

12 Ways to Supercharge your Practice in 2012: #6 Use Remote Employees or Contractors

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If you can't find the right part-time or full-time employees, maybe you're not looking in the right places. One of the great things about business today is that a portion of your workforce can be anywhere. Your best employees may not live in your town, your state or your time zone.

Many employers can't handle offsite employees, but study after study shows that both employers and employees win when employees work from home. **Slaughter Development** notes:

*"The real reason why telecommuting makes people more productive and more satisfied is this: **outside of the office, employees are automatically in control their environment and workflow.** There is no better way to build satisfaction than to give people authority and responsibility, and no better way to destroy productivity than to require people to work in environments and structures which do not leverage their expertise."*

What are other positives about remote employees?

1. Employees spend less money and have less non-productive time (e.g. commuting), get more sleep and have a better life-work balance working from home, so they feel they win as employees.
2. Not having to provide office space for employees mean freeing up space to become revenue-producing. "Given that it costs more than \$15,000 per year to provide an employee with 200 square feet of cubicle, the savings would be significant – so great, in fact, that companies would still come out thousands of dollars ahead after springing for workers' broadband and VoIP expenses."
(Wired Magazine)
3. Having employees work from home means staff can be scheduled to cover early or late shifts without the safety concerns of working in an empty building.
4. Remote employees can be part-time or prn and have floating hours to help cover busy times of the year, medical leaves and unexpected shortages.
5. Not being exposed to office germs, office politics and negative behavior reduces stress and absenteeism and increases loyalty and retention.
6. Telecommuting is green.

What are the negatives about remote employees?

1. Some managers have no experience managing a remote workforce and may find it uncomfortable managing staff they cannot see.
2. If the employee hasn't worked from home before, s/he may experience feelings of being isolated and out of the loop.
3. Most employers will choose to supply remote workers with

computers, and therefore must to take responsibility for maintaining and repairing offsite computers.

4. Communication with remote employees must be very strong and very consistent. Managers must pick up the phone, have Skype talks and video conferences.
5. Remote employees will need performance standards just as onsite employees do, but their standards may be more production-oriented than time-oriented.

What are the medical practice positions that lend themselves to remote employees?

- transcription
- coding and billing
- nurse triage
- scheduling
- any task that does require face-to-face time with patients

Some employers would rather have remote contractors instead of employees – what is the difference?

An **employee** is paid on an hourly or salary basis, and is sometimes called a W-2 employee since they receive a W-2 record of their earnings, taxes deducted, taxes contributed and taxable benefits at the end of the calendar year. A **contractor** (self-employed) receives a 1099, which reflects earnings without any taxes deducted, contributed, or benefits rewarded.

The IRS defines an employee under common-law rules as anyone who performs services for you ***if you can control what will be done and how it will be done***. This is so even when you give the employee freedom of action. What matters is that you have

the right to control the details of how the services are performed.

People such as doctors, dentists, veterinarians, lawyers, accountants, contractors, subcontractors, public stenographers, or auctioneers who are in an independent trade, business, or profession in which they offer their services to the general public are generally independent contractors. However, whether these people are independent contractors or employees depends on the facts in each case. The general rule is that an individual is an independent contractor if the payer has the right to control or direct only the result of the work and not what will be done and how it will be done. The earnings of a person who is working as an independent contractor are subject to Self-Employment Tax.

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