



WAHVE (Work At Home Vintage Experts)

## **'Pretirement' Brings Benefits to Both Sides of the Hiring Table**

By Sharon Emek, Ph.D.

In old-school retirement, you got the gold watch and were shown the door. Unfortunately, not only did you carry your office belongings out in a cardboard box, you also carried out a career's worth of knowledge and know-how. That's a tough loss for any industry, but particularly for the insurance industry, which has been struggling to attract and keep talent for years.

Yet boomers have refused to accept that there is only one way to retire, and now they're considering "pretirement," which allows them to leave the regular workforce to transition to a work-at-home position. It's the very premise on which Work At Home Vintage Experts (WAHVE) has thrived. Of course, the insurance industry competes for many of the same workers as other business segments, so offering creative work solutions is no longer a luxury, but more of an expectation. In fact, Justin Bariso, founder of Insight, a global consulting firm, says freelancers compose nearly 34% of today's workforce. By 2020, he anticipates that number to hit 50%. In addition, he reports that 89% of organizations will offer "mobile workstyles" by 2020.

Fortunately, remote work isn't a "compromise" solution; it's a work option that offers benefits to both insurance agencies and employees alike. Technology makes the process nearly seamless. Personal or commercial lines processing, policy checking, new business and renewal preparation and quoting to certificates of insurance, underwriting, rating, claims, customer service, and full account management/CSR work — all of these can be performed remotely by experts who know what they're doing. Older insurance workers who aren't quite ready to hang it up can hang on longer, reaping benefits like flexibility, engagement and financial security. Agencies gain access to a rich talent pool, regardless of geography.

Even beyond the obvious benefits, there are some other benefits that come with continued work. Here's a few you may not have considered:

- **Mental Stimulation.** Publishing magnate Malcolm Forbes said, "Retirement kills more people than hard work ever did." Of course, retirement might not directly kill people, but it *could* possibly be implicated in the death of brain cells. With aging comes nearly universal fear of losing memory and mental sharpness. While some people have turned to "Brain Games," special activities or even daily apps to stimulate their minds, according to an *Everyday Health* [article](#), experts actually recommend "sticking to brain training that involves real-world activities."

- **Improved Productivity.** One study recently published in [The Quarterly Journal of Economics](#) examined the habits of 16,000 call center employees who were randomly assigned to work in either an office or at home. The result? Those working from home were 13% more productive. Following that, all employees were given the option to work from home if they desired. Productivity for home workers then improved even more to 22%.
- **Better Sleep.** According to a study included in [Sleep Health](#), people with scheduling flexibility slept better than those who had to report to an office at specific times. Why's this so important? Because inadequate sleep has been linked to increased risk of automobile crashes, chronic disease and early mortality, and it also impairs our decision-making skills and ability to read social and emotional cues.

Need more reasons to consider remote work for either yourself or your agency? How about the fact that employees who have an ideal life-work fit typically bring tremendous enthusiasm to their work, making them an asset to the agencies that hire them? "We're kind of addicted to the idea," says John O'Brien, president of R.J. O'Brien Insurance Agency in Glens Falls, New York. "WAHVE has completely changed our view of outsourcing because we've had such a positive experience ... Not only has our arrangement been a great one for our on-site staff, but it's also been very well received by clients."

If you're ready to learn more about our insurance-specific remote solution for either yourself or your agency, I hope you'll visit [wahve.com](http://wahve.com) for more information and perspective.



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