# Servicing the work-from-home consumer

**Dynamic scheduling will help the operator maintain margins as more employees use home offices.**

Today's modern world has many advantages for the business world. Laptops and mobile devices allow owners to view reports and respond to important issues from practically anywhere. In many professions, people are able to do their job from home — which has led to a critical issue for vending operators. The number of employees at a location is reduced, and worse, at an inconsistent rate since many employees don't have a set schedule of when they work from home.



Vending needs to adjust to more employees working from home.

### Problem: inconsistent workers

The latest research from Global Workplace Analytics reports that the number of teleworking or telecommuting employees has increased more than 79 percent from 2005 to 2012. It grew 16 percent alone during the recession. While the numbers of employees working from home has slowed, it isn't expected to go anywhere but up as more companies take advantage of things like the "cloud" and internet based management systems. This is proving difficult for the vending operator to react to. Traditionally, if sales dropped at the vending bank, operators could change the product mix or perhaps add another payment option, such as cashless, but these solutions don't help when the consumer isn't on location.

**TELEMETRY** *allows operators to adjust supply to the need.*

### Solution: telemetry

Honestly, there are only two profitable solutions to a location whose employees are showing erratic in-office hours. The first is to stop service, but if the revenue still exists and it's just a matter of getting your costs down, dynamic scheduling is a great solution. The telemetry involved allows an operator to view the service schedule of a machine and what products are there. Anant Agrawal, CMO of Cantaloupe Systems reports that most operators he works with are surprised by how many machines they are "over servicing" when they first start with telemetry. Usually it is the route driver who is closest to the location, explains Agrawal. Therefore it was the driver who adjusted the service schedule and products based on sales, but this was very subjective and only as good as the drivers' instincts. He said, "With telemetry and dynamic scheduling, the data is there and owners can make decisions based on fact efficiently without being overwhelmed with all the new information."

While new technology and better products might invite people to visit the vending machines more often, the reality is no one is going to drive to work just to use a vender when they can work from home. That means that the only way vending operators can increase their profitability at these accounts is to lower costs and service machines only when needed. They can service more locations with the same number of drivers and get other added benefits of telemetry.

In the end, it's about evolving. The operator must evolve with technology. And they must use technology to do it. ◄