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\$400 billion savings could result from telework, report says

By Marcia Heroux Pounds, Sun Sentinel

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Remote work policies could save U.S. businesses more than \$400 billion a year in increased productivity, lower office costs and reduced absenteeism and staff turnover, according to a report released Tuesday by Telework Research Network.

The study found that a company with 100 employees that instituted telework policies could save about \$576,000 a year.

Many businesses have seen increased productivity through telework, said Bernardo de Albergaria, general manager of global marketing and eCommerce at Citrix Online, a division of Fort Lauderdale-based Citrix Systems, which commissioned the study.

Citrix, which offers products for telework including GoToMeeting, GoToMyPc and GoToTraining, declined to say what it paid for the research.

Three-quarters of the Citrix Online work force regularly does their jobs from remote locations.

Betty Wiesenfeld, Citrix Online's business development manager of government, education and health, works from her home in [Boca Raton](#) half the time.

"If there's an airport delay and I don't get home until 3 a.m., I can still make an 8:30 a.m. meeting at home," says Wiesenfeld.

She often works at home when she has a project that requires concentration. "I have a lot less distractions and I can be a lot more productive," she says.


The U.S. Census Bureau puts the number of at-home workers at 5.9 million in 2008, with 370,545 of them residing in Florida. But the census doesn't count those working from remote locations other than home. At least 40 percent of U.S. population holds jobs that could be done at home, according to the most recent numbers available.

Kate Lister, lead researcher for Telework Research Network, said trust by company management has been the biggest stumbling block to more remote work. "It's management born in the days of typing pools and sweatshops. Most of them just want to see workers in the office, just to be sure," Lister said.

But others said there are some hurdles to employees' teleworking.

"It works in some places and not in others," said Mark Neuberger, a lawyer with Foley & Lardner in Miami. Issues, he said, include wage and hour law compliance, if the employee is paid hourly; protection of confidential company information; and worker's compensation coverage.

"There are ways around all of that," said Neuberger, who happened to be working from home on Tuesday



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because he was sick. Many of his clients use telework on an intermittent basis, when employees need to be home to meet a repair person, or have personal or caregiver issues.

Database Editor John Maines contributed to this report.

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