



The Remote Potential

by Sharon Emek, Ph.D.

Since 2012, the number of companies with the majority of their employees working remotely has increased to over 50%, says the US Department of Labor. According to a Gallup poll, 43% of the 15,000 employed Americans asked, spent at least some time working remotely in 2016.

That statistic prompted 15Five, an employee feedback and engagement software provider, to ask 500 managers, supervisors and executives about their own experiences and observations with remote workers. The news was similar: those surveyed said that productivity and performance improved for 21% of the 500 companies surveyed.

So what does this mean for the insurance industry? Can an agency in a small Midwestern town really see the same results from remote workers as a large insurer in the Boston area?

The answer, of course, is yes! Moreover, your small agency may also gain a competitive advantage. That's because remote workers can be assigned those tasks that your current in-house staff handles, freeing their schedules for more customer service, marketing, and sales-related efforts.

The Productivity Myth

Yet many companies – agencies and insurers included – still hold on to the notion that remote workers are less productive than the 9-to-5 employee. Yet the 15Five survey shows otherwise: 21% of respondents have seen an improvement in both productivity and performance coming from their remote workers. Just ask remote employees. According to a survey from employee engagement firm TINYpulse, 91% of remote workers say they "get more work done when working remotely."

And remote workers are actively engaged; 63% of employers are reporting being more engaged and communicative with remote employees than with in-house staff.

In fact, for the insurance industry, the benefits are impressive.

- A growing remote workforce: A recent Gallup survey shows that 47% of workers in insurance, finance and real estate work remotely at least some of the time, up from 39% in 2012.
- Right-fit workers: According to 15Five, 19% of employers surveyed say they chose remote workers because they were able to gain access to the best candidates regardless of geographic location.
- Better in-house productivity: By engaging remote workers for daily tasks, or to augment various departments, such as underwriting, certs, or policy issuance, you're able to free your staff's time to focus on business growth strategies, sales, marketing, or customer service improvements.

Finding a Great Remote Worker

Yet where can you find remote workers who have insurance industry-specific skills? That has proven to be one of the bigger reasons why the insurance industry has been slow to engage remote workers. Traditional staffing firms don't often have insurance talent at the ready, let alone workers with the exact skills you seek.

But there's another option to traditional staffing solutions. WAHVE engages veteran insurance pros – we call them *pretirees* – and matches their skills to your company's needs. Pretirees are looking to remain active in the industry, yet may no longer want or need a full-time career. Or they may want to shift gears and work in a niche area.

We've found our remote workers to be actively engaged in the work, and happy to continue serving the industry where they spent their careers. They want to use their knowledge and maintain relevance, even as they transition into retirement.

That's a benefit to employing remote workers that no other industry has right now, and it's one that can deliver quite a powerful return on your investment. Remote workers with the exact skills you need who can enhance your staff's productivity and improve your competitive advantage?

That's money in the bank.

To learn more about how a remote worker can help you and your staff get more done, give us a call at 646-807-4372 or visit us at WAHVE.com.



About the author

Sharon Emek, Ph.D., CIC, is president & CEO of Work At Home Vintage Experts, an innovative contract staffing talent solution. WAHVE matches retiring insurance professionals leaving the regular workforce to insurance firms to meet their full- or part-time staffing needs. Insurance firms benefit by improving productivity and lowering costs. [WAHVE's](http://WAHVE) unique qualifying process and technology platform match the right "pretirees" wherever they may live to the needs of insurance firms wherever they are located.

WAHVE bridges the gap between insurance firms' staffing needs and seasoned professionals' "work-life" balance preferences as they phase into retirement.

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