



International Facility Management Association

Press Release

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### **New Research Reveals Latest Trends in Distributed Work Strategies**

HOUSTON — (May 7, 2009) — The International Facility Management Association is pleased to announce the release of “[Distributed Work: Research Report #31](#),” a comprehensive resource that details trends in both on- and off-site distributed work strategies and defines the common terms associated with these work settings. The new report features 10 case studies that demonstrate how companies around the world — including AT&T, Bank of America, BP, Hewlett-Packard, Microsoft and Sprint Nextel — are implementing their own distributed work programs.

Distributed work strategy is a catchall phrase for work that is spread among workers in variable locations and occurs at varying times. Based on a survey of 951 built environment professionals, IFMA’s new research report reveals some telling trends impacting today’s workplace strategies.

Sixty percent of facility professionals responding to the survey report using unassigned workspace in their facilities, with 40 percent either dedicating or assigning all workspace. While nearly half of respondents noted an increase in employees utilizing unassigned workspace over the past two years, only 37 percent have increased their unassigned workspace allocation. Though cost savings may seem like a natural benefit of on-site alternative workplace options, very few facility practitioners indicated significant decreases or increases on overall operating costs, and more than 40 percent reported no effect.

Telecommuting was the most common off-site workplace strategy reported, with 56 percent of respondents noting its use within their organizations. The top reasons for considering or implementing an off-site workplace strategy included flexibility, work/life balance and cost savings, while the greatest impediments to implementing off-site options were management’s resistance to change, organizational culture and technology constraints. Not surprisingly, facility professionals cited employees under 30 years old as having the most interest in distributed workplace options, with 71 percent reporting a strong appeal to that age group.

“In light of today’s economy, companies that are able to shed underutilized real estate by not assigning dedicated workstations will come out ahead,” said Shari Epstein, IFMA director of research. “Allowing workers to choose where they work — often closer to home — minimizes the impact on the environment. The technology is already in place; however, there is still the concern that without sufficient face time, the visibility and value of one’s contribution is diminished.”

As evidenced in the research report and its case studies, businesses adopt distributed work strategies for a variety of reasons, from increased productivity and saving on real estate costs to employee benefits and environmental sustainability. Case study researchers contacted leading organizations known for successfully implementing distributed work practices, selecting to profile companies from a variety of industries.

In each case study, the researcher focused on how the company developed solutions that were linked to their overall business strategy. Researchers sought to capture the specific, measurable goals companies used when implementing new solutions and ways of measuring the success of these companies' strategies.

"I believe this is the first research report of its kind," said Joel Ratekin, president and founder of Ratekin Consulting, who helped develop the case studies. "These best practice case studies help facility professionals understand why progressive leaders are choosing to deploy new, alternative workplace solutions for the health of their business and their workforce."

While distributed work strategies will continue to evolve and change, this research report and its case studies can serve as a tool for facility professionals developing their own distributed work strategies or evaluating the plan they have in place as they seek the strategies that will lead to optimum productivity for their organizations.

To learn more about "Distributed Work: Research Report #31" or to order a copy of the report, visit [www.ifma.org/tools/research/31.cfm](http://www.ifma.org/tools/research/31.cfm). Members of the media may receive the report at no cost. For information about other IFMA research reports, visit [www.ifma.org/tools/research/research.cfm](http://www.ifma.org/tools/research/research.cfm).

IFMA is the world's largest and most widely recognized international association for professional facility managers, supporting more than 19,500 members in 60 countries. The association's members, represented in 125 chapters and 16 councils worldwide, manage more than 37 billion square feet of property and annually purchase more than US\$100 billion in products and services. Formed in 1980, IFMA certifies facility managers, conducts research, provides educational programs, recognizes facility management certificate programs and produces World Workplace, the world's largest facility management conference and exposition. To join and follow IFMA's social media outlets online, visit the association's [LinkedIn](#), [Facebook](#), [YouTube](#) and [Twitter](#) pages. For more information, visit the [IFMA press room](#) or [www.ifma.org](http://www.ifma.org).

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