

The Federal Manager

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PRESIDENT'S PAGE



*FMA National President
Patricia Niehaus*

Mobilizing FMA in the Face of Adversity

Over the past year, the federal employee community faced tremendous challenges spurred by Members of Congress intent on blaming civil servants for the country's economic woes. The proliferation of media headlines and sound bites targeting federal workers served only to fan the flames of anti-fed sentiment rooted in misinformation and outright falsehoods. I expect 2011 to be another very challenging year for federal managers and employees, as the "fed bashing" is already underway. Many lawmakers appear dead-set on enacting widespread federal

workforce cuts and other toxic proposals in the name of deficit reduction. Rest assured, FMA is committed to counteracting the damage caused by these attacks, working with our partners in the federal employee community, our friends in Congress, and the media to show the American public that the nation's "Silent Patriots" are vital to keeping the country strong and running smoothly.

In December, I appeared on the DorobekINSIDER (FederalNewsRadio) to combat the fictitious caricature of civil servants many lawmakers and members of the public have formed in their minds. FMA's Government Affairs Director Jessie Klement is a regular contributor on the news organization's many radio programs, where she provides critical insight into the Association's efforts on Capitol Hill to promote an efficient and effective federal workforce. You can listen to our interviews on www.fedmanagers.org. We also respond to regular requests for comments on the anti-fed legislative items of the day as well as other current affairs from various media outlets.

This year, more than any other I can remember, a successful grassroots effort will be critical to counter the civil service attacks expected from Congress. *Each of you must play an active part if we are to be successful.* When Jessie and Government Affairs Representative Karl Gruss send out legislative information, please pay attention and contact your Members of Congress. Let them know they have constituents who do not support legislation placing an inequitable burden on federal employees to right our fiscal ship. If you are not receiving these updates, please make sure the National Office has a non-government email address for you.

Many people have thanked me for fighting for federal managers over the past few months. I am grateful for your support, but I need to point out that this is not just MY effort – it is a team effort with the majority of the work falling on our National Office staff. I have also received advice and support from our Executive Board, our Immediate Past President and many of our members. George Smith, Region 2 Director, has been especially helpful with the Association's recent work on the Department of Defense's personnel reform efforts. Thank you all!

We will continue to reach out to areas in the federal government where we have not previously established chapters/membership. We experienced success with our outreach in 2010, and we are working to continue that trend in 2011. If you know of an area where we could reach out to potential members, please contact Virginia Hall, FMA's Membership Coordinator.

As my predecessor, Darryl Perkinson, once said, "Our power on the national scene grows exponentially as we increase our membership." That is as true today as it was then. We need to maintain our focus on membership this year. *This is my challenge to you for 2011 – recruit one new member.* As our National Vice President Jim Mahlmann says, "One by one, we will grow."

Our Association will meet the challenges facing us now just as we have in the past. Please do not hesitate to put forth your ideas. FMA is only as strong as its members! ■

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All materials submitted to *The Federal Manager* should pertain to public service managers. Copy should be double-spaced, no longer than 10 pages.

High resolution color photographs, charts, or other illustrations should be included if possible. Text should be submitted on compact disc. Include a biography of the author.

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What's Next for Federal Managers and Telework?

Contributed by Telework Exchange

In the federal arena, telework has become The Next Big Thing. From President Obama's memorandum encouraging flexible work practices within the federal government to the new legislation requiring agencies to implement those practices, widespread telework adoption is on the horizon.

With all the talk surrounding telework lately, it would seem that everyone has jumped on the bandwagon. Some in the federal government are wholeheartedly embracing telework, but others are still on the fence.

According to the Office of Personnel Management's (OPM) 2010 Employee Viewpoint Survey, only about 100,000 federal employees (less than ten percent of the eligible federal workforce) are teleworking.

So what's in it for managers? Implementing telework means that managers get more productive and satisfied team members. Telework means managers and their teams can maintain business operations even during a snowstorm. And telework means that managers and employees will become more open and results-driven.

