

# Power to the people

## *Small businesses can gain big advantages with flexible working*

**E**VERY employee dreams of a better work-life balance, while every business wants to attract the best employees and work as cost-effectively as possible. Now, with improved technology such as high-speed broadband and Wi-Fi, achieving these goals has never been easier.

More employers are now offering flexible working, which enables staff to work remotely – at home and on the move – with full access to office systems and information.

This gives employees more control over their lives and work while delivering both cost and efficiency benefits for businesses.

From April 2009, all employees with children under the age of 16 will have the legal right to request flexible working.

BT Business works with over 1.1m small businesses, helping them to work flexibly and more productively, while latest BT research suggests that by 2010 more than 50 million Europeans will spend some time working remotely, instead of at their usual workplace.

Flexible working is not something to be scared of – but it does require careful planning. Follow these top tips to get started...

### 1. ASSESS BENEFITS

Take a look at what happens now in your business and where you can make improvements. Are you responsive to customers? Are staff always contactable? Where could you benefit from working more flexibly?

### 2. LOOK AHEAD

Consider your objectives for the coming year – growth, new customers or services – and think about how you can resource and manage these changes, whilst still controlling costs.

### 3. PLAN FOR CHANGE

Flexible working requires adjustments – think about the impact. Remote staff will be able to stay in touch and work with office-based staff, but procedures for working must be in place to ensure productivity across teams.

### 4. GET HELP

Take a fresh view of your communication needs. Find a reliable supplier who can advise on converged systems and services to aid flexible working.

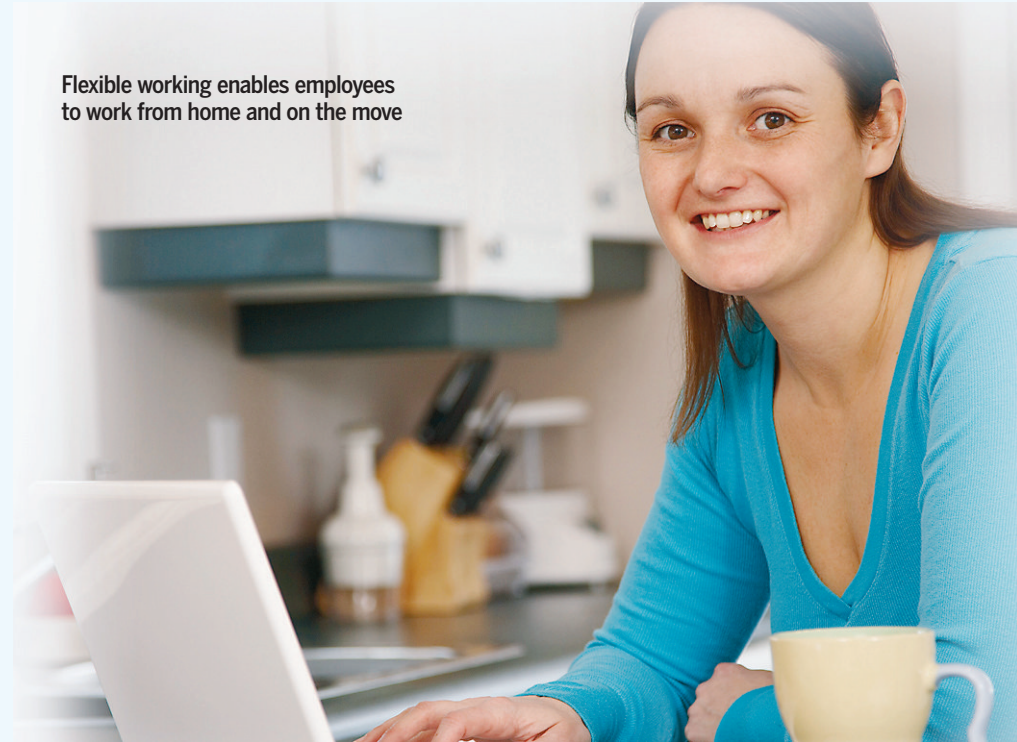
### 5. TOP EQUIPMENT

Cutting corners can be counterproductive. Equipment that's easy for remote workers to operate outweighs savings made by using cut-down versions of software and services.

### 6. SECURITY CHECK

Securing your business systems to block unauthorised

Flexible working enables employees to work from home and on the move



access is even more essential when you have employees logging in remotely. Get expert help from your IT supplier.

### 7. RELIABLE SERVICE

Remote workers depend on constant and reliable connections and devices, so make sure you provide appropriate maintenance, repair and support services.

### 8. CLEVER PURCHASES

New devices and services for remote working are launched every day, so it helps to know what's available to buy. Call BT to find out about the latest laptops, mobiles and PDAs.

### 9. REVIEW COSTS

With guidance from the right supplier, you should have a clear idea of potential costs and savings. Review regularly to ensure you're getting the most out of flexible working.

### 10. SIMPLICITY

The internet-based technologies behind flexible working are all tried and tested. Your supplier will help you plan a cost effective way to use the latest technologies.

■ For more information and to talk about how BT can help you harness flexible working for your business, visit [www.bt.com](http://www.bt.com) or download 'Gaining a Competitive Advantage with Flexible Working' at [www.sbw08.co.uk](http://www.sbw08.co.uk).