



Employer Telework Case Study

Employer

Clean Currents
155 Gibbs Street
Suite 425
Rockville, MD 20850

Contact

Brian Eglsaer, Operations
Manager
beglsaer@cleancurrents.com

Tanya Gulnik, Operations
Associate
tgulnik@cleancurrents.com

“Allowing employees the option to telework helps cut our company’s carbon footprint.”

Background

Clean Currents is a green energy company that was founded in 2005. Clean Currents provides affordable green energy options to

residential customers including windpower options through the grid as well as solar panel installations for on-site energy generation. Clean Currents also provides energy efficiency and environmental consultation services. As a green energy company, Clean Currents works to ensure that its operations are environmentally responsible. The option for employees to telework is one of these efforts.

In addition to providing environmental benefits, the telework program is also used to ease Clean Currents’ demands for office space. Other benefits include a positive impact on employee work/life balance and Clean Currents’ recruiting efforts. Telework is also promoted during bad air quality days as a way to further reduce the number of automobiles on the road and air pollution.

In addition to telework, Clean Currents also promotes biking to work, mass transit and carpooling. One way in which mass transit is promoted is by providing a higher subsidy for bikers and employees who take the Metro than for parking at the worksite. Approximately 40 percent of Clean Currents’ employees use the Metro to get to work.

The Telework Experience

Clean Current's telework program essentially began when the company was launched in 2005. Several founders of the company had experience with telework and the Internet connectivity systems provided by MyRAMLink™. Having experienced the benefits of telework, implementing a program at Clean Currents was a natural decision.

Employees are trained on Clean Currents' remote desktop system, MyRAMLink™, when they join the system. This software allows them to access a shared drive and their documents from any computer, greatly facilitating the telework option. Software programs and data are stored on a shared-drive that employees can access remotely. As program software is available on the shared-drive, employees can use software that is not available on their computers, making IT setup and maintenance much more seamless. Remote employees also have access to printers in the office. This allows employees to print documents for co-workers in the office or print documents that will be available when they return to the office. Clean Currents also uses eFax, reducing the need for employees to have fax machines available and making it simpler to send, receive and share faxed documents.

Clean Currents' VOIP system allows calls from an employee's extension to roll to personal cell phones, making it easy to be available anywhere. Conference rooms at Clean Currents' facilities include conference call hardware and software that allow employees to call in for meetings and participate remotely.

New employees are typically required to spend six months at the worksite before they can join the telework program. This allows employees to become familiar with the IT systems, establish relationships with co-workers and become familiar with their job-duties. Teleworkers are required to maintain their performance levels while teleworking in order to continue participating in the program.

Employees may telework for full or partial days. Employees wishing to miss peak commute hours, have meetings off-site or have an event to attend often combine partial or full telework days with those efforts to reduce their time spent driving during the day, further reducing air-pollution.

Several part-time employees telework a majority of the time allowing them more flexibility in being available and productive when they are needed and eliminating the requirement to provide permanent desk space. Most full-time employee's telework one or two days per week. Employees who are often on the road or telework frequently use a rotating desk system that allows them to have a place to work in the office without needing a permanent office location. The move from a dedicated workspace to the rotating desk system is determined by an employee's needs and a mutual agreement with their manager.

Clean Currents provides a \$250 credit for employees who wish to purchase a new computer as part of the telework program. The computer must be Energy Star or EPEAT certified and Employees are required to dispose of old computers and any other hardware through an electronics recycling program. Clean Currents has an

“Ecycling” program in place at the worksite, augmenting these efforts.

Currently, Clean Currents has 21 full-time employees that telework at least one day per week and six part-time employees that telework more often, including full-time.

Challenges and Investment

Clean Currents provides and funds monthly usage fees for a RAMink license and VoIP setup for each teleworker. Clean Currents also pays up to \$50 for teleworkers’ cellphone coverage during their first year of employment. After the first year Clean Currents pays for teleworkers’ entire cellphone costs.

When technical problems arise, designated employees in the office troubleshoot the issues. MyRAMLink™ also provides rapid-response customer support.

Program Outlook

Currently, conference calling is the most frequent method for remote collaboration. An investigation to add video-conferencing is underway. Video-conferencing will allow a higher level of remote collaboration and may increase the amount of work that can be done remotely.

Most Helpful Resources

MyRAMLink™ customized their systems for Clean Currents and provides a high level of customer support. As a result, all of Clean Currents remote access, training and

support needs are met and supported with less effort.

Success Tips

A telework program must be part of an employee’s daily routine. Providing remote access that provides direct access to a teleworker’s computer reduces the need for redundant software and learning new access protocols.

Teleworkers and their managers benefit from performance goals and expectations for the type of work that can be done remotely. This mutual arrangement provides teleworkers with guidance and allows managers to gauge employees’ telework efforts and performance.

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