

On the Job for July 24, 2015

Nancy Mackevich Glazer

### Managing a Virtual Workforce

While virtual workers have become more commonplace, some simple strategies can help partners become more comfortable with these arrangements.

1. **Change perspective.** Just because you don't have daily face-to-face contact, doesn't mean you still can't monitor and motivate your staff. You may not see employees working, but you can still hold them accountable for results.
2. **Set clear expectations.** Establish set working hours and require employees to have a dedicated virtual workspace. Set standards for hardware and software (and perhaps purchase some or all of this equipment). Include this information in your employee handbook.
3. **Use technology.** Skype and Google Hangouts allow video chatting. Google Documents enables document sharing. Facebook and LinkedIn have new collaboration tools for easy communication. You can also verify that work is getting done using project-management tools like Microsoft Project and Basecamp. (Just be careful that you don't create bad morale; don't overuse these tools, emailing or calling.)

A virtual workforce can be dually productive and collaborative. You can still make the effort to meet employees for team-building and bonding. This balance can keep both your virtual and your on-site employees feeling connected and energized.