

Telework as a tool to promote entrepreneurship: a proposal of a strategic outreach campaign.

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ABSTRACT

This paper presents the possibility to use telework as a tool for the developing of entrepreneurship, to consider it, is necessary to pass through several steps to ensure its correct diffusion.

The first part discusses the main advantages of telework, and also the necessary conditions to reach true benefits for the employers.

The second part is an analysis of some Governments and institutions portals from different countries that have developed the subject of telework and have made efforts to allow citizens to take its advantages.

And finally we present an outreach campaign, that although not exhaustive; makes recommendations about the principal aspects for the success in the promotion of telework.

Keywords: entrepreneurship, resources to promote telework, strategic outreach campaign, telework.

1 INTRODUCTION

The current society is immersed in change processes, relationships between people have altered with the integration of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) into everyday life and this transformation has also reached the workplaces, many of the functions can be performed by the employee in another place different of the business location [1], causing new challenges for the organizations.

This concept known as teleworking, emerged in the seventies as a solution proposed by the economist Jack Nilles to affront the oil crisis and to allow save fuel by not travel at the workplace [2], the term has evolved and today there are different names for remote work, as telecommuting or telework which describe the situation in which the employee performs work outside the primary workplace, aided by ICTs [3].

There are plenty of studies that have analyzed the advantages that have brought flexibility to the employment sector; here are the most frequently mentioned:

1.1 Teleworking Advantages

- It allows a better reconciliation of work, family and workers: The need to harmonize work and family life can be encouraged by telework as it reduces the time and distance previously used to going to the workplace, it allows realize faster tasks and takes more time in family activities, leisure and personal care [4].

For achieved this benefit, there need to be flexible labor policies and family-responsible, finance or provide services that help care for dependents or domestic work. This can reduce stress levels; absenteeism and increase productivity, companies that manage to satisfy these needs should have an organizational culture supportive of these practices, know the needs of workers and their families and keep a good network of internal and external communication [5].

- It increases the flexibility of time for the worker: Telework allows organize the worker according to their convenience and scheduling your day, teleworkers can have control over working conditions and their time, but is recommended for a successful implementation of distance work, establish work plans, schedules and deadlines for compliance with the obligations; also be clear about the type of work to be performed and take into account that communication is the key [6].
- Increases organizational commitment: with the telework, the teleworker get autonomy and a balance between work and familiar life [7], therefore, the organization must review the politics that encourage workers to stay with the company and to work for success [8].

For implement the telework, it is necessary start with a pilot plan, with people strategically selected and clearly defined goals, to evaluate the results and then extend it to more areas within the organization [9].

- Reduces travel times: Allows save money and time.
- Increases productivity of teleworkers: Telework provides motivation to employees, who should have a proper training and be clear about policies and procedures of the company, the goals to be met and the evaluation of achievements. The manager must define the time periods and what it expects from its workers, it is recommended not to be isolated, but taking into account within the organization [10].
- Reduces electricity costs, office space and benefits the environment: The savings in travel time have a great impact in the reduction of the emission of gases, for example in the United States the fuel savings associated with teleworking assumed in 2007 a reduction of 50,000 tons of CO₂ [11].
- Allows development in rural areas: giving the opportunity to network with others who are in remote locations or other countries. With the help of technologies, the company must assume a change in structure and corporate culture and be ready for a globalization world [12].

The problem is that although these benefits are known, there exist a reluctance to adopt telework, mainly because of lack of information and knowledge on how to develop projects under these new conditions [13].

The times are turbulent, traditional employment opportunities have been declined forcing people to use their creativity to carry out work independently, the composition of the families are changed and the 21st century worker's role is more dynamic because the increase in competitiveness [14], therefore is necessary to promote alternatives, like telework that allow the developing of new business ideas.

1.2 Telework and Entrepreneurship

The main motivation of this research is to give the people an alternative to develop their creativity and to propose solutions for generate a livelihood while trying to harmonize work and family life taking advantages of the benefits generated by telework.

It seeks to give priority for young people and women to propose and implement innovative projects that improve quality of life and the status for the general society.

Formichella defines the entrepreneurship as the development of an innovative economic, social or politic project and an entrepreneur as a person with creativity and the ability to make decisions and who can work on their own initiative [15].

This research suggests that to achieve more utilization of the initiatives for entrepreneurial youth and women, is necessary to establish a campaign to promote the advantages of telework as a source of livelihood of families and as a generator of employment and an activator of the economy.

