

## Teleworkers more productive

MARTIN MOORE Last updated 14:52 30/10/2013

People who work part-time from home are more productive and more satisfied in their jobs, a new Australasian study shows.

The poll of 1800 employees and 100 managers at 50 businesses across New Zealand and Australa found that “hybrid” teleworkers – those who work remotely one to three days a week – were 12 per cent more productive than people who worked fulltime in the office.

The study was commissioned by IT company Cisco and conducted by AUT University’s NZ Work Research Institute with the University of Melbourne’s Institute for a Broadband-Enabled Society.

It found that 15 per cent of New Zealand employees and 17 per cent of Australian workers teleworked in some capacity.

Over 70 per cent of the teleworkers surveyed said that style of working had a favourable impact on their attitude towards their job.

The study covered multiple industries and companies ranging in size from small and medium-sized enterprises to those with more than 200 employees.

Cisco New Zealand country manager Geoff Lawrie said work styles had changed over the past several years, and the traditional nine-to-five working day “is no longer the only way to work effectively”.

“Both our customer feedback and our own internal experience demonstrates that flexible working drives productivity,” he said.

Teleworkers surveyed said flexible work arrangements allowed them to perform better, while managers found teleworkers delivered better results and suffered less from absenteeism.

The productivity gains were greatest among employees who teleworked up to three days a week, but the gains declined if workers spent more time than that out of the office.

The study found that organisations needed to provide more support to get the most out of their teleworking staff.

The key elements for effective teleworking were trust, good management, and the right technological support, it found.

The majority of managers surveyed said they would like more training to help manage remote employees, but less than half had received training in this or in the communication technologies involved.

“The benefits of telework and flexible work practices have been recognised informally for a long time, but for the first time, we now have a substantial piece of trans-Tasman research to quantify the benefits and opportunities telework presents,” director of the NZ Work Research Institute Tim Bentley said.

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