So, what is next for telework, and what does it mean for federal managers?

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Federal Managers and Telework

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What's the big deal about telework?

Getting to work is a job in itself. Employees have to endure an often stressful commute, especially in the Washington, D.C. area. With the rise of flexible work arrangements, employees can spend more time getting tasks done, and less time getting ready for, and getting to, work.

For agencies, telework can bring real estate savings, a tangible way to green, operations, and agency-wide cost savings. But telework is not just a win-win for employees and agencies. Managers can also reap the benefits of telework.

When a winter storm, dubbed "Snowmagedon," dumped three feet of snow on the Washington, D.C. area in February 2010, telework was a critical plank in maintaining federal government operations.

Integrating telework into a continuity of operations (COOP) plan or emergency preparedness plan allows managers and their teams to achieve their goals, even in the harshest situations.

In fact, John Berry, Director of OPM, noted that the federal government saved \$30 million a day by teleworking during the snowstorms, cutting the projected loss of productivity from an initial estimate of \$100 million per day.

During the storms, the Defense Information Systems Agency (DISA) saw firsthand how telework and COOP work together. As a result of telework, more than 1,200 DISA employees were able to continue business operations during a time that the federal government was declared "closed."

Similarly, the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office had more than 2,500 employees who worked from home during the storms, giving a practical demonstration of telework as a business continuity strategy.

About sixty percent of the General Services Administration's (GSA) employees in the D.C. region were able to



Looking on as President Obama signs the Telework Enhancement Act in the Oval Office are: OPM Director John Berry; GSA Administrator Martha Johnson; HHS Secretary Kathleen Sebelius; Rep. John Sarbanes (D-Md.); Rep. Stephen Lynch (D-Mass.); Defense Deputy Secretary Bill Lynn; Rep. Gerry Connolly (D-Va.), and, Labor Secretary Hilda Solis.

telecommute during the snow, according to Casey Coleman, Chief Information Officer, GSA, in an interview with FederalNewsRadio.

"It wasn't seamless," Coleman said to FederalNewsRadio. "The infrastructure team – my folks – spent a lot of their time making sure that we were load balancing. We want to take that to the next level and add capacity so that, if it happens again, there's not a moment's hesitation – everyone can be teleworking."

In December 2010, the Obama administration revised the federal leave policy, empowering federal employees with the option to telework during severe weather. The revision renames the work status originally known as "unscheduled leave" to "open with unscheduled leave or unscheduled telework." The change enables telework as a business continuity strategy and should help keep the government running as close to normal as possible in times of inclement weather.

But continuity of operations is not the only benefit for managers. On a day-to-day basis, managers can see the benefits of telework through increased productivity

and performance.

According to a 2007 study by Telework Exchange and the Federal Managers Association (FMA), more than sixty five percent of managers who manage teleworkers find that teleworkers are as productive as their in-office counterparts.

At the Virginia Department of Taxation, which participated in a telework pilot program, more than sixty percent of employees work from home at least one day per week. And those who do work from home are actually more productive than their in-office colleagues.

At the Department of Taxation, teleworkers who do mail processing achieved an eighty percent improvement in productivity when compared to the standard by which they are supposed to perform, while data-entry workers at home showed efficiency rates of 110 percent above the standard. Additionally, teleworking benefits increased employee wellness through heightened morale and health. Teleworkers at the Department of Taxation used 42 percent less sick leave than those working in the office – leading to even more productivity.

Why does working from home make a difference? Research shows that those who have a better work-life balance perform better.

Telework allows employees to have more time at home – and more money in their wallets. Even teleworking just one day per week delivers approximately \$2,000 in savings to each teleworker annually, as well as more than forty hours a year saved from a decreased commute, according to a 2009 Telework Exchange study.

Telework is proven to help with recruitment and retention, meaning managers have the best employees on their teams – and that those employees are not lost to attrition.