2 STEPS INVOLVED IN THE PLANNING PROCESS OF AN OUTREACH CAMPAIGN TO PROMOTE THE ENTREPRENEURSHIP.

The main goal of an outreach campaign is to influence the behavior of its target audience, for example in the case of a campaign directed to the diffusion of telework as a tool to promote the entrepreneurship, the expectative is to make at the people think about their skills to realize a distance work, generate business ideas and motive public and private companies to hire these workers, because to make a better use of these initiatives is necessary the support of the Governments, the private enterprise and the general society.

Next are the steps that have to be considered for an outreach campaign according to the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) [16]:

2.1 Assess the Current Outreach Situation: analyze what outreach efforts have been carried out so far? What has worked? What has no worked? Mistakes and successes.

2.2 Identify Outreach Goals of a New Campaign: Identify the goals of the campaign and relate it to the objectives of the Government at the country in which they will be develop to determinate the necessary budget and the behavior to be modified, in this case, is expected that people propose new business ideas carried out trough telework.

2.3 Specify the Scope of the Campaign: determine clearly what is to be achieved through education and outreach phase of the proposed item to change the perceptions of the target audience. This is accomplished when present the advantages of telecommuting or teleworking.

2.4 Obtain Information from Research: during all stages of the process, initially for resources with which account, and during and after the process of evaluating the results and make adjustments.

2.5 Identify target audience: is necessary to know aspects of the population they are targeted in the campaign, such as where they live, channels that they use to receive information, the prejudices about the issue of the campaign and the knowledge about the theme.

Also for this selection can weigh the priorities of government policies or the easy to reach certain audiences, in all cases it is recommended to segment the message.

2.6 Identify Potential Partners: in order to cut costs, getting contributions of money, expertise and knowledge of the target audience.

2.7 Develop and execute a communications program: Having chosen a target audience and having clear goals, must be design the message and identifies the media to transmit it.

3 METHODOLOGY

This research follows the next steps:

First is the review of the Government and institutions portals about the subject of telework and make an inventory of information resources that can be included in the campaign.

Second, find innovative sources that can be used to promote telework.

Finally, it proposes and outreach campaign that included practical examples to promote the telework and that can be used in different organizations.

Influence people to consider the teleworking as a way to create jobs and promote the generation of ideas and the companies to contract these services may need several successive campaigns for change the attitude that is required [17]. So, this research propose three moments of the campaign: a first one to call attention to telework as a tool to increase the employment opportunities, another that shows the benefits of telework and finally motivate people to present innovative ideas.

4 ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Teleworking Resources Inventory

This inventory includes resources found in different Governments and institutions portals that have been responsible for promoting and development the concept of teleworking and its requirements, presents theoretical and technical information that can guide people that start with telework and the companies that implement it. Although there is more information is expected that it can be an orientation to research and the search of new resources.

It is divided into the following sections:

4.1.1 Information resources include telework definition, their importance, how to start teleworking? What can be teleworking? The telework advantages to people and companies, requirements and legislation (Chart 1).

Chart 1
Inventory of information resources

Resources	Content	Website
PDF: Understand and manage mobile workers	Guide for companies: include statistics, advantages, tips Creator: Cisco Systems, 2007.	http://www.gobiernofacil.go.cr/e-gob/gobiernodigital/teletrabajo%20completo/Docs/GUIA%20DE%20TRABAJADOR%20MOVIL%20%20CISCO%20SYSTEMS.pdf
Legislation	<i>Proyecto de Ley de Teletrabajo</i> , Argentina, 2007 <i>Decreto de promoción del teletrabajo en instituciones públicas del Gobierno de Costa Rica</i> , 2008.	http://www.trabajo.gob.ar/downloads/temasespecial/es/teletrabajo_proyecto-de-ley.pdf http://www.gobiernofacil.co.cr/gobiernodigital/legislacion/Decreto_Teletrabajo.pdf
News, articules, videos, slides.	News and updated articles. Chile.	http://www.teletrabajo.cl/
FAQ	Answer to questions about teleworking. Uruguay.	http://www.teletrabajo.com.uy/respuestas/teletrabajo/1/

Resources	Content	Website
Forums	Virtual community for teleworkers, share topics of interest, Uruguay.	http://www.teletrabajo.com.uy/foro/
General information	Myths, types of teleworkers, other data. Guides to start teleworking, Argentina.	http://www.trabajo.gob.ar/teletrabajo/ http://www.caminandoutopias.org.ar/institucional/guia.php
Conference information, papers.	Links to papers and conferences. Colombia.	http://www.cetelco.org/index.html

4.1.2 *Educational resources*: include courses, guides, implementation manuals, documents and others (Chart 2).

