

Flexitime

Flexitime (also spelled **flexitime** [British English], **flexi-time**) is a variable work schedule, in contrast to traditional^[1] work arrangements requiring employees to work a standard 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. day. Under flexitime, there is typically a core period (of approximately 50% of total working time / working day) of the day, when employees are expected to be at work (for example, between 11 a.m. and 3 p.m.), while the rest of the working day is “flexible time”, in which employees can choose when they work, subject to achieving total daily, weekly or monthly hours in the region of what the employer expects, and subject to the necessary work being done. A flexitime policy allows staff to determine when they will work, while a flexplace policy allows staff to determine where they will work. Advantages include allowing employees to coordinate their work hours with public transport schedules, with the schedules of their children, and with daily traffic patterns to avoid high congestion times such as rush hour. Some claim that flexible working will change the nature of the way we work.^[2]

1 Flexible working from practitioners' viewpoint

The industrial perspective of flexible working emphasizes on the practical definition of flexibility. Employees being allowed to work from many different places as long as their level of production is maintained if not increased.^[3] Moreover, research reports^[4] gave quantitative interpretation backed by statistical evidences showing the changing attitude of organisations in different countries and especially the UK toward flexible working. For example, 50% of companies in the UK started to consider flexible working as a common practice and 73% of the managers in the survey showed an ultimate support to it. On the other hand, employees showed great preference to flexible working to the point that 40% of workers in the UK choose it over salary.^[5] Also, greater focus was put^{[6][7]} to explain the increased demand for such arrangements by both stakeholders which was clarified by their advantages of contributing to high quality of output results while creating the perfect working conditions for workers.

Additionally, as seen recently, most business Organisations have started to introduce flexible working patterns for their employee as a way to increase their productivity level. Higher level of productivity means a higher level of profitability for the organization. Flexible working is also seen as family friendly policy, which leads to a good work

life balance for employees. Some examples of Organisations with flexible working arrangement include Agilent technologies, NetApp, Qualcomm Inc.^[8]

Flexible working arrangement or pattern has also become an important issue in the business society because it has been seen as a way for organisations to expand and increase their operations national and international at lower cost, this is in comparison to permanent or non-flexible working arrangement.^[9] While both employees and employers acknowledge the benefits of flexible working, yet they are also concerned with its limitations which come as the extra expenses and responsibility the organization will incur in order to provide these arrangements and the low benefits offered to employee in accordance to their reduced working timing.^[10]

2 Flexible working in academia

Flexible working was academically introduced in 1970^[11] and since then this topic continues to be the interest of most research papers. For four decades, academic papers have contributed to the increased knowledge and interest in flexible working. A descriptive background of the evolution of the concept of flexibility as well as highlighting the main factors contributed to its growth were the main focus of academic studies.^[12] Also, they deliver evidence of the significant amount and the ongoing increase in the use of flexible working in many countries.^[13] Few empirical studies were conducted to reflect the relation between flexible working and other variables. As a response to the empirical gap, a study by Origo and Pagani^[14] based on a sample of European countries, gave a deep analysis of the concept of flexible working by testing the level of heterogeneity in the effect of flexibility on job satisfaction and found some positive link with some aspects of the job while negative or no relation was found against other aspects.

Academicians see flexible working as an element which can both prevent and create opportunities. The findings revealed generally positive relationship between flexible working and perceptions of job quality in terms of work-life balance and helping to improve and control autonomy particularly for remote workers, but some factors such as opportunities for advancement will be negatively affected due to the variations on different dimensions of job quality.^[15] Flexible employment is one of the vital factors in the European Union policy discourse. It is a mean to

reduce unemployment, increase economic and social cohesion, maintain economic competitiveness and enhance equal opportunities between women and men.^[16]

3 United Kingdom

Haller founded a company in the UK in 1971 and registered the trademark “Flexitime”, the mark remains the property of that company’s successor hfx Ltd. In spring 2003, 17.7% of men and 26.7% of women were employed with flexitime arrangements in the United Kingdom, (Office for National Statistics 2003).^[17] In the United Kingdom, flexitime working is commonplace in both the private and public sectors. The practice is often found in administrative and back office functions of commercial organisations and local councils.

