

Two Point Seven: Mobile Teleworking in an Advertising Agency: SME Case 22

Overview

Ms Czech became self-employed in 1996 starting the public relations and advertising agency Two Point Seven with registered office in Feucht (near Nuremberg). After relocating she did not want to give up her job eventhough she was now located 160 km away from her customer. The agency was designed as a home office allowing her to continue handling her contracts.

Practice

The managing director of this „one-woman“ agency works in cooperation with partners *inter alia* from Switzerland. These partners are self-employed teleworkers in the graphic design, layout and photography sectors. All work results are exchanged in digitised format. Ms Czech mainly practices mobile telework. She travels a lot because the main motto of her business is personal contact with the customer. When travelling she always brings her notebook. By datacard and mobile phone she is able to check mails while travelling and can log into the office computer if necessary in case she has forgotten an important document for a customer meeting.

Cooperation with partners is based on most modern communication means. „Effective agency work can only be carried out on an optimal communication basis.“ Ms Czech therefore pays particular attention to good technical equipment including a video conferencing system. Application sharing enables all project partners to joint access to applications and files. Documents can be drafted in teamwork and edited online. By means of a virtual sketchpad all members of a meeting are able to interactively submit notes, sketches and drawings to the discussion.

The joint telework was not legally regulated. The performance provided is measured by result. With tasks such as acquisition or mailing campaigns teleworkers record their time effort and assessment is carried out on that basis.

Experience

Ms Czech considers the improved contacts and the increased productivity as advantages of telework: „The combination of picture, language and data creates a closer and more personal relationship between the parties involved.“ The joint access to data and interactive simultaneous work on the documents result in timesavings and prevents misunderstandings. The managing director of the agency considers telework as an opportunity for middle-sized companies in the media sector in particular, especially with a view to the creation of competitive advantages and therefore the safeguarding of the survivability of SMEs in today's market.

An additional positive aspect for Two Point Seven is the possibility of overcoming the spatial distance to individual cooperation partners located in Hamburg, Munich and Cologne. Ms Czech considers that the insufficient technical equipment of some cooperation partners can be problematic. Video conferencing systems in particular are used too seldom even though they considerably improve the workflow.