

FACTS ABOUT FLEXIBLE SCHEDULES

Flexible Work Scheduling: Adjustable scheduling such as four ten-hour days or other schedules to accommodate personal commitments or conflicts.

What are the costs and challenges of flexible schedules?

Although very few costs are associated with flexible scheduling, some employers find that the scheduling limitations flextime presents are hard to overcome. If your business requires team meetings or collaborative work sessions, flextime may leave you missing key players of your team. Trying to find a time when everyone you need to attend a meeting is available can be difficult with rotating or constantly changing schedules. Establishing a fair system for choosing shifts is imperative for flextime to be successful.

- Challenging to manage—supervisors cannot always see when work is being done;
- Bosses or supervisors are not always on hand to answer questions or handle problems;
- Difficult to schedule in-house meetings;
- May give rise to demands for even more flexibility—like telecommuting;
- Workers may use extra time for a second job which results in increased fatigue and safety risks; and
- Covering work for sick leave or vacations presents challenges.

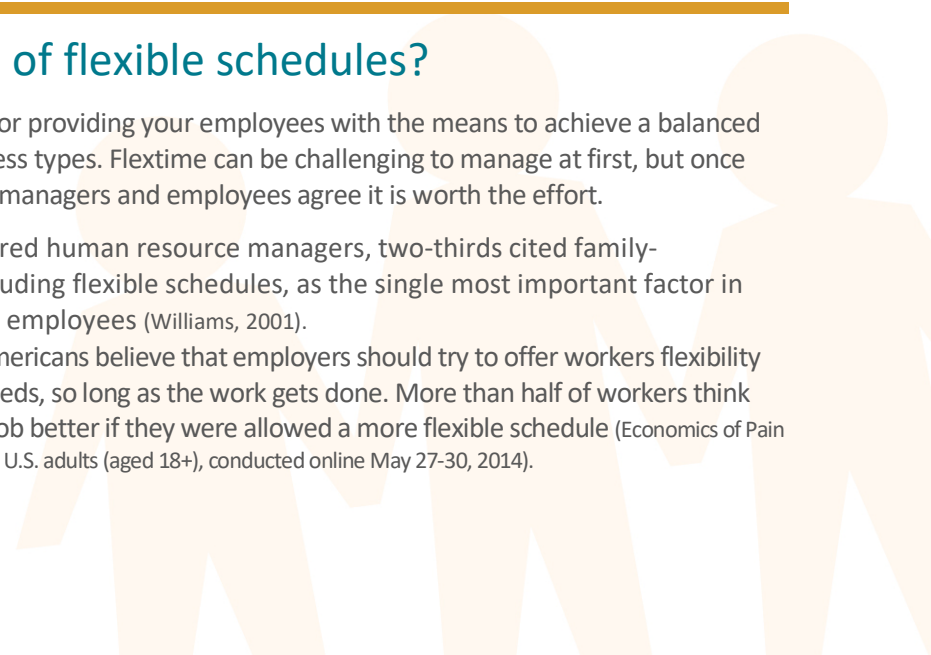
SOURCE: The Fort Worth Star-Telegram. Entrepreneur Magazine, <http://www.hroi.com/Key-trends-shaping-tomorrows-workplace-Flextime>

HOW ARE THESE CHALLENGES OVERCOME?

Allowing employees to oversee and coordinate projects so that they can communicate directly with others involved can minimize communication challenges with last-minute use of flextime and reduces burden on managers. Having ground rules about flexible schedules to set up as many regular schedules as possible helps people cover work and meetings. If, for example, you know that two employees are always off-site Wednesday afternoons, this helps others plan around that.

What are the benefits of flexible schedules?

Flextime can be a great opportunity for providing your employees with the means to achieve a balanced life, but it does not work for all business types. Flextime can be challenging to manage at first, but once the bumps are smoothed over, most managers and employees agree it is worth the effort.

- In a survey of two hundred human resource managers, two-thirds cited family-supportive policies, including flexible schedules, as the single most important factor in attracting and retaining employees (Williams, 2001).
 - Moreover, 9 out of 10 Americans believe that employers should try to offer workers flexibility to meet their families' needs, so long as the work gets done. More than half of workers think that they could do their job better if they were allowed a more flexible schedule (Economics of Pain Leave, Pg 8. Harris Poll of 4,096 U.S. adults (aged 18+), conducted online May 27-30, 2014).
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- Employers that have implemented a flextime schedule often find it easier to retain their top performers. The increased satisfaction with the workplace often results in lowered turnover and less employee burn out. Likewise, happy employees make for more productive employees (and more profit for companies).

Flextime allows working parents to be involved with their children's schools and eases the ability to juggle an active family life without sacrificing income or productivity at work. Employees without children still benefit, as they have the ability to break up their workweek, allowing for the scheduling of doctor's appointments, college courses, or other types of personal enrichment.

Sample Flexible Schedules Policies

Society for Human Resource Management:

https://www.shrm.org/resourcesandtools/tools-and-samples/policies/pages/cms_000593.aspx

What can businesses do to make it work?

- Find out more about what your employees actually need.
- Inform senior-level management about the business case for flexible scheduling.
- Establish a workplace scheduling committee.
- Consider technology to assist with schedule changes. Apps and online platforms allows employees to sign up for different shifts, log and track hours on projects, and relieves the burden from managers for approvals and finding replacements (consider: MyShift, 7Shifts, Shifboard, When I Work, Fleetmatics Work, Harvest).

CITATIONS

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