Chart 2

Inventory of educational resources

Resources	Content	Website
Implementation guide of Telework.	Guide for the implementation of a pilot plan to telework and create appropriate patterns. Government of Costa Rica, 2009.	http://www.gobiernofacil.go.cr/e-gob/gobiernodigital/guia_de_implementacion_de_teletrabajo_2009.pdf
Virtual course: Telework in Costa Rica	It can download and use on the computer individually, includes all issues related to telework, 2009.	http://www.gobiernofacil.go.cr/e-gob/gobiernodigital/teletrabajo%20completo/cursovirtual.html
Training center	CEDTEL: free seminars and virtual courses, Argentina.	http://www.cedtel.com.ar/
Training courses	Interactive courses for employees and employers. USA	http://www.telework.gov/tools_and_resources/training/index.aspx
E-books	<i>Telecapacitados: Teletrabajo para la inclusión de personas con discapacidad</i> , available for download, Argentina. <i>Exportadores de servicios en Internet</i> , (Boairov et al), Argentina, free, online.	http://www.telecapacitados.tic.org.ar/telecapacitados.pdf http://www.etis-lac.org.ar/libro_etis-lac.pdf
Video blogs	Examples of teleworking, Uruguay.	http://www.teletrabajo.com.uy/videos/

4.1.3 *Media resources*: include examples of outreach campaigns, databases, videos, contests, statistics and others (Chart 3).

Chart 3

Inventory of diffusion resources

Resources	Content	Website
Champaign	Workplace Flexibility 2010, promoted by Georgetown Law, consists in a education campaign and is stimulated by rewards and benefits to employers. USA	http://workplaceflexibility2010.org/
Brochures	Free newsletter: Teletrabajando: send by e-mail Argentina	http://www.teletrabajando.org.ar/
Videos	GSA: Telework centers, resources, USA.	http://www.gsa.gov/Portal/gsa/ep/contentView.do?contentType=GSA_BASIC&contentId=23668
Resources for teleworkers	Recommended resources, Uruguay.	http://www.teletrabajo.com.uy/teletrabajo/sitios-web-recomendados/11/
Statistics	<i>El teletrabajo en Uruguay y el resto de Latinoamérica</i> (must subscribe to the site to access the documents)	http://www.teletrabajo.com.uy/respuestas/estadisticas/11/

Resources	Content	Website
Recognition	Skills Certification Program, Argentina, free and recognize the efforts and the experience.	http://www.trabajo.gob.ar/teletrabajo/certificacion.asp#ancla2
Networks	Telework network: public and private companies coordinated through the Argentine Government for share experiences.	http://www.trabajo.gob.ar/teletrabajo/redempresas.asp
Commitments	Guidelines to promote telework, Argentina.	http://www.trabajo.gob.ar/downloads/teletrabajo/teletrabajoytrabajodecente.pdf
Virtual offices	Torres de Teletrabajo: provides virtual offices and potential recruits, Argentina.	http://www.torresdeteletrabajo.com/
Congress	1rst International Telework Congress, Costa Rica, 2009. 15th International ITA Workshop; Argentina	http://www.uned.ac.cr/congresoteletrabajo/memoria.html http://www.telework2010.tic.org.ar/

4.2 Resources to promote Telework

This section contains resources that can be used for a publicity campaign of teleworking, specially the related with Internet, considering its penetration in today's society. Also included the resources that allow the formation of teleworkers communities creating sites where people find support for their initiatives, offer their services and where the Government and private companies make public their demands of different services.

4.2.1 Internet

In the current marketing the utilization of Internet as a media to promote services and products has a predominant place because its possibility to reach many users and its low operation costs, the creation of websites and the utilization of blogs there some resources that included relevant information for the target of this sites, that is why is recommended creating a website with all the elements of the campaign.

4.2.2 Use of banners, posters and wall papers

They are useful to raise awareness the concepts that want to publicize and call attention to an idea, they can be placed on the website and be downloaded and shared with others, additionally they can be impress and publishing in newspapers or in public places.

4.2.3 Videos

Can be used to give more information about the theme, presenting real cases of people with success in the teleworking and promote them through the Website.

4.2.4 Socialization tactics

Allow find in the web people who can talk about many topics, creating social networks, interacting and create contents [18].

The social networks provide at their users an attractive way of socialization [19], their success it's given because they complemented the traditional communications forms and this can help at the diffusion of the benefits of telework in young people using the viral marketing.

4.2.5 Viral marketing

Maqueira and Bruque [20], define the viral marketing as a technique where the user recommended and provides web address to their contacts in the social networks to belong. Its objective is making known different services between their members.

