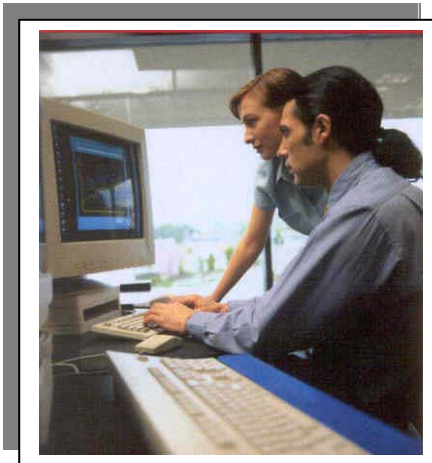


## ADVANTAGES OF FLEXIBLE WORKING HOURS



### ADVANTAGES TO MANAGEMENT

**Absenteeism** has been reduced in companies by working flexibly, sometimes to as much as 25 per cent. Instead of taking the odd *casual day* off for whatever of a variety of reasons staff might do this, now they have the chance to get in later, yet before core time.

**Staff Turnover** usually decreases where FWH is introduced. One company working with one of our systems found that the turnover of staff in one department reduced from 40 per cent within eight months.

**Productivity** – while often it is difficult to measure improved productivity, especially in white collar environments, some FLEXTIME System users claim that productivity has increased by between 1 and 5 per cent. Relationships between staff and management have improved and most people working with our System would not like to return to fixed working days.

**Less Overtime** needs be worked as employees can, within the given guidelines, regulate the hours they work to cope better with busier and slack periods. Experience has shown that people prefer to be properly occupied when at work. Equally they prefer to take time off when there isn't much as much work to do, so as to use that time more productively in a personal sense e.g, do shopping, use local facilities, family commitments etc. This is rather than sit around waiting for things to do just for the sake of being at work, when there is an alternative to this.

**Overview:** FlexTime's award winning research shows a direct connection between employee morale and the provision of *flexible working hours/flextime*.

In general HR research, it had been already well established that there is a similar connection between improved employee morale and *reduced absence levels, better employee retention rates and also productivity*.

Our study shows that when the organisation recognises the employee's work:life conflict and is then prepared to make a crucial intervention so as to provide *flexible working hours* as a support mechanism – then...

**the employee “reciprocates” consciously or otherwise with a new and more positive attitude to work and to the workplace, resulting in advantages that can accrue from having flexible working as covered in this document.**

To add further to this, often the intervention i.e. *the provision of flexible hours*, is most appreciated at a time of pressure, perhaps even crisis, in an employee's life cycle e.g. *when needing to care for small children or an elderly parent*. Thus, unusually, for a H.R. subject, *flexible working hours* can reach right into the employee's home and homelife. The study found that this is can explain why the benefits of such intervention can be felt even after that “pressured” part of that employee's life, referred to above, has passed, which can furthermore assist towards a more lasting workplace harmony.

In addition, the concept of *work:life conflict* is an issue for all people at work irrespective of their age group, their family commitments etc. So, for example, a younger or single person, will see the benefits of flexible working in his/her own way e.g. *avoiding traffic, attending night courses more easily* etc.

## **ADVANTAGES OF FLEXIBLE WORKING HOURS**

### **ADVANTAGES TO MANAGEMENT**

**Finishing a Job** can be catered for more easily with flexible working. In general, people like to complete a task if it is possible and will stay longer, in the knowledge that the time worked is being built up in the system. This can avoid wasted time the next day, having to recap on what has already been started the previous day, a situation which often happens in a fixed working day which ends at a specific time.

By comparison, with FWH an employee knows that he can take time off to compensate for extra hours worked.

**Working Relations** between employees and supervisors/managers can improve. Flexible working can replace that old fashioned concept of what was called Face Management i.e. the boss needs to see the employee at work to prove work is being performed. This Face Management approach is often the preserve of the short sighted and in some cases the immature boss. It can lead to all sorts of situations e.g. an employee can feel he/she has to stay late, irrespective of what is actually being achieved, just to impress a boss. In a modern working environment, employee resentment can thus build up – at the feeling of being controlled, just for the sake of it. This is the opposite to the “task oriented” environment which flexible working engenders.

**Make no mistake, employees compare how their friends and family members are being treated in their workplaces. Many will vote with their feet and transfer to the more mature and fairer workplace that offers flexible working.**

**Arriving at Work** at different times cuts down a lot of the general chit-chat about last night's TV programme or the latest news to hit the headlines. People come in at their own time and settle down to work quicker.

**Communications** actually improve because it becomes more concentrated as everyone outside and inside the organisation knows that all staff are available during core time.

**Concentration** may be difficult in a busy office, but during the flexible part of the day there are always quiet times when people can get down to doing a difficult job.

**Uneven Workloads** are much clearer to identify by the amount of hours worked by individuals. This enables alterations to be made or even promotions to be considered.