In 2003, the UK Government introduced legislation^[18] that gave parents of children under 6, or the parents of disabled children under 18, the right in law to request a flexible working arrangement from their employer. A survey in 2005 by the National Office of Statistics^[19] showed that 71% of female workers and 60% of male workers were aware of the rights created under the 2003 legislation. Between 2003 and 2005 more than 14% of all workers had requested a change to flexible working. Since April 2007 the right to request flexible working also applies to carers of adults.

On 13 November 2012 Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg announced plans to extend the right to request flexible working to all employees,^[20] this legislation takes effect in April 2014.^[21] Lawyers have suggested that this will lead to “major headaches” for employers.^[22]

Now being enforced by the law in 30 June 2014, industrial reports concentrate on workers right to request for flexible working and how it is guided by Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS). They explained how this code is designed to help employers, employees and their representatives dealing with disciplinary and grievance situations in the workplace.^[23]

Shift workers are generally excluded from flexitime schemes as are senior managers. Other groups of workers for whom flexitime arrangements are rare include those who serve the public during specific opening times.

The advantages of Flexitime for the individual include a better work-life balance, fewer commutes, less fatigue, more days off, lower sickness rates. The benefits for the company include; better motivated workers, more efficient and effective operation, less fatigued workers, so fewer errors; they get people working overtime hours without paying overtime rates, fewer facilities required, and lower sickness rates.

For employers, flexitime can aid the recruitment and retention of staff. It has been a particularly popular option in 2009 for employers trying to reduce staff costs with-

out having to make redundancies during the recession. It can also help provide staff cover outside normal working hours and reduce the need for overtime. Additionally flexitime can also improve the provision of equal opportunities to staff unable to work standard hours.

Flexitime can give employees greater freedom to organize their working lives to suit personal needs. In addition, travelling can be cheaper and easier if it is out of peak time.

4 United States

In Florida, flexitime workers, like salaried workers, are exempted from insurance regulations, and are given broad leeway in setting their own work schedule. Unlike exempted salaried workers, employers are still required to pay overtime to a flexitime worker if they work more than 40 hours per week; some employers avoid this policy by dismissing their employees shortly before their scheduled working hours have been completed. In addition, the employer will usually require that a flexitime employee works a minimum number of hours each week.

In recent years, the term “flexitime” has acquired a more controversial definition when used to describe proposals to overhaul the nation’s overtime regulations. Under one such proposal by the Bush administration made public on August 5, 2004, employers would not be required to pay non-exempt employees overtime for working more than 40 hours in a week so long as the employee works no more than 80 hours over a two-week period. For example, a worker could be required to work 70 hours one week and receive no overtime compensation as long as they work 10 hours or less the following week. Such arrangements are opposed by trade unions such as the AFL-CIO.

In certain industries and disciplines, such as information technology, flexitime permits workers to vary their schedule. For example, they may opt to work four 10-hour days per week, taking Monday or Friday off. Another flexitime schedule is to work nine-hour days Monday through Thursday, an eight-hour day on Friday, taking every other Friday off. Workers may arrange to coordinate their days off so that their responsibilities are adequately covered.

Other workers may opt simply to come in early, such as 5 or 6 a.m., and leave in the mid-afternoon, or come in late and therefore leave late. One benefit of such a schedule is that commuting times occur outside of the congested rush hour traffic within a given geographic region. Flexitime arrangements also help parents: one parent works 10 a.m - 6 p.m. and is in charge of the children before school / daycare, while the other parent works 7 a.m. - 3 p.m. and is in charge of the children after school / daycare. This allows parents time to commute.^[24] Flexitime is also beneficial to workers pursuing an education.

It is an ongoing part of the work-life balance discussions in many companies.

5 Australia

Flexi-time in Australia is usually referred to accumulated overtime hours that an employee can build up and exchange for the equivalent amount of time off. (Example: Jane works 7 a.m. - 3 p.m. Monday to Friday. Over the past month, Jane has worked 8 hours overtime meaning she is eligible for a paid day off.)

