There’s No Place Like a Home Office: Staples Survey Shows Telecommuters are Happier and Healthier, With 25% Less Stress When Working from Home

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FRAMINGHAM, Mass.--(BUSINESS WIRE)--FRAMINGHAM, Mass.--(BUSINESS WIRE)--Want happier, loyal and more productive employees? Send them home. According to a recent survey from Staples Advantage, the business-to-business division of Staples, Inc., telecommuters say they feel and work better when working from home. In fact, 86 percent of telecommuters say they are more productive in their home office.

Telecommuters say they are:

- **Happier and healthier** – When asked to draw comparisons, telecommuters say their stress levels have dropped 25 percent on average since working from home. Seventy-three percent even say they eat healthier when working from home.

- **More loyal** – Without the trek to the office – on average, a 75-mile round-trip for respondents – 76 percent of telecommuters say they are more willing to put in extra time on work and say they are more loyal to their company since telecommuting.

- **Better balanced** – More than 80 percent say they now maintain a better work-life balance.

Considering these benefits, it’s no wonder the number of telecommuters is on the rise – expected to reach 63 million in the United States by 2016, according to a March 2009 report, “U.S. Telecommuting Forecast, 2009 to 2016,” from Forrester Research, Inc.

The survey pointed to opportunities for companies to better assist their workers. For instance, most telecommuters said their companies don’t provide furniture (87 percent), office equipment (60 percent) or supplies (57 percent). Improving in these areas can help create an environment that simulates corporate office conditions and maximizes productivity.

**Furniture and Equipment Set-Up**

Important considerations for telecommuters include:

- **Finding the perfect chair** – The top item on the wish list for a home office is a more comfortable chair, as 44 percent give their current one a “C” grade or lower. Qualities to look for include upper and lower back support, adjustable armrests and seats that support even weight distribution.

- **Maximizing space** – Nearly 50 percent of telecommuters say their home office clutter hinders productivity. Desk and drawer organizers are cost-effective ways to tame clutter, and multi-function devices, such as all-in-one printers, can help save space.

- **Improving ergonomics** – When constructing their home office, only 1 percent of respondents received support with ergonomic set-up. Companies can help employees be more productive and healthy by providing ergonomic equipment that maximizes comfort, along with set-up assistance and tips for use.

“It’s important to make the work-from-home experience a safe, productive and positive one for employees, with quality furniture and a layout that’s conducive to maximum efficiency,” said John Michael, vice president and general manager of Business Interiors by Staples, the furniture and interior design division of Staples Advantage. “We make it easy for companies to support telecommuting programs in a cost-effective way, by simplifying furniture procurement and home office set-up.”

Business Interiors by Staples is one of the largest commercial furniture dealers in North America and offers comprehensive telecommuting solutions for enterprises, including:

- Space planning consultations to simplify and improve home office design
- Extensive product selection to fit any budget
- Customized furniture packages for turnkey implementation
- Easy online ordering for remote workers
- Delivery, installation and clean-up services
Technology Needs

In addition to Internet connectivity and access to company networks, key considerations for telecommuters include:

- **Communication tools** - Telecommuters say they rely on email (96 percent), instant messaging (68 percent), videoconferencing (44 percent) and unified communications technologies (25 percent) to stay connected.

- **Security** - A proactive security strategy can help telecommuters prevent data loss, breaches and viruses, which can be spread to company networks. More than two-thirds of telecommuters say they didn’t receive IT security training in preparation for home office work. Fortunately, many are applying good judgment and security best practices – 95 percent say they install operating system updates right away and 84 percent don’t store personal data on their machines.

- **Data backup** - Nearly 1 in 3 telecommuters say they never back up their data – leaving themselves and their companies vulnerable to data loss. It’s important to educate telecommuters on how and when to back up their data. Data backups should be automated and tested to ensure functionality.

“Data can be the lifeblood of an organization, so it’s important to provide telecommuters with IT training and security best practices,” said Ed Ludwigson, vice president and general manager for Staples Technology Solutions, the technology products and services division of Staples Advantage. “Because advances in technology continue to help dissolve geographical barriers, companies should also provide their telecommuters with tools that make it easy and efficient to collaborate and stay connected.”

With the right set-up and support from employers, telecommuting programs can be rewarding and productive options for employees. In fact, telecommuters claim they’d even be willing to sacrifice a few of their favorite things to continue working from home. Respondents would give up their favorite TV show (54 percent), forgo an extra hour of sleep (48 percent), swear off a favorite food (40 percent) or take a pay cut (40 percent) rather than stop telecommuting.

For more information about Staples Advantage and solutions to support telecommuting programs, please visit www.staplesadvantage.com.

About the Survey

Staples Advantage conducted an online survey, with responses from more than 140 telecommuters at companies of various sizes and across industries. The survey, conducted in May 2011, asked respondents, who work at least one day per week from home, about their home office set-up, furniture and technology, as well as their overall experiences telecommuting.

About Staples Advantage

Staples Advantage, the business-to-business division of Staples, Inc. (Nasdaq: SPLS), serves organizations of 20 or more employees up to the Fortune 1000, including global businesses, local, state and federal government, healthcare organizations and educational institutions. The Staples Advantage one source solution includes comprehensive products and services from office supplies, technology and printing to promotional products, furniture and facility supplies. Dedicated to providing organizations with greater cost savings and improved ordering efficiencies, Staples Advantage provides a customized level of account support and best-in-class customer service. More information is available at http://www.staplesadvantage.com.

About Staples

Staples is the world’s largest office products company and a trusted source for office solutions. The company provides products, services and expertise in office supplies, copy & print, technology, facilities and breakroom, and furniture. Staples invented the office superstore concept in 1986 and now has annual sales of $25 billion, ranking second in the world in eCommerce sales. With 90,000 associates worldwide, Staples operates in 26 countries throughout North and South America, Europe, Asia and Australia, making it easy for businesses of all sizes, and consumers. The company is headquartered outside Boston. More information about Staples (Nasdaq: SPLS) is available at www.staples.com/media.


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