

Tarkett GmbH: Telework in the Production Industry: SME Case 19

Overview

Tarkett GmbH with registered office in Konz (Rhineland-Palatinate) is one of many production plants of Tarkett Sommer AG. Here, floor and wall coverings as well as plastic sheeting is produced. The industrial company employs approx. 400 employees. The work model telework was first practised here in the area of remote maintenance for production machines. It was necessary to be able to access the company network outside of regular working hours, i.e. from home. Particularly after technical disturbances during the three-shift operation, the computer specialists were in demand around the clock. The solution was remote maintenance.

Practice

In time the technical development had progressed so well that it was also desired to utilise the advantages of telework in other areas. Therefore, starting in spring 1996, managers and clerical staff were provided with tele-workplaces. In all 12 employees carry out telework for Tarkett GmbH. It is planned to provide further tele-workplaces in the future.

In order to legally regulate and secure telework an agreement for a project period of initially one year was drawn up between management and the works council. The employer pays for the home PC and proportionately reimburses the costs for an ISDN connection. In addition, the communication costs arising from telework are reimbursed. If the agreement is not terminated it is renewed automatically.

Regarding data security the following solution was found: the teleworker is bound to the same regulations as any other employee in the office. The teleworker has access to the internal network by passwords and a so-called callback procedure. This works as follows: the teleworker logs on to the system with his PC, which has a particular identity code. The system automatically calls the PC back using the given code. This identifies the user. Such a procedure prevents an unauthorised user gaining access to the internal system even if this user logs on with the correct password.

Experience

All 12 teleworkers of Tarkett GmbH are longstanding, trusted employees of the company. In the opinion of management this is an important prerequisite for the successful application of telework. Apart from that, the possibility of carrying out work inspections is available. This can be done by system access measuring or by inspecting the data amounts transmitted. This inspection method is used, for example, with accounts personnel.

Telework had several advantages for the company, the faster reaction time after disturbances within production being of particular significance. Data processing

support, for example, can be ensured around the clock. This solution means for staff that they are saved from difficult (night, bad weather) and time consuming trips. By means of remote support they are also able to react much faster and can repair occurring errors within a very short period of time. Because of alternating telework, each support employee can be deployed as a 24 hour „help desk“ once a week without a lot of effort. Within administration flexible working time is mentioned as one of the most important advantages. In the past, nearly all part time employees wanted to work only in the mornings, today the distorted patterns of these work peaks can be chronologically corrected.