According to The White House’s Forum on Workplace Flexibility in March 2010, it costs approximately \$40,000 to bring in a new employee, including recruitment and training. Therefore, agencies need to consider their existing employees’ needs and focus on providing better flexibility. Retaining employees saves money and drives productivity.

than “opt in” telework policy, reports that its staffing rate has remained at more than 100 percent annually since 2005, and its attrition rate continues to be below seven percent. During DISA’s most recent survey, seventy percent of the responding employees said the option to telework would have an impact on their decision to stay with DISA after the base realignment and closure (BRAC) process.

As part of the BRAC plan, more than 19,000 defense workers will move to new worksites in 2011 – mostly along the I-95 corridor in northern Virginia, far from public transportation. DISA, included in the BRAC plan, will move to Fort Meade, Maryland. DISA utilized telework to help its employees avoid long commutes.

What does the legislation mean?

Telework is no longer a nice-to-have option; now, incorporating telework into agency operations is federally mandated.

After a two-year effort, the Telework Enhancement Act of 2010 was signed into law on December 9, 2010, with bipartisan congressional support.

Broken down, Public Law 111-292 has six basic components. Each agency must:

- Establish a telework policy and determine employee eligibility within 180 days of the bill becoming law (by June 7, 2011). Under each agency’s policy, employees may be authorized to telework as long as it does not diminish their performance or agency operations and must sign a written agreement.
- Set up interactive training programs for employees and managers to ensure they are comfortable with the new technology solutions and human resource processes associated with telework.
- Ensure teleworkers and non-teleworkers are treated the same for the purposes of job performance appraisal, promotion eligibility, and work requirements.
- Include telework in agency COOP plans.



Martha Johnson, GSA Administrator, during her keynote address at the Telework Exchange Fall 2010 Town Hall Meeting

- Designate a telework managing officer who is a senior official with direct access to the agency head.
- Submit yearly progress reports to OPM. OPM will provide oversight and management support to federal agencies.

According to the 2010 Telework Exchange report, “From Bill to Building: Next Steps for Federal Telework,” agencies should also establish clear telework guidelines and performance standards, train managers to enable employee success, and champion organizational telework benefits in order to be successful. The report recommends that agencies embrace new ways of thinking, provide support to managers, and use pilot programs to minimize risk.

“Because of the Telework Enhancement Act of 2010, agencies can usher in a new era for federal telework programs,” said Cindy Auten, General Manager, Telework Exchange. “As an increased productivity tool and a money-saver for agencies, telework is an invaluable asset to the federal government.”

continued on next page

“
Work is what
you do, not
where you do it.”

– Martha Johnson, Administrator,
General Services Administration

For potential employees, especially those in Generation Y, flexible workplace arrangements are becoming less of an added bonus, and more of an expected provision. Gen Y employees are interested in flexible jobs that allow time for family and personal lives, which makes compressed work weeks and telework options key job perks.

DISA, which has an “opt out” rather

Federal Managers and Telework

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Attendees gathered to learn about telework best practices at the Telework Exchange Fall 2010 Town Hall Meeting

How do technology and security fit in?

A common misconception is that with telework, any hope of network security goes out the window. The truth is, however, the technology exists to enable secure remote access.

Employers need a remote network accessible for teleworkers. By establishing a secure remote network, employees are able to work as they would in the office while teleworking or during a business continuity situation. Agencies should regularly test remote networks to ensure any problems are fixed before a business continuity situation arises.

To ensure data security, employees should follow their agencies' security guidelines when working remotely. It is also helpful to establish mobile support systems for those who do work remotely. By utilizing remote access, providing mobile equipment when appropriate, locking down mobile security, and establishing mobile support systems employees are able to work securely while

Additional Telework Resources:

www.telework.gov

www.teleworkexchange.com

Work: It's a Verb,
Not a Noun blog –

[http://teleworkexchange.com/
work/?id=newyear](http://teleworkexchange.com/work/?id=newyear)

teleworking.

