

# *New Working Practices*

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## ***Excerpt - Benefits, Barriers, and Implications***

Becker, F. (1994) *Telework Centers-Satellite Offices: New Working Practices*. New York: Cornell University International Workplace Studies Program (IWSP)

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## Benefits of Flexible Work Locations

Some of the benefits organizations associate with flexible work locations include:

- More flexibility and control provided to the employees to choose when, how and where they will work.
- Traffic/commuting considerations: freedom from the hassles associated with commuting, reduced commuting times, fewer commutes.
- Ability of employees to work in area that best suits the task at hand.
- Ability of employees to better balance work and home life.
- Ability of employees to be more productive.
- Reduced space costs in some instances.
- Improved communications under some alternatives.
- Increased employee satisfaction.
- Increased labor pool-can recruit people that may not be able to work in a traditional environment, such as single-parent families, handicapped, etc.

## "Barriers" to Flexible Work Locations

Potential barriers-which in some cases may be based on untested or false assumptions-that organizations may encounter when trying to implement flexible work locations include:

- Decreased communication with employees who work in locations other than the central office.
- Decreased ability to work as a team.
- Decreased productivity in the central office as a result of people being out of the office.
- Dissatisfaction with having to give up office space.

- Insurance questions for non-office work locations.

## Facility/Facility Management Implications for Flexible Work Locations

Some of the Facility/Facility Management implications for implementing flexible location alternatives include:

- The workplace now goes beyond the boundaries of the office; facility managers may become responsible for many "sites." This new responsibility will require new information systems solutions to track, communicate with, and monitor sites. It also will require facility managers to provide servicing of equipment and furniture in these new sites. Finally, it can result in changes in the way that facility managers purchase; instead of purchasing bulk orders of similar equipment, furniture, etc., it may require facility managers to purchase individual components to meet individual needs.
- Facility managers will have to address specific security issues and determine what information people working outside of the central office will have access to.
- Facility managers will have to acquire equipment, technology, and furniture that will best facilitate employees' working patterns.

The objectives of the New Working Practices study were to identify both the range and extent of innovative workplace practices currently in place among member organizations of the Cornell University Workscape 21 research consortium. We also wanted to learn whether the kinds of innovations adopted, and the factors driving them, were associated with particular industries, different size organizations, or different national contexts.

Finally, we wanted to consider the implications of these alternative work practices on the workplace itself and on how it is planned, designed, and managed.

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