

## What's stopping you from employing flexible work arrangements?

Flexible work options are great for enabling employees to manage work responsibilities and personal commitments in a dynamic and productive way; a way that results in positive outcomes for both the employer and the employee.

How flexibility is defined is up to the employee and the employer and is based on individual and business needs. Having flexible work options available and supported by the company culture not only inspires women to aim higher<sup>i</sup> but has proven to reduce both hard and soft costs across the organization<sup>ii</sup>.

The key to success for any flexible work program is to ensure that it is fully supported in the company culture and utilized by employees from all levels across the organization. When flexible work options are viewed as an accommodation you run the risk of creating further discrimination and bias within your workforce.

A lack of awareness and or misconception of flexible workers will lead employers to be hesitant to implement such program and employees unwilling to broach the topic with their Managers.

For employers, we are available to consult with you on how do develop a culture of flexibility within your team or organization.

*But in the mean time, here are a couple of myth busters to get you started...*

### Myth #1: Flexible work means part-time

At tellent, we define flexible work as the ability to work where and how you are most productive while meeting the needs of the individual and the business.

Part-time is certainly an option but so is:

- Flexible location (working from home or satellite office)
- Compressed work week
- Contract work
- Flexible start / finish time
- Reduced hours

Often it is a combination of the above. Ultimately flexible work is the ability to choose where and how you work best to deliver results.

## Myth #2: Flexible work programs only benefit employees

There is no doubt that flexible work schedules benefit employees but there is a strong business case for employers to get on board. Especially as it pertains to attracting top talent. In fact, a study by Global Workplace Analytics that WORKshift<sup>iii</sup> commissioned in 2011 estimated an annual savings of over \$10,000 per employee per year based on remote working just 2 days per week.

The savings of successfully implementing flexible work options can be realized across talent attraction and retention (wellbeing), engagement and productivity (increased loyalty and less sick days), real estate, and innovation (increased ability to compete with competition).

However, in this competitive talent market, offering flexibility is key to attracting top talent, not just women but Millennials, boomers and GenX... we all want it.

Deloitte calculated the cost savings from flexibility by calculating the turnover expense from those employees who would have left without flexible work arrangements, and came up with a savings of \$41.5 million in turnover costs alone.<sup>iv</sup>

## Myth #3: Flexible work policies only benefit parents and carers

Parents and carers have the most *obvious* need for flexibility. But what about the amateur athlete who trains in the morning, the devout worshiper who attends service early afternoon, the aspiring actress or budding photographer? What about the community volunteer, entrepreneur or simply the employee who is more productive late morning than first thing? If we do not appreciate or allow people to be their whole selves, we miss out on the diversity of thought that we so strongly desire in order to build competitive workplaces.

Flexible work policies can benefit everyone from a personal and business perspective if implement and supported effectively. In fact if only carers and parents use flexible work options, myths and misconceptions will remain and bias and discrimination will ultimately punish employees for taking those options.

## Myth #4: Employees are not as committed to the organization and will take advantage of flex work

***“Responsibility and productivity are the result of attitudes, dedication, work ethic and trust between managers and their staff, not the result of physical location or particular working hours or days.”***

A culture of trust and cooperation will lead to increased morale, commitment and productivity. Flexible employees are more focused and more productive. You trust people to get the job done when you hire them, why should that change because of where or how they are working?

If flexible workers are not meeting their goals and getting results, it becomes a performance issue, not a flexibility issue.

Often because flexible workers have increased trust, engagement, productivity and loyalty, they go above and beyond what is required.

## **Myth #6: We don't need to change**

As we noted in Myth #3, times are changing and flexible work options as an accommodation are no longer enough to attract and retain top talent. **A culture of flexibility and work life balance is the number one employer benefit that experienced women are looking for<sup>v</sup>.** If your company is not offering that, you are not going to be attracting top talent or encouraging diversity of thought.

If you still have questions or would like to talk through any of the above myths, please contact me at [Jennifer@wearetellent.com](mailto:Jennifer@wearetellent.com)

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i <http://www.catalyst.org/knowledge/great-debate-flexibility-vs-face-time-busting-myths->

ii <https://www.workshiftcanada.com/resources/#toggle-id-1>

iii <http://globalworkplaceanalytics.com/bottom-line-on-telework-in-canada/5972>

iv <https://www.slideshare.net/JohnWilcox3/business-impacts-of-flexibility-32408685>

v <https://www.pwc.com/gx/en/about/diversity/internationalwomensday/the-female-millennial.html>

