



EMPLOYER PROFILE

MEETING EMPLOYEE NEEDS, MEETING EMPLOYER NEEDS: THE ASSEDO CONSULTING STORY

Pictured Above: President and CEO of Assedo Consulting, Odessa Phillip, bikes to work daily, and provides safe bike storage in the office for employees who wish to do the same.

When Odessa Phillip launched Assedo Consulting, a Laurel-based firm focusing on transportation, infrastructure, and public parks, eight years ago, she had a clear vision of the kind of company she wanted to lead and the tools she needed to get there. “When I worked for other people, I always wished I had more flexibility to be able to set my work schedule, and also to be able to cycle to work,” Phillip said. “So when I started my own company, I was not only going to make sure I had those perks, but that all my employees did, as well.”

Phillip implemented a telework program at Assedo, allowing all of her employees to work from home one day a week, and also gave her employees schedule flexibility on other days of the week. “A lot of our work takes place outside the office, so we encourage our employees to reduce their travel by not coming in to the office on days when they will be spending part of the day in the field,” Phillip said. Assedo staff take full advantage of this perk. “We had one employee who told us when they started that they didn’t want to telework, but within a few months they were taking their remote work day just like everyone else. It’s very useful for our employees who have long commutes.”

In Phillip’s eyes, the popularity of this perk is the point. “We offer telework because it helps us be a responsible steward of the environment, which is a core value for our company, and it helps us recruit and retain employees. But my metric for the success of the telework program is that everyone uses it and takes full advantage of it, which they do.” The company has needed to tweak its telework program over time, to ensure that everyone could be together in the office for meetings on certain days of the week. Now Assedo employees are expected to take their telework day either on Wednesday or Friday.

Telework is not the only transportation-related benefit offered by Assedo. Phillip takes pride in the work she’s done to make her company a bicycle-friendly workplace, as well. When she chose an office location for her business, the owner of the complex had a clause in every lease banning bicycles from the building. “I wanted to be able to bike to work, and I wanted my employees to be able to bike to work, and I knew we would need secure bicycle storage. So I successfully negotiated with the landlord to be able to bring bicycles into our offices,” said Phillip.

As Assedo gets ready to open its third office location, in Baltimore City, Phillip is still working to make sure that the benefits she offers meet her employees needs. “During the pandemic, we’ve found ways to make full-time telework function for us, even though we’re not in the same place,” said Phillip. “There are benefits to being in the same place that I don’t want to lose, but I might talk to my employees to see how a second telework day would affect them.” Phillip sees that kind of consultation as crucial to the success of transportation benefits at any firm. “If you offer programs that benefit your employees,” she said, “you end up with employees that want to do their best for the company, so find out what incentives your employees need to do their best.”

“My metric for the success of the telework program is that everyone uses it and takes full advantage of it, which they do.”

-Odessa Phillip

President & CEO,
Assedo Consulting