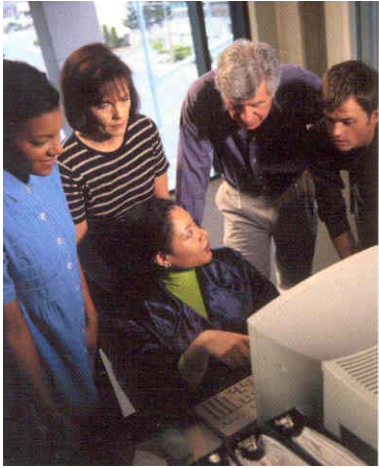
**When Recruiting** new staff FWH can be listed as an employee benefit.

**Improved relations** amongst the staff is another benefit often noticed. People who are happy in their work are more reliable and productive and better relations between staff and management can only be beneficial.

**The number** of hours worked is the issue with FWH, not punctuality. The person who arrives late and leaves at the end of core time is merely credited with less hours. Much time is lost by lateness in companies working fixed hours.

## ADVANTAGES OF FLEXIBLE WORKING HOURS

### ADVANTAGES TO EMPLOYEES



**Rush Hours** can be avoided. No more queuing, pushing and shoving or sitting for hours in traffic jams. Staff can avoid the crush and undoubtedly feel less harassed when they get to work and arrive home. The amount of time getting to the office and back again can be reduced and advantage can sometimes be taken of off peak fares.

**Personal Matters** can be sorted out without having to take time off. The kids can be taken to school and/or collected, the shopping can be done when the stores are less full, or you can watch that TV programme you wanted to see and get to a concert or football match in time. Experience shows that evening courses are taken up more easily.

**Mothers** with young children can hold down a full time job and be away from work in time to pick up children. No queues or rushes to beat at the end of the day as staff dash out of the door to be first at the bus stop or in the car park.

**Elderly Parents** – and their wellbeing are regularly a cause worry for their children. With flexible working, more suitable time is now available to employees to visit and care for those who have contributed so much.

**Greener Environment** – most employees like to feel that are contributing to the improvement of their environment. There is a reduction of CO<sub>2</sub> emission due to travelling at times where start stop traffic can be avoided. This reduction can be further contributed to by those who work from home –even on some days.

**Extra Time** is already often worked by employees on fixed wages and salaries, sometimes without overtime pay. When hours are being recorded, credit time above the target can be taken off as flexible leave.

**A Job can be Finished** instead of being carried over to the next day. Extra hours put in on one day count towards the final target.

**Local Communities** benefit through a more even spread of use of facilities, such as roads, banks, post offices, shops and public transport.

**Personal Rhythms** vary. Some people work better first thing, others take a while to get going. By choosing the starting and finishing times people can work to suit their own metabolism.

### ARE THERE ANY DISADVANTAGES ?

Having seen the virtues of the scheme most people want to know what disadvantages there could be to FWH. There are several arguments cited against the introduction of FWH but most are dispelled once the scheme is in use.

**ARE THERE ANY DISADVANTAGES ? Extra Heating/Lighting Costs :** It has been noted that because buildings have to be left open through bandwidth, extra lighting, and heating costs result. It is worth remembering that in many companies on fixed days, the lights and heating are on well before and after the premises are occupied. However, the amount is small compared with the economic advantages which accrue from flexible working. Indeed, the advent of flexible working, can used to re-enforce personal responsibility in general and in this area of potential wastage in particular e.g. “switch off the light as you leave your area”.

**Fears that staff are not available** when needed are sometimes felt by management.

As when any new system is introduced, a certain amount of adjustment is required and obviously departments will not always be fully manned during flexible times, at the beginning, middle and end of the day. However, concrete evidence shows that even with the opportunity of flexible hours, people do set their own patterns of arrival and departure and usually stick to them. This in turn means that a Manager can be fairly sure of knowing what time each of his staff will be available for work. In a survey carried out in one organisation, 1,000 calls were made to staff before the introduction of FWH and again afterwards. It was found that they were just as easy to contact on flexible working hours as they had been on fixed hours.

### **The Time Recording System :**

Some staff might initially be uncomfortable at the prospect of having to use a time recording system. However, after a short while the benefits to be gained will override that concern. For example,

*they realise that their punctuality is no longer in need of being watched  
being an interactive system means they keep a permanent and personal check on worked time  
they realise because of the sheer flexibility of what is being offered, and the associated  
calculations which a manual system would require, that management would not cope without  
a system, and thus flexible working would be a “non starter”*

Some organisations might feel that they can offer flexible working on an honours basis – as we “trust our staff”. Trust is not the only issue here and the main consideration is the “loss of shape” which would become quickly evident in the organisation trying out flexible working on an honours basis. The specially designed system – will ensure that “shape” will be kept, meaning that flexible working will not only stay for good in the organisation, but will allow for will allow for newer flexibilities to more easily emerge to the benefit of management and staff e.g.

*home and mobile working, term time, time in lieu, individualised working time arrangements,  
varieties of job and work sharing.*

Such wide combinations of flexible working arrangements, are becoming commonplace in our user group, but would be a fearsome consideration, were it not for the availability of a system specially designed for the purpose.

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