

7 reasons to incorporate a flexible work culture

By [Paul Burrin](#)

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What hours did you work last week? Chances are, it wasn't 9-5.



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The world of work as we know it is changing. With new technology making it easier to work anywhere, anytime, the traditional 9-5 is effectively dead.

Having flexibility in their working schedule is now a key priority for employees, helping them to successfully juggle work and personal responsibilities.

In fact, more than [80% of 3,500 employees](#) Sage People polled globally placed importance and value on flexible and remote working.

Valuing a work life balance has become increasingly important – whether this is to meet family needs, personal obligations or just to avoid rush hour – it is clear that giving employees increased control over their work schedule is good for employees, making it good for business.

With that in mind, here are seven reasons business leaders should be embracing the benefits of flexible working.

1. The world of work has changed

The line between work life and home life is much more blurred than it was just a few years ago.

For example, it's now common for people to demand virtual meetings, the ability to work from home, and even have 'duvet days' when required, rather than having to suffer through the dreaded commute for hours every day.

Furthermore, modern work responsibilities are often cross-functional, requiring staff to interact with more people in different time zones.

As a result, constraints on how, where and when we work, should be updated to reflect this cultural shift.

Businesses must be prepared to accept that the working world has changed if they want to truly motivate and engage employees.

2. There's a war for talent

With top talent becoming more challenging to attract and retain, many industries are facing widespread skills shortages.

This means in-demand employees can be more selective – and the desire for flexibility is a key factor.

For example, [a recent study](#) found that 54% of people would be willing to move jobs to gain greater flexibility.

Employers who offer flexible working will attract the best talent and will also be more likely to retain these employees for longer.

3. Flexible working boosts productivity

Workforce productivity has become a global issue. Our research shows that employees are typically working only 30 hours a week, which means there's a whole day when they're in the office, but not actually working.

What's more, most people who work a 40-hour week feel they are productive for only 3.75 days out of the 5-day working week.

Revolutionising productivity in new ways, such as giving employees the freedom to work in the way that best suits them, could go a long way towards narrowing the productivity gap and enabling businesses to get the most out of their staff.

4. Flexible working empowers employees, and shows you trust them

Our research also found that workers want to feel valued and recognised, with two-thirds (66%) of those surveyed seeing this as the most important aspect of their working life.

For many, this is more vital than office perks like games in the office or free food.

Giving employees the freedom to work in their own way shows they are a valued and trusted member of the team. It also empowers them to perform to a high standard and be as productive as possible.

5. It supports worker wellbeing

The health and wellbeing of staff has become more of a priority for businesses in recent years, while also being increasingly vital for employees themselves.

Over a third of employees polled (39%) believe HR and people teams could do more to improve wellness at work, with initiatives such as providing fresh fruit or offering a subsidised gym membership now proving popular.

Flexible working can help in this area by reducing stress (no more mad dashes in heavy traffic), making it something companies need to pay attention to.

6. Employees want flexible working

One of the most important reasons for businesses to embrace flexible working is simply because it's what staff want.

[According to Fuze](#), nearly 50% of workers across all generations want to be more mobile at work, rising to 70% for those aged 16-44.

Employees want to be able to pick up their kids from school, start and finish early if they have international calls first thing in the morning, or be able to head to a doctor's appointment without fear they may be considered to be slacking.

Businesses would therefore be wise to listen to what their employees want and respond accordingly.

7. Technology has changed

The most straightforward argument for remote working is that staff simply no longer need to be in the office to do their jobs effectively.

Most workers now have all the tools they need on their smartphones and tablets, which means they can comfortably work from anywhere – a coffee shop between meetings, their home, or somewhere they can work undistracted.

For example, cloud technology gives employees secure access to documents externally, while collaboration and communication tools enable staff to work together from opposite sides of the globe.

Isn't it time the way we work changed to reflect these capabilities?

Ultimately, enabling flexible working should be a focus for all businesses. From aiding talent retention, to creating positive workplace experiences – which is important to 92% of people – the long- and short-term benefits could prove invaluable.

Most importantly, giving employees flexibility will result in a happier, more engaged and more productive workforce.

In an age of continuing disruption and increasing competition, that's not something businesses can afford to ignore.

[Download Sage People's research](#) on what employees really want from their employers.

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