter the workforce, they have significantly less experience and out of date skills than men of the same age. With remote work, women can continue to work while raising children, maintain their skill proficiency and have the same years of work experience.
 - b. Cost of childcare while at work is expensive and significantly reduces the effective income during the childrearing years.

Cons:

- 1. Distractions at home**
 - a. There are many distractions at home that can detract from an employee's focus on their work. Some of these factors include screaming children, noise from passing traffic, ringing doorbells, dogs barking and household chores. If employees continue to work from home, it's important that they have a dedicated workspace, access to childcare and a schedule.
- 2. Isolation**
 - a. Remote work -- especially for those who live alone -- can lead to feelings of loneliness and isolation. Even if an employee has their own office in a physical office building, they see others in the hallway, elevator and parking lot throughout the day. They also interact with people at gas stations, coffee shops and restaurants during their commute to work and their lunch. Workers may only exchange pleasantries, but it is in-person social interaction. Employees who work from home miss out on these conversations.
- 3. Loss of work-life balance**

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- a. Though a better work-life balance is sometimes an advantage, many teleworkers find the opposite to be true. Some employees find that work bleeds over into their home life more and more. It can start as something simple, such as responding to an email after clocking out for the day. But if workers aren't careful, that can turn into multiple emails or putting in extra work after hours. For some, this turns an eight-hour day into a 10-hour day or more. The line between work life and home life becomes blurred when the workplace is inside the home, which can lead to burnout and lower morale.

4. Increased need for meetings

- a. Once a company's employees are spread far and wide, management will want to keep tabs on them to some extent. In a remote work world, this means managers can no longer walk across the office to check in on their employees. Instead, they need to schedule virtual meetings to discuss routine project management tasks. While digital meetings can be less disruptive than in-person meetings, they are rarely the highlight of the workday. And having too many meetings often causes frustration among employees.

5. Career Stagnation

- a. Remote work makes some employees worry about career progression, and nearly 60% of managers feel remote work is robbing them of opportunities for informal leadership development, according to the Owl Labs survey.

Conclusion:

- a. According to one survey from Owl Labs, around 70% of full-time employees in the U.S are working from home during the Covid-19 pandemic.
- b. Even after the pandemic is over, half of them will seek jobs that offer remote work, with 23% of them being willing to take a pay cut over 10% if they can work remotely some of the time.
- c. In a podcast, business magnate and philanthropist Bill Gates recently said that in the pre-pandemic business world, people worried that a client would be offended by a virtual meeting. But, in a post-pandemic world, people will have second thoughts about the necessity of physical meetings. As virtual meetings become a normal business event, the technology will also improve.

Motion

It is moved that: **THE SPEEA COUNCIL SUPPORTS REMOTE WORK**



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