4.2.6 Digital communities

The constitution of online communities of teleworkers may be a way to promote telework, in this websites the people integrate around a common interest and including topics with professional contents [21]. Their objectives are creating community and obtain the loyalty of the users.

Boiarov indicates that a community of teleworkers can bring the following benefits [22]:

- Allows sharing of experiences
- Generate employments sources.
- Support is given to those who need it.
- Can define the extent of the market.
- Facilitates the inclusion of vulnerable people.

4.2.7 Awards

The awards can motivate people to participate in the activities proposed in the campaign.

4.2.8 Recommendation for an effective message

WIPO recommends that an effective message must be written in simple language, with a topic at a time, using different media, like television, radio, newspapers, internet and others to increase the possibility that more people can see them [23].

5 PROPOSAL OF A STRATEGIC OUTREACH CAMPAIGN OF TELEWORK AS A TOOL TO PROMOTE THE ENTREPRENEURSHIP

This paper recommended a massive campaign that includes mass media as television, radio, magazines, newspapers and the Internet to draw attention of the population about the concept of telework and they consider it as a source of employment.

Government support is very important for those initiatives and is necessary encouraging businesses to develop plans for implementing the telework pilot.

We need to change the mentality of employers, making them see the opportunity that may have to hire teleworkers, incentives such as reducing taxes can be a motivation for creating opportunities in this sector, plus the establishment of agreements can stimulate recruitment.

This campaign is aimed particularly at young people and women to propose innovative ideas developed through teleworking, the training is very important it is necessary integrate the institutions that are responsible for providing courses in order to keep the day to individuals in the knowledge of ICTs.

The dissemination by news in television morning shows may produce the interest of women and students with business ideas, but they may not know the way to develop it.

Each person must become a propagator of the campaign, so those involved will be asked to help spread the message to other people, it will rely on the use of social networks used by the population to transmit the message quickly and reach a greater number of citizens.

Collaboration between countries can be very helpful; there are advances and best practices that can be exploited by those who are not as advanced in terms of legislation or instrument design.

Units must exist to coordinate the campaign to follow up on the spread and are in charge of making visible the achievements as they occur, such as awards, recognition to companies developing the plan, among others.

Find help of advertising agencies to design posters, banners and graphics that serve to promote the ideas of the campaign.

Creating digital communities of teleworkers supported by government offices and private enterprise, where people can find employment opportunities to offer their products, share knowledge, information relevant to their business development, technical assistance and others.

These communities will be sectioned according to the interests of each teleworker and services offered to facilitate the search by employers.

Supporting Government plans to telework as a way to create jobs and increase productivity.

Continue to promote the investigation of the issue and proposals in Congress as the Telework

The existing telework centers can be exposed as role models, as well as examples of people teleworkers and is capable of giving advice and guidance to those who start with this work.

5.1 Objectives of the Campaign

5.1.1 Raising public awareness on the concept of teleworking and its ability to generate new jobs.

5.1.2 Make available the benefits of telework for workers and employers.

5.1.3 Encourage the presentation of new ideas of telework by women and young entrepreneurs

5.2 Target Population: Women and young entrepreneurs, public and private companies. Language: Spanish.

5.3 Possible Involved: Governments, training institutions, technical colleges, universities, mass media, and experts in entrepreneurship, training center for small and medium enterprises (SMEs), private companies and governmental institutions, organizations related to telework.

5.4 Resources: Web site, brochures, banners, videos, contests, Web 2.0.

5.5 Campaign Stages

5.5.1 Awareness of the concept of teleworking and its ability to generate new jobs

- Develop a Web site where information includes aspects of telework, what is telework, How I can telework?, Answers to frequently asked questions, contact forms, links to sites of interest, participation forums that promote community building, supply and demand of services, links to social networks. Figure 1 shows the site map.



Figure 1 Site map

- Create pictures, banners and short videos that draw the attention of people on the concept of telework. Can use free resources found in the network and publish in different media, print and publish in newspapers or in public places, to start creating an expectation around the issue and conduct more visits to the website. It is recommended to choose a character image of the campaign, in this case was selected Linda.

Linda is a teacher who has lost their job, knows the Internet but do not know the possibility of teleworking. Figure 2 and 3 shows advertising in the form of cartoon. This can be printed and distributed to spread the website.