Agencies should train all employees on how to use mobile equipment securely. Equipment ranges from basic components like laptops and Internet connectivity to video conferencing tools and mobile devices. With the rise of Internet-enabled mobile devices, employees can stay productive even when not in the office or

officially teleworking. Federal employees equipped with smartphones report an average time savings/productivity gain of 54 minutes per day, according to a 2008 Telework Exchange study, "Out of the Office: Federal Mobile Workforce Trends."

Data security is a top priority and is top of mind for agency professionals; however, concerns about data protection should not be used as an excuse to hinder telework adoption. With proper training, support, and equipment, mobile workers do not pose a data security threat.

So, what does this all mean for me?

The transition to telework is not without challenges for managers. Implementing telework will require a culture shift – from a focus on in-office interactions to a focus on work output.

The process also will require redefining the concept of the workplace. Managers will need to change the conversation on telework – it is not about where you work; it is about performance.

The government needs to move the culture toward a "take away the desk" mindset.

Employees may feel that they lose value when they give up their office space, so they need to be reassured that they will continue to be a part of the office structure, even if they choose to work from home.

"We really don't call it telework – we just call it work," John Berry stated at the Telework Exchange Fall 2010 Town Hall Meeting. "And we'll know we've succeeded when we get to that point, but our managers are starting to see it, and I think that is a major culture shift. Now, the key is, we need to embrace it and use it to drive specific results."

As Martha Johnson, GSA Administrator, succinctly stated at the Fall Town Hall Meeting, "Work is what you do, not where you do it."

This shift will require additional

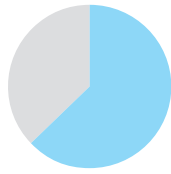
What are your attitudes toward telework?

Managers who do NOT manage teleworkers



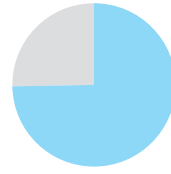
54% Favorable

Managers who DO manage teleworkers



63% Favorable

Managers who ARE teleworkers



75% Favorable

Note: 66% of managers who manage teleworkers find that teleworkers are as productive as their in-office counterparts.

Face Value: Try it and you'll like it. As managers become more involved in telework, they express more favorable attitudes toward telework.

"Face-to-Face with Management Reality" Study, January 2007

training, both for employees and for managers. Managers and employees need to learn how to develop, communicate, and implement plans that have clear expectations. The plans should establish clear performance measurements that include results-driven evaluations. Employees should be managed by performance, not presence. This applies to all workers, not just teleworkers.

Transitioning to an environment where output trumps in-office interactions will require employing cost-effective technology solutions, and then training employees how to use the solutions from home. It all comes down to fostering greater trust and communication between employees and managers.

Although telework might be a new frontier for many, studies show that as managers are exposed to telework, their approval of the operating practice improves significantly. According to the 2007 Telework Exchange and FMA study, "Face-to-Face with Management Reality," managers most involved in telework (those who telework themselves) report favorable impressions with 21 percent greater frequency than managers who do not telework or manage teleworkers.

The bottom line – telework is a "Green

Eggs and Ham" situation. Try it and you'll like it. ■

Telework Exchange is a public-private partnership focused on demonstrating the tangible value of telework and serving the emerging educational and communication requirements of the federal teleworker community. The organization facilitates communication among federal teleworkers, telework managers, and IT professionals.

Telework Exchange will host the Spring Town Hall Meeting on Thursday, April 28, 2011, at the Ronald Reagan Building in Washington, D.C. Consisting of two tracks, the event will address management and technology needs for building, implementing, and measuring telework programs. Hear directly from government leaders on best practices and lessons learned.

Join fellow attendees including agency executives, program and IT directors and managers, telework coordinators, advisors, industry partners, and affiliated organizations – all working collectively to advance telework. For more information and to register, visit www.teleworkexchange.com/townhallmeeting.

For more information about Telework Exchange, or to explore the resources available for federal managers, please visit www.teleworkexchange.com.

The Telework Enhancement Act of 2010

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2. Set up interactive training programs
3. Include telework in COOP
4. Appoint a telework managing officer
5. Submit yearly progress reports to OPM