

Benefits of Flexible Working



1. Increased productivity from a results-driven approach based on trust, empowerment and accountability

Both a cause and result of trust between personnel and managers, flexible working arrangements (FWAs) promote results-driven management and dispel the notion that office presence is of utmost importance. Counter to common fears that staff will work less if doing so from home, a recent study by Oxford University Press reported that people working from home achieved a 13 per cent productivity improvement over their office-based counterparts.ⁱ



2. Reduced absenteeism and increased well-being

FWAs reduce unscheduled absences by providing the flexibility for staff to care for themselves and their families. In terms of psychological and physical well-being, reported benefits include reduced stress, a greater sense of control, a pleasant work environment and the ability to better integrate a healthy lifestyle into daily routine.ⁱⁱ



3. Business continuity

FWAs can support business continuity by allowing personnel to work remotely in situations that might otherwise preclude them from coming into work (e.g. transport strikes, extreme weather conditions). Additionally, such arrangements can ease the strain on personnel observing religious holidays, which may require fasting, and send a positive message of workplace accommodation for diverse religious practices.



4. Decreased operating costs

By increasing employee productivity, reducing facility costs, lowering absenteeism and reducing turnover, organizations can save on multiple fronts. An analysis of over 250 case studies found that companies reduce operating costs by more than USD 10,000 per year for every person who telecommutes half time.ⁱⁱⁱ



5. Attraction and retention of an engaged and diverse workforce

FWAs can increase recruitment and retention, including among personnel with disabilities and personnel with dependents with disabilities. For many women, flexibility is a key factor as they consider whether and how to juggle their career advancements with family aspirations. This life stage tends to align with mid-management levels and likely contributes to the dramatic drop in female representation at senior levels.^{iv} Flexibility is also important for men: a Pew Research Center study found that 50 per cent of men found it somewhat or very difficult to balance family life and work responsibilities.^v



ⁱ Bloom, N., J. Liang, J. Roberts and Z.J. Ying (2015). Does Working from Home Work? Evidence from a Chinese Experiment. *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 130, no. 1: 165-218.

ⁱⁱ Thompson, J. and E. Truch (2013). *The Flex Factor: Realising the Value of Flexible Working*.

ⁱⁱⁱ Catalyst (2013). "Flex works". www.catalyst.org

^{iv} See UN System HR Statistics Report (2017). CEB/2018/ HLCM/HR/22.

^v Parker, K. and W. Wang (2013). *Modern Parenthood: Roles of Moms and Dads Converge as They Balance Work and Family*. Pew Research Center: Social and Demographic Trends.