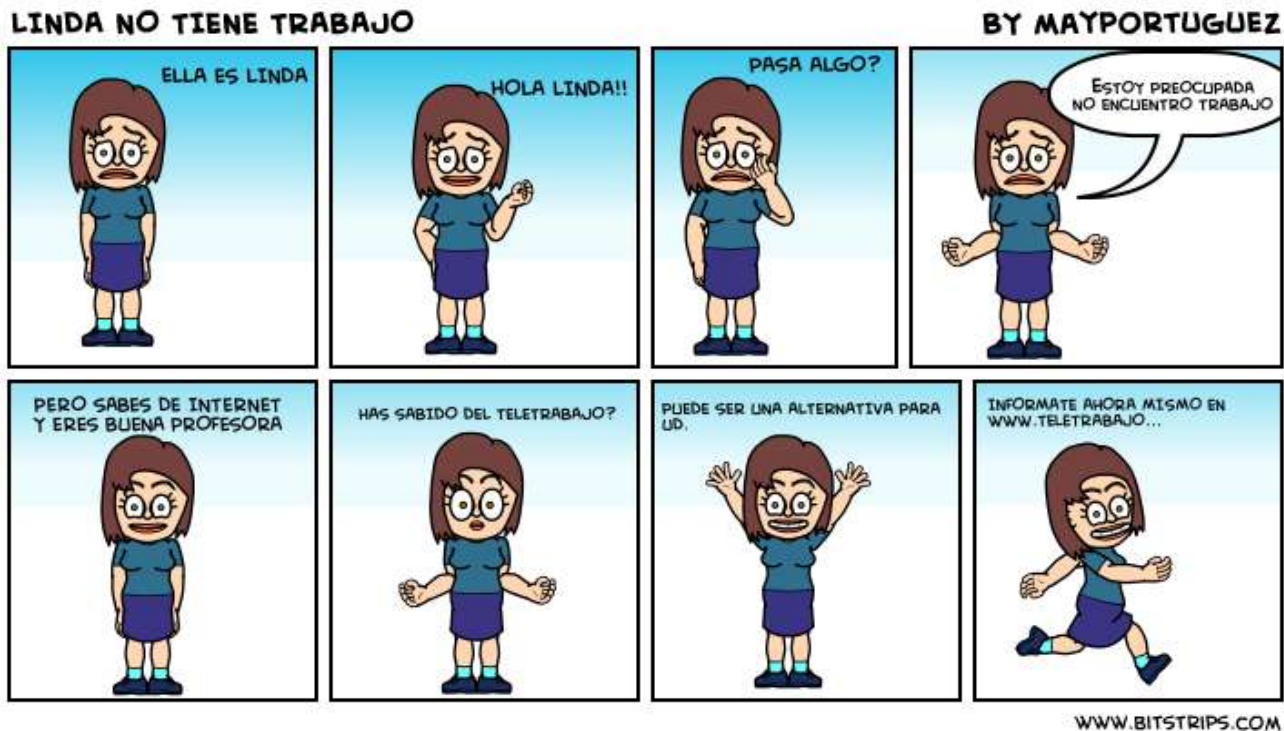


Figure 2 Example of campaign to promote telework

'TITLE OF STRIP'

BY MAYPORTUGUEZ



WWW.BITSTRIPS.COM

BY MAYPORTUGUEZ



WWW.BITSTRIPS.COM

BY MAYPORTUGUEZ



WWW.BITSTRIPS.COM

Figure 2 Ad to promote the telework directed to women.

5.5.2 Teleworking advantages

Use banners to promote the benefits of teleworking. Figure 4 shows an example with the same character asking did you know. And where Linda gives the answer talking about the benefits of telework may be useful as an information campaign for businesses.



Figure 4 Banner to promote the advantages of teleworking.

- Show the positive experiences of teleworkers and companies that hire them, using videos that represent successful experiences of people with telework.

5.5.3 Presentation of innovative ideas

- Encourage the presentation of business ideas through teleworking, by a competition aimed at women and young people wishing to start their own business remotely, on the website include the contest rules, awards and other information, is also requested to share with others. Figure 5 shows an advertisement for this contest.



Figure 5 Application of innovative ideas

- Encourage users to invite other friends to join the network and that they in turn invite others.
- Reward those who submit their projects to contests and promotions in the most used social networking (Facebook, Twitter, Hi-5), depending of the sector to which it is conducting and disseminating awards.

6 CONCLUSIONS

The diffusion of telework should lead a joint effort of the entire society. Is necessary to create awareness about its benefits and the possibility of developing new employment opportunities, encouraging the creativity of entrepreneurs and the formation of communities of teleworkers, increasing information to companies and provide more support for have more confidence in hiring such employees. The campaign proposal seeks to use limited economic resources, to exploit the potential of the Web and bring attention to existing efforts that develop these alternatives.

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