

Talking of Grading...

Working more effectively

Home Working for Private Hire

In a recently published article it was revealed that *'many workers lose on average a day a week just getting to work'*. It goes on to say that travel getting to and from work could equate to *two whole years wasted over a lifetime!*

Of course in our industry the car is often the only practical means of transporting our valuable clients on their many varied daily journeys. This is quite often to and from work but comprises other 'incidental' travelling that they undertake whilst at work, in particular the link up journeys that need to be undertaken in the course of their working day.

Much has been said about flexible working and in recent times **The Confederation of British Industry (CBI)** has rejected the notion that parents should be the only workers to request more flexible working hours. This recognises that flexible working would help many of the other 29 million UK workers to balance their home and work lives better.

In our industry in particular, there is a considerable amount of flexible working already due to the fact that in most cases **Licensed Private Hire Operator's** activities span the full **24 hours of the day**.

Today there is becoming a significant shift to **'Home Working'**, for example for people who wish to work but cannot do so because of disability, family or other commitments whatever they may be.

With the latest telephony and technology that is now available, it is more than possible to engage the services of skilled telephonists working from home in what are known as a 'virtual call centres', which have direct links to an operator's operational base.

This also benefits many disabled people who may not be able to travel to, or easily access, some **Licensed Operating Centres** to ply their skills by enabling them to work many more hours and contribute as part of a 'virtual team'.



VoIP (Voice over Internet Protocol) is a way to make or receive phone calls using the **Internet**, rather than a traditional landline and this enables workers to make and receive calls from other **VoIP users, mobile users and people with ordinary landlines**. *The link between any ordinary line and VoIP is undetectable to callers.*

Licensed Operators with many telephonists (**teleworkers**) are likely to get the maximum benefit from **VoIP**. It cuts your business telephony costs as all calls to other **VoIP** phone users are free and other calls are generally cheap.

To enable such home working for a home worker you simply need a PC with booking and VoIP enabled software simply connected by the internet to your main operating centre. Once the **call taker** is trained they can be added to your **telephonist / call taking team**, even to the extent that they can be paid by the call or just utilised when demand is high, this at low cost to you and extra income to them.

by **GEOFF WRIGHT**



When the **Minister for State for Children, Young People and Families** said in February that all jobs should be advertised as Part Time, Job-Share or Flexible, her views were based on the notion of extending the right to request flexible working to everyone. She went on to imply that this would be a natural progression towards enabling workers to balance their home and working environments more effectively.

To the best of my belief our industry is getting the right balance and indeed it is a fact that some **Private Hire Companies**, particularly in **London**, already use **'home workers'** (in the capacities I have previously mentioned), with great success.

Whether this success is because of family commitments or to avoid the rigours and related distress of trying to get to and from work is not clear.

What is clear though is that it works very well, plus it is very effective and highly professional. We all know that to be greeted on the telephone by an experienced call taker is something which enhances the booking process and the Company's image with resulting consequences for future business.

Some of the advantages for operators are:

- Less office space needed
- Reduced costs
- Call takers on demand

Some of the advantages for call takers are:

- Extra / new Income
- No travel and associated costs
- More time with families

We all know a happy business is a successful business and the opportunities offered by today's telephony and technology presents many great opportunities both to operators and their future employees.

The LPHCA hopes to present to our **members** (in conjunction with our industry telephony and computer system suppliers) a workshop on home working at some stage and I am sure this will be another successful innovation for our industry and the way we will all work in future.

For information on **VoIP** please contact
LPHCA telephony partners **LCC** on **0800 652256**
or see their advert on page 31)