WORK FROM HOME FOR CONTACT CENTER PROFESSIONALS

EVOLVE IP CHECKLIST

According to Gartner, 40% of workers spend their time working remotely and by 2021, organizations will encourage 40% more workers to work remotely within the same amount of space. Like most businesses, if your contact center has remote agents or plans to implement a Work From Home (WFH) program, here are the top things that you need to think about:

IMPLEMENT A SOLID TECHNOLOGY SOLUTION

The key items to address from a technology perspective are the ability for agents to make and receive phone calls, get access to your business applications and obtain technical support. Some of the other specific things you need to consider when determining the right technology solution include:

- Will the agents be recorded?
- How will they access their business applications?
- How will you remotely support the at-home equipment? Will your existing Support hours suffice?
- Where are the support boundaries drawn for personal equipment? Is this solely the employee's responsibility?

DETERMINE LEGAL AND FINANCIAL POLICIES

Addressing these items up-front and clearly communicating them will avoid gotchas and angst down the road. You need to be proactive in clearly documenting and verbally communicating these policies to the employees, avoid such things as employees attempting to submit expense reports for printers or expensive office equipment/furniture.

You want your legal team to weigh in on the compensation considerations and on how you will handle the approval of the work area; many legal teams do not want the liability of one employee visiting another employee's home for business purposes. Legal and financial considerations to address include:

- Will you pay your employees if their Internet connection is down and they are unable to access your applications?
- If their schedule has them "on-call" and you don't need them, are you going to pay employees for that time?
- What is expected of the employee to protect Confidential Information?
- Is the use of personal equipment allowed? Will the employee be compensated for equipment usage?
- How will you handle personal equipment failure or support?
- What is expected of the employee to protect employer assets?
- What items are reimbursable? Supplies, Internet, and phone?
- What items are not reimbursable? Heating/AC, furniture, electricity, commuting expenses?
- Will the agent's homeowners/renters policy cover employer equipment?
- Will initial and/or on-going photos and site visits be required to ensure employee's physical environment meets your expectations? What are the legal implications of these?
- How will the employer be compensated for equipment that is broken or not returned?

○ Will PTO be mandatory for unproductive time (equipment failure, power, Internet, etc.)? Or, will the employee be required to work out of the corporate office in such situations?

○ How will the employer educate and enforce adherence to compliance requirements, i.e. HIPAA, PCI etc.

○ How will calls be delivered remotely? Are there additional costs or constraints?

○ Will your agents need a headset? If so, what unit will they use?

○ How do you ensure call quality isn't compromised? Are wireless or cellular phones acceptable?

○ How will supervisors monitor their agents?

○ Will the agent's calls and activities be included in your existing reports?

○ Will the agents' calls/screens be recorded?

BUILD A WORK FROM HOME PROGRAM GUIDE

An over-arching program guide is essential to a successful Work from Home program. Sections that should be included in the guide:

○ Program overview.

○ Policies & expectations.

○ Reimbursement criteria and process.

○ Troubleshooting - should include as much descriptive step-by-step setup and troubleshooting information as possible - with lots of diagrams / pictures, to make set up and troubleshooting as easy as possible for the employees.

○ Support contacts – should outline the support process that the at-home workers are expected to follow, along with the appropriate support contact information.

○ Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)**

○ A Work from Home Agreement document that the employee signs that is kept on file by the HR department. After you've fully documented all the policies, procedures, expectations, and reimbursement criteria, having the employee sign off that they understand and acknowledge all those items will eliminate confusion and issues later on.

** Sample FAQs could include:

1. Who is a candidate?
2. Can my work schedule be changed if I work from home? If I return to the office?
3. Will this impact my compensation and benefits?
4. Will the company's insurance cover the equipment?
5. May I use my own equipment?
6. Are there tax implications if I work from home?

SELECT AGENTS TO WORK FROM HOME

Agent Availability:

○ What are Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)? Is the agent meeting those KPIs now?

○ Does the agent have the "right" personality / motivation to work independently?

○ Is the agent willing to work flexible hours or shifts?

○ Will the agent accept "on-call" hours?

○ Who is responsible for the employee's dependent care?

○ Is there a high-speed home Internet connection?

On-going Considerations:

○ What are the minimum acceptable KPIs to maintain at-home status?

○ How will you handle "other" non-KPI challenges?

○ How often are the agents required to work from the corporate office?

○ Will home visits or photos be required?

○ What kind of notice will be given if the agent is removed from the program?

○ What shift will the agent work if they return to the office?

PILOT, EVALUATE, ADJUST, AND DEPLOY

○ Launch program and set regularly scheduled evaluations of all aspects of the program.

○ Monitor KPIs and calls to detect early warning signs.

○ Actively solicit feedback from agents, support teams, customers, and supervisors.

○ When rolling out any changes to the program, be sure to update the Program Guide and ensure acceptance of the changes from all employees.

ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Evaluate your work-from-home program at regular intervals, and always look for ways to enhance it. Working from home is a privilege that can be revoked at any time, and at-home workers should be expected to be on-call as needed. Here are some additional recommendations you should consider:

○ Clearly define your policies, document them, and make sure staff is aware.

○ Create an at-home "community" to maintain interpersonal connections.

○ Leaders of at-home workers need to cultivate engagement to prevent employees from feeling "disconnected" from their office.

○ Leverage Unified Communication & Collaboration tools to bridge the distance.

○ Monitor KPIs and customer interactions to detect early warning signs.

○ Actively solicit feedback from agents, support teams customers, and supervisors.

○ Determine what communication tools (IM/chat, video conferencing, etc.) you will use to bridge the distance between the agent and their Supervisor during fail-over mode from the designated location/s.

○ Communicate! Communicate! Communicate!

ABOUT EVOLVE IP

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