

6 Telecommuting



1 telecommute



2 gallery



3 Skype™



4 Basecamp®

Project 1
Project 2
Project 3

5 color coding

Mr. Tobin,

I'm writing to you today on behalf of several employees with a request to start a **telecommuting** program here at Zone Solutions. To do so will require changes, but they would ultimately benefit our company.

I suggest that we invest in **Basecamp®**. It's a **web-based** software package. Regardless of where we're working, it will increase productivity. Basically, we would **centralize** all projects, communication and updates.

Basecamp® opens in any browser, so employees can use it from home or the office. And it's easy to navigate, so there's no training required. **Color-coding** identifies different projects. The **dashboard** displays recently accessed files, so we can all see what is being worked on. The project **gallery** allows everyone to **toggle** quickly between files. And a **message board** is updated in **real time** to facilitate rapid exchanges.

In addition to Basecamp®, free **Skype™** software can be downloaded for any communications that require speaking person to person. We can have conference calls with clients around the world without even needing a phone. Should you require specific details, I would be happy to discuss the issue with you. Additionally, both Backpack® and Skype™ offer **tours** with detailed information about their products.

I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,
Erica Robin
Erica Robin



6 message board

Reading

2 Read the letter from an employee to a business owner. Then, choose the right answers.

- What is the employee doing in the letter?
 - requesting that the company reorganize projects
 - proposing an expansion of the telecommuting program
 - suggesting that the company create web-based software
 - explaining how employees could work from home
- According to the letter, the dashboard...
 - identifies projects by color.
 - helps users toggle between files.
 - shows what is being worked on.
 - allows communication without a phone.
- What can be inferred about Skype™?
 - It is a part of the Basecamp® software package.
 - It requires users to pay a monthly subscription.
 - It provides better sound quality than phones.
 - It allows users talk to each other on computers.

Get ready!

1 Before you read the passage, talk about these questions.

- What are the benefits of telecommuting?
- What are the challenges of telecommuting, for workers and management?

Vocabulary

3 Match the words (1-6) with the definitions (A-F).

- | | |
|----------------|--------------------|
| 1 __ toggle | 4 __ web-based |
| 2 __ dashboard | 5 __ telecommute |
| 3 __ real time | 6 __ message board |

- A being updated as new information arrives
 B to switch from one file to another
 C a display that shows recently used files
 D available on the Internet
 E a series of pages that offer information about a product
 F to work away from an office using technology

4 Place the words from the word bank under the correct heading.

Word BANK

Basecamp® centralize tour gallery
 Skype™ color-code

Programs	Actions	Website Features
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

5 Listen and read the letter from an employee to a business owner again. How will employees be able to check on which files are being accessed?

Listening

6 Listen to a conversation between an employee and manager. Mark the following statements as true (T) or false (F).

- Basecamp® allows users to monitor production.
- The message board must be updated by users.
- Employees who telecommute will need high speed connections.

7 Listen again and complete the conversation.

- O: Well, I can understand the employees' 1 _____. However, I have some questions.
 E: I would expect so. Is there 2 _____?
 O: Let's start with production. I'd need a way to check that people are getting work done at home.
 E: Absolutely. The Basecamp® program would take care of that.
 O: Really? I 3 _____ the tour, but I didn't see anything about monitoring production.
 E: It's on the dashboard. It shows all the files being worked on, and who's working on them.
 O: Okay, 4 _____. Now, what about communication?
 E: Well, there's the 5 _____.

Speaking

8 With a partner, act out the roles below based on Task 7. Then, switch roles.

USE LANGUAGE SUCH AS:

*I'm glad you're considering my proposal.
 The Basecamp® program would take care of that.
 What about communication?*

Student A: You are talking to an employee. Ask Student B about:

- monitoring production
- communication

Student B: You are talking to an owner. Answer student A's questions.

Writing

9 You are a manager and you are starting a telecommuting program. Use the letter and the conversation from Task 8 to explain the program in a memo to members of staff. (120-150 words). Talk about:

- What programs you will use
- How projects will be organized
- Ways you will communicate