

## **TWG GmbH: Virtual Enterprise: SME Case 21**

### *Overview*

The TWG Central Office – teleworking services and problem solutions – with registered office in Schmalenberg (Rhineland-Palatinate) was founded in 1996. The transfer from individual firm to GmbH, which trades as TWG – The Webworker Group – Gesellschaft für Virtual Business Services mbH, took place on 1<sup>st</sup> October 1998. The new registered office is in Frankfurt/Main. TWG is one of the few service companies in Germany to have its organisation based on a purely virtual structure. Ms Arnold, managing director of TWG GmbH, was able to gain experience as a teleworker prior to the formation of the company. Having experienced the advantages of telework, i.e. the better integration of job and family and not having to commute to a workplace, she was encouraged to start her own teleworking company aiming its services primarily at women in underdeveloped areas.

### *Practice*

At TWG one will not find the classic office from which employees handle jobs. Rather the corporate concept is on the virtual cooperation of the individual employees. As a result one will not find any employees or office buildings at TWG. Twelve staff members with different qualifications on freelance basis form the core team of TWG; an additional 50 specialists can be involved in projects when required. All of them work from their home offices for the headquarters. Ms Arnold coordinates the whole organisation. She handles job acquisition and coordinates the smooth handling of projects. As soon as a new order has been received Ms Arnold refers back to the interdisciplinary employee pool and forms a team whose shared abilities correspond best to the project requirements. TWGs' services range from classic services such as data and word processing, telephone marketing / call services, translations, information brokering, ghost-writing, editing and literature research to the complete marketing range of services. An important aspect of the services offered is the maintaining of internet presentations. This primarily includes the independent actualisation of contents and requires intensive observation of events within the respective industry in order to filter out the optimum for each customer.

The TWG Central Office is equipped with everything required for smooth communication and data transfer: PC, LAN, internet, email, telephone and fax. Communication with teleworkers that have only analogous equipment available to them at their home is handled exclusively by electronic communication. However, personal contact continues to be an important prerequisite for successful cooperation.

## *Experience*

This innovative corporate concept has brought a range of advantages. Heike Arnold: „By doing without office buildings and expensive office equipment we are able to offer our qualified services at excellent value for money. Another advantage for our customers is the possibility to fall back on specialists from all kinds of specialised areas depending on the individual project requirements. This is of particular interest to companies that are not in a position to employ their own personnel for certain specialised areas.“

One of the crucial success factors in the whole enterprise is the fact that all employees who work within the TWG network act as individual entrepreneurs themselves within each project. Any entrepreneurial outlook means acting responsible and having a high level of commitment, a guarantee for optimal handling of each project. The virtual conception of the company also creates, apart from know-how advantages, significant cost advantages which support the marketing of the services.

TWG's innovative concept is described by the managing director herself as follows: „We at TWG consider ourselves pioneers who have successfully implemented today that which will be normal in the more human and technology adjusted working world of the next millennium. Work, irrespective of time and place – adjusted to the needs of the people and their customers“.