Telecommuting in IT Support

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In 2006, WorldatWork reported that telecommuting trends have been steadily on the rise in America. In the summer of 2008, a poll by Reuters showed that more than 1/3rd of U.S. technology workers would be willing to take a pay cut to work from home. What are HDI members doing in their support centers?

For this survey "*telecommute*" was defined as "*to work for an employer from a remote location such as a home office. These employees are often referred to as teleworkers, remote employees, or virtual employees.*"

Results represent 410 responses collected from HDI Members via an on-line survey from January 15, 2009 through January 20, 2009.

How much Telecommuting is going on in IT support centers?
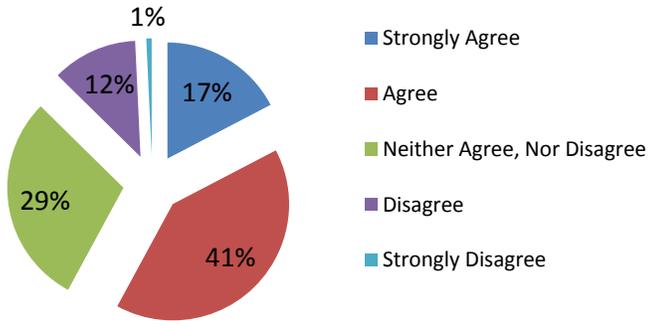
5% of support center analysts telecommute full-time (includes employed and contracted)

33% telecommute with some regularity (even if it is less than once a month)

42% of support centers have analysts who telecommute at least once a month (includes employed and contracted)

34% of support centers have analysts who telecommute at least once a week (includes employed and contracted)

17% of support centers have analysts who telecommute full-time (includes employed and contracted)
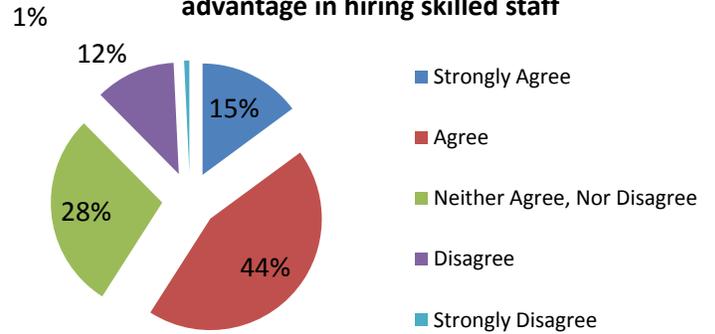
How do people feel about telecommuting?

· Most respondents believe that telecommuting saves the company money and gives them an advantage in hiring skilled staff.

· About a quarter believe the benefits of telecommuting do not outweigh any hassles of managing remote staff.

· The jury is out about whether it is okay for the customers to know they are being supported from an agent who is not working in the office.

· The concept of telecommuting does not seem to be accepted widely across all levels in the company. We want to know…which demographic has a problem with the concept in your organization? Is it the CEO and/or executives who don't approve? Or, do you think it is a generational difference, not a hierarchical one? Let us know in the HDI Blog.
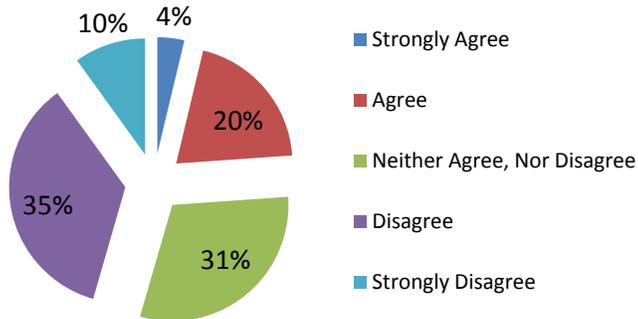
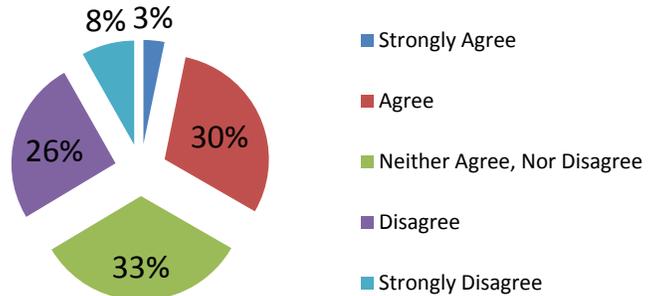See full results below...

