

BEST PLACES TO WORK IN THE BAY AREA 2009

VOX NETWORK SOLUTIONS — NO. 2 — SMALL EMPLOYERS (25-50)

Workers keep productive by staying at home often

BY DAVID MILLS
San Francisco Business Times Contributor

Vox Network Solutions has discovered a way to keep its employees happy: Let them stay home.

While that philosophy might seem risky or even crazy to some executives, it has worked well at the burgeoning voice and data network services company.

Most of Vox's 45 employees travel to the firm's South San Francisco headquarters only once or twice a week, and some even less than that.

That's because Vox allows workers to use their home offices as a base. The company also outfits its sales and service employees with the cell phones, laptops and other equipment they need.

Scott Landis, Vox's chief executive officer, says the company's stay-at-home system increases productivity. Workers, he said, aren't wasting two or three hours each day commuting. They start their workday earlier, and they can adjust their schedules to fit their workload.

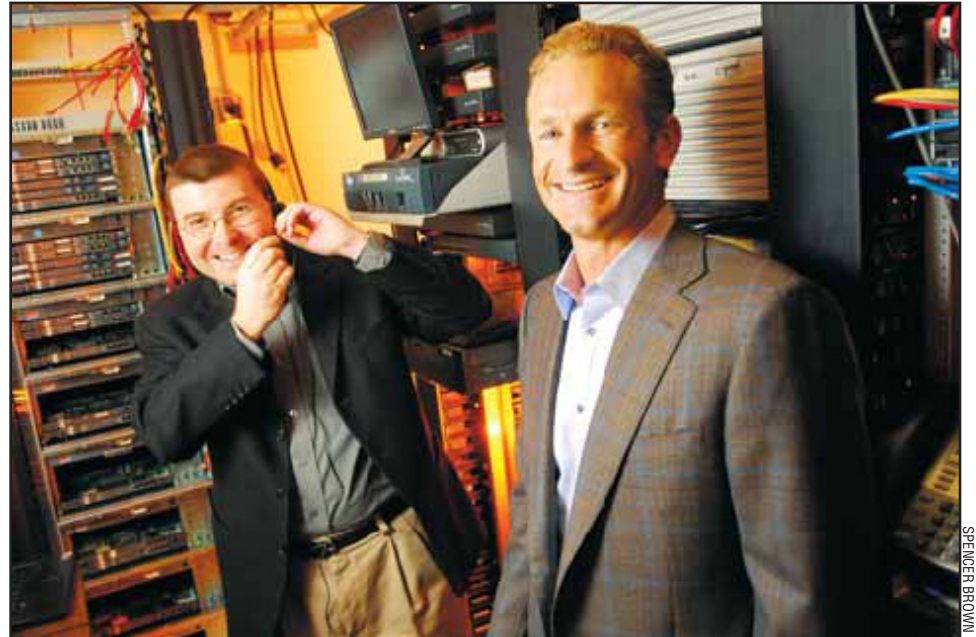
"It creates efficiency," Landis said. "It also creates trust between the company and the employees."

Igor Kopman, Vox's human resources director, adds that the setup gives employees flexibility and doesn't burden them with certain typical office tasks. They are also encouraged to make certain decisions in the field without consulting with management.

"It gives them a level of empowerment," said Kopman. "It creates a rewarding environment for people to work."

Kevin Bryant has worked at Vox since it started three years ago. The account executive does much of his work from his home in Livermore or at his clients' offices. He visits Vox's headquarters twice a month for sales meetings, training sessions or to drop off a contract.

The arrangement allows him to skip the three-hour round-trip commute across the



Landis (right) and Kopman say flexibility is vital for trust and efficiency at work.

San Francisco Bay. When necessary, he also can help his wife with their 6-month-old daughter or take his 4-year-old son to school.

Bryant says he always gets his work done because, regardless of the location, he and his co-workers must be productive and motivated.

"I have so many action items that if I don't do my work, things start to pile up," he said.

Landis says another key is bringing in the right people. Vox typically hires people with at least 10 years experience as well as individuals who fit in with its corporate culture.

"We try to recruit the best and brightest. People with the right attitude and the right skills," he said.

Landis says the hiring standards accentuate employee motivation because they enjoy working with well-qualified co-workers.

"Part of the reason they love their job is they are working with competent, smart

Vox Network Solutions

CEO: Scott Landis.
Headquarters: South San Francisco.
Number of Bay Area employees: 45.
Score: 95.91.

people," he said.

Bryant agrees.

"We have a good group of people," he said. "We rely on each other."

Vox also offers employee stock options and has created employee committees, where workers gather and offer feedback and ideas.

"Our people are pretty motivated to make the company and themselves succeed," said Kopman.

Landis says their focus on employee satisfaction is one reason Vox continues to grow three years into its existence.

"It's one of our core values," he said. "Without your people, you don't have a business."