

Is the Job Suitable for e-working?

A thorough assessment of the job should identify elements that clearly are suitable or not suitable for e-working, and work practices that could be adapted to facilitate e-working

Jobs suitable for e-working are most usually those involving a high degree of information processing, clearly defined areas of individual work, work with clear objectives, measurable outputs and minimal requirements for supervision. Jobs which require high levels of concentration and which involve research are also considered suitable.

On the other hand, jobs with high levels of face to face contact and unscheduled meetings with colleagues and customers are obviously not as suited to e-working.

Not all jobs are neatly defined, however. Many jobs involve a variety of tasks, parts of which may be suitable for e-working which would allow a worker to work one or two days at home. In practice, e-workers are found across a broad range of industries and occupations and many types of e-working arrangements exist in every industry.

Examination of current work patterns

To establish whether the job or parts of the job are suitable for e-working it is necessary to examine how the job operates at present, looking especially at the areas that require interaction with others, that utilise specialised equipment or that require records which are held only on paper or are highly secure.

The assessment of the job should identify elements that clearly are suitable or not suitable for e-working. The assessment may identify areas where work practices could be adapted to facilitate e-working. Some organisations also find that this type of assessment may raise the question as to whether the existing practice is in fact the best way of doing the job.

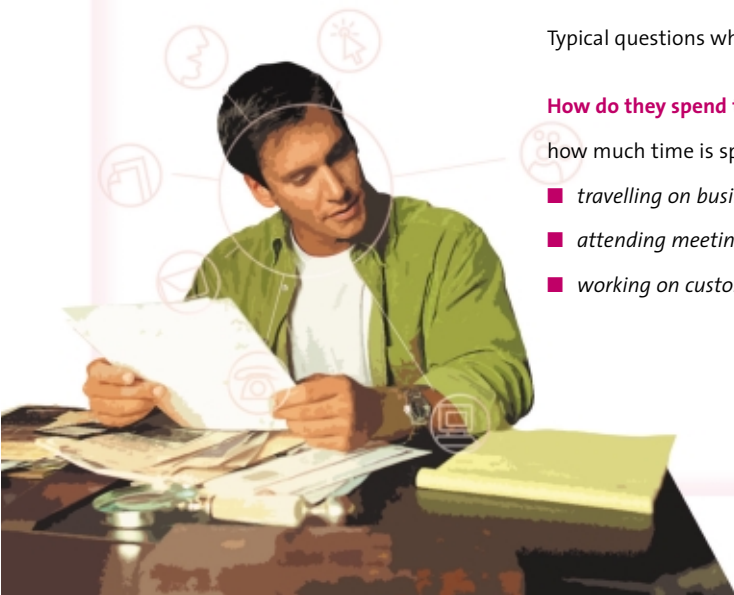
Finally, the way in which the objectives for the job are set and how the performance of the worker is managed and assessed may also need to be adapted to suit e-working.

Typical questions which a potential e-worker must ask themselves are:

How do they spend their time?

how much time is spent out of the office:

- *travelling on business?*
- *attending meetings?*
- *working on customer sites?*



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How much time is spent in the office:

- *dealing with email/ working online?*
- *on the phone?*
- *dealing with secure data, electronic and paper based?*
- *dealing with paper based reports?*

Interactions

- *Is the work closely linked to that of others?*
- *How often do they need to work face to face with the manager, team, other colleagues, third parties such as customers or suppliers?*

What use is made of office resources, and how often

- *Other people outside the team, such as administration staff*
- *Files/records*
- *Specialised equipment*

Managing work: the e-worker, the e-team and the manager

- *How is work organised, assigned and monitored?*
- *How is performance managed and assessed?*
- *Can a fair balance be found so that extra workload does not fall on the e-worker or those in the office?*
- *Do the e-worker, team colleagues and manager have the appropriate skills to operate at a distance?*

This review will also assist in identifying the technology and equipment required for the home office.

For further information go to www.familyfriendly.ie/ease-to-eworking



“There are huge amounts of work could be performed anywhere. And all it takes is somebody to sit down and manage it properly. I mean it’s very easy to say people are only working when I can see them working, when I can put my hands on their shoulders and say, “oh yes, you’re working”.

There’s a huge amount of things happen in society and we don’t know how they operate or what makes them operate. We’re just confident they’re being done. And it’s the same level of trust that we have to have in adults.

It’s adults that we are talking about here, and we trust them to do the job ”

Billy Hannigan
Assistant General Secretary,
PSEU