Telecommuting saves the company money

- Strongly Agree — 17%
- Agree — 41%
- Neither Agree, Nor Disagree — 29%
- Disagree — 12%
- Strongly Disagree — 1%

Support centers who offer telecommuting, have an advantage in hiring skilled staff

- Strongly Agree — 15%
- Agree — 44%
- Neither Agree, Nor Disagree — 28%
- Disagree — 12%
- Strongly Disagree — 1%

The benefits do not outweigh the hassle

- Strongly Agree — 4%
- Agree — 20%
- Neither Agree, Nor Disagree — 31%
- Disagree — 35%
- Strongly Disagree — 10%

It is okay for the customers to know that the support center analyst is telecommuting

- Strongly Agree — 3%
- Agree — 30%
- Neither Agree, Nor Disagree — 33%
- Disagree — 26%
- Strongly Disagree — 8%

The concept of telecommuting analysts is completely accepted by all levels in our company

- Strongly Agree — 4%
- Agree — 13%
- Neither Agree, Nor Disagree — 13%
- Disagree — 40%
- Strongly Disagree — 30%
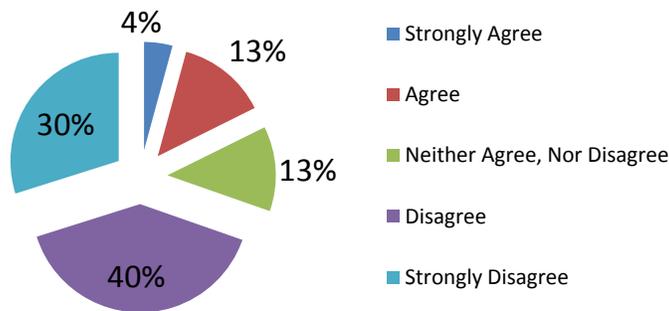
What expenses are companies paying for remote employees?

Of those who have support analysts who telecommute most are paying for the remote hardware and software. Just under ½ are paying for phone and Internet connections. And office expenses such as supplies, furniture, utilities, and ergonomic considerations are not paid for by most companies.

	In-full	Partially	No
Software	78%	9%	13%
Hardware	72%	10%	18%
Phone	30%	16%	54%
Internet access	29%	17%	54%
Office Supplies	21%	14%	65%
Ergonomic considerations	6%	9%	85%
Utilities	3%	4%	93%
Office Furniture	3%	4%	94%
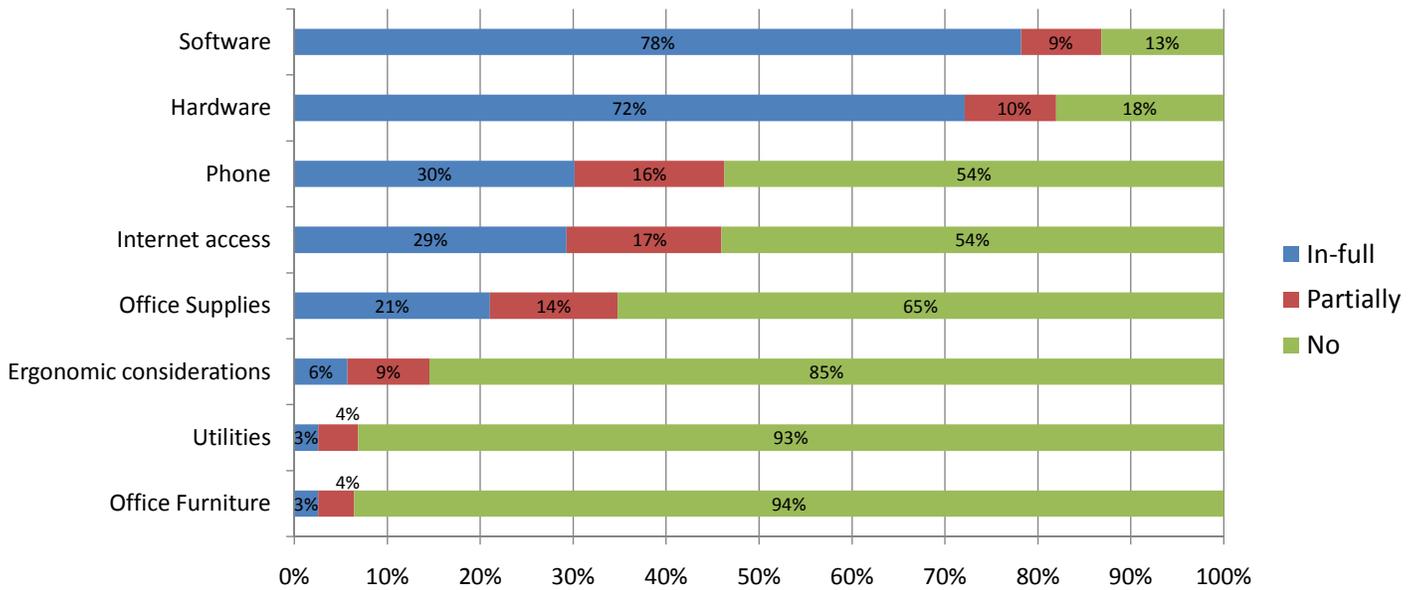
Overall, many IT Support centers are hiring or allowing teleworkers. They are paying for some expenses such as hardware and software, but not other such as office furniture and utilities. Even though there appears to be a perceived benefit of telecommuting, the concept is not completely accepted in organizations.

Related resources:

Reducing Call Center Costs: White Paper: 51 Ways to Reduce Contact Center Costs

Future Trends in the IT Support Center: Focus Book: The Support Center in 2011: A Report on the future Trends Facing the Support Industry