

CASE STUDY

CREATING THE “NEW NORMAL” IN EMPLOYEE FLEXIBILITY

*American AgCredit
& Curt Steinhorst*



After 18 months of the pandemic, businesses were growing increasingly eager to get their staffs back into the office. But over those same 18 months, employees learned they could complete their work, deliver on their responsibilities, and keep their organizations running, all from home... and they liked it.

Project Overview

American Ag Credit (AAC) looked at the return-to-office situation with a skeptical eye and realized that following the lead of other financial services companies — expecting employees to return to offices and branches — was not necessarily the right move for them or their team. Instead, AAC connected with Focuswise CEO Curt Steinhorst to gain a better understanding of the situation and plot a strategic course forward.

Solution

AAC initiated its Focuswise consulting engagement with several general but robust conversations between Steinhorst and Chief People Experience Officer Rich Hollis. Among their topics was the critical challenge of returning to normal operations from the remote work environment forced by the pandemic.

AAC then engaged Steinhorst to share his insights and expertise with the 12-member executive team as they considered how best to return to normal business operations. In a virtual presentation, Steinhorst shared his insights into the current talent market and employee expectations, as well as the competencies that can be developed and supported to allow a productive, remote work environment. A follow-up video from Steinhorst highlighted key points for the executive team to consider as they moved forward with their return-to-office plan.

Results

With the insights Steinhorst provided, AAC's leadership undertook a hefty challenge:



1 Creating and then maintaining a healthy, productive and focused work environment that capitalizes on technology to support a broadly remote employee workforce. That construct would be designed to meet their current employees' expectation of flexibility and help AAC continue to attract the most qualified employees, while simultaneously continuing to deliver value and service to its customers. In short, they decided to create a new "normal."

2 AAC launched its WorkFlex program in September to overwhelmingly positive employee response. The program defines three categories of employees: full-time remote, part-time remote or hybrid, and full-time in-office. Every position has been reviewed and categorized with the goal of enabling the most work flexibility. Based on this careful analysis, fewer than 20% of employees are needed in the office full-time. Employees designated as part-time remote will determine with their managers an in-office schedule that meets the employee's, business', and customers' needs, whether that's two or three days a week, or one day every two weeks. Full-time remote employees are expected to travel as needed for specific meetings or events. And all employees have been assured that, whatever their status, they are welcome in any AAC office at any time.

3 AAC expects that this flexible approach, informed by its consulting engagement with Focuswise, will enable it to attract and retain top talent, and from a much broader pool of applicants since location is no longer a critical consideration for the majority of its team. More, it's confident that WorkFlex serves the goal of keeping employees safe, happy and healthy while delivering exceptional service to its customers.

Curt Steinhorst is one of the many forward thinking consultants in the FCCS Consulting Network. For more information on his consulting, or other available consultants and solutions, visit:

www.fccsconsulting.com/consulting-network.