

SMART Partnerships Ltd's CASE STUDY

Established in 2001, SMART Partnerships' ethos was through consultancy to help businesses across the country embrace technology, the Internet and better use of IT in general to deliver greater benefit to the companies it engaged with. The acronym of SMART was derived from Strategy, Marketing And Rational Thinking.

Working as an organisation with only two employees, this is completely enhanced with the inclusion of a number of trusted associates allows the company to deliver a wide range of services in a peripatetic manner.

Managing Director and Senior Consultant Adrian Bereziuk is a fully TMB accredited advisor and is also a PRINCE 2 qualified project manager. Although not a technician himself, Adrian is able to see where technology and business converge and since the company was formed in 2001, has been operating in a technological environment with colleagues and clients across the length and breadth of the UK.

Always in communication, Adrian has worked with over 800 companies of all sizes over the last 5 years and covers on average around 25,000 car miles and a further 10,000 air miles annually. This use of technology and remote working means that although high, these figures are not doubled as they would otherwise be using conventional working practices.

Through server based, PC, Laptop and mobile technologies, Adrian is able to work from anywhere in the world and has even managed to co-ordinate a number of events whilst abroad without physically needing to be there for every meeting. This was achieved very successfully through IP telephony, video conferencing and use of wireless computing communications. As broadband is so readily available, there are no boundaries that need to be set.

Adrian said "If we needed to be based in an office and stuck behind a desk, I would not have been able to achieve the growth we have enjoyed since the company started. The last contract I was working on in Lincolnshire meant that every three weeks or so, I needed to travel the round trip of 1000 miles to the county and see the businesses I was engaged with and this was of course necessary however I was working with a London based firm and the contract covered 10 consultants working as associates using a model of communication that was excellent". He added "we had 5-way IP telephony based forums on a weekly basis to discuss our cases, we managed our client updates via access over terminal services on a SharePoint platform and once client relationships were established, ongoing communication and work was carried out on a virtual basis. This saved an immense amount of time and expense and was extremely effective".

"It is unfortunate that more businesses do not understand or adopt the benefits of remote working more fully as in many cases I strongly believe that they would be far more able to deliver greater output and efficiency. Again I believe in many cases that where office working is concerned, typical days and thought processes are interrupted far too often and where jobs have deadlines or need creative thinking, the benefit of remote working to deliver is totally undervalued in the main".

Adrian believes that if employees (and associates) are task driven and can have the peace to carry out their work in a quite uninterrupted environment, there is less

stress, a more effective results output and a far better quality of life. He said "I know that there is still a very old fashioned view with many employers that 'If I don't see you at your desk, you can't be working' whereas SMART Partnerships and the associate group I work with are happier to know that their employees can have the freedom to regularly work from their home on a 'job and finish' basis.

Avoiding traffic congestion, frustration over child minding, worrying about absenteeism etc are all areas where remote working can help employers in a number of ways:

- Reduction in the need for office space and the associated costs
- Focus management thinking on employee outputs
- Helping staff to overcome personal situations i.e. child minding over school holidays, school runs etc

As long as there is a workload to be delivered, Adrian questions whether it really matters where it is delivered from?

Of course, security needs to be seriously considered and this option will not suit everyone or every organisation but Adrian highly recommends remote working as an option to consider as he knows the benefits personally and at the end of the day, he believes that it is not the cost of technology that is the barrier but the attitude and trust of management that needs to change to help the bottom line on the balance sheet.

Adrian concluded "We have worked this way since the company started – would I want to change? Absolutely not! It helps my profitability, opportunity levels and we are always able to manage the workload so we can deliver on time and to budget. Clients are happy and many are considering change but there is still a long way to go.

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