If employees accumulate too many flex hours, they are required to perform a “flex burndown”, as they are burning down the flex. Similarly, taking a flex day off is known as “flexing”.

It is implemented formally in the Australian Federal Public Service and is available for staff in most state and territory government departments. With current changes to industrial relations laws (2006), from State to Federal level there are no new published guidelines (online) for flexi-time.

Flexi-time has also been implemented in the [Victorian Public Service](#).

The word “flex” has entered the lexicon of many Australians and, in some workplaces, possessing a high flex balance is a point of honour, with many employees placing bets on who can accumulate the most number of flex hours by a particular date. This has led to many employees staying behind at work until very late, despite being completely idle, to build up their flex.

6 Recording flextime working

There are many different methods used for recording working time ranging from [sophisticated software](#) (computer programs) to [handwritten time sheets](#). Most of these methods are associated with the payment of wages in return for hours worked. As a result they often do not address a fundamental difference of most flexible working systems - namely the intention of flexible working to allow an employee to “trade hours” with their employer in return for a fixed wage (Hayward, Bruce; Fong, Barry; Thornton, Alex (December 2007), “[The Third Work-Life Balance Employer Survey: Main Findings](#)” (PDF), *UK Govt. Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform*).

7 Millennial and flexible working

Millennial Generation is the name most commonly used to describe those born between 1978 and 2001. As the right to request for flexible working is extended to all by law, many benefits are expected to rise. With “Millennial” becoming the interest of many organisations, flexible working seems to be the element to attract them.^[25] As ethical diversity and high level of education are their

main characters, it is seen that millennial are more likely to change their jobs more than previous generation to achieve economical reason and career advancement. Additionally, due to the delay in the retirement of baby boomers generation, gaps in workforce were created and waiting for Millennial to fill.^[26] In order to get deep understanding on millennial, the lens from baby boomer parents is important to consider as millennial are “treasure” of baby boomer. They are raised up well protected by baby boomers, who realize that their offspring are vital to the nation and to their parents’ sense of purposes. Millennial workers build on the desire of their older siblings (Gen Xers) for work-life balance. Thus, if they can do it over again, they would strive for a more balanced life. Millennial’s characteristics will be discussed as followed.

- As a result of the tremendous attempt to emphasize self-esteem and high level of education from parents, millennial are confident, high achieving, and under a lot of pressure. Therefore, millennial is achievement oriented with high involvement of parental decision.
- The power of technology is widely understood by millennial more than other generation.

The strategy to pull out millennial abilities, support talents and find best ways to manage millennial are listed below.

- As millennial have confident in their nature, they are looking forward to contribute immediately to an organization. They are not willing to wait years before being accepted their ability, so the traditional organization positioning as hierarchical will not attract millennial. Consequently, organizational structure reformation is needed.
- Since parents influence millennial decision, positive impression in the process of recruiting is necessary to be explicitly shown such as sending parents welcome packets or including parents in initial informational sessions.
- Explicitly, the effective use of technology is critical for Millennial. They can connect easily to others people by online social network.
- As a result of advanced technology, millennial tend to be self-directed learners. When they face difficulties, they will open up the issue to their social network and ask for advice.

In terms of setting direction, leaders need to connect with these newest workforce entrants in many ways besides form job description. Since millennial emphasize on contribution to society, leaders should design their day-to-day work with a higher cause. In term of creating alignment, the ability to find common ground as well as

find ways to work cross-culturally and cross functionally was emphasized by Kris Downing. Compared to older workers, employees' age eighteen to twenty-four indicate that their commitment and motivation at work are influenced less by base pay and more by promotion opportunities and flexible working arrangements. In term of gaining commitment, millennial tend to recognize and respond to different motivators such as work-life balance or opportunities to make a difference in the company rapidly. As the millennial, the most recent generation, enters the workforce, leaders face with the big challenge on how to deeply understand the differences between generations and most importantly, how to manage and find best ways for everyone.^[27]

8 Advantages and Criticisms of Flexible Working

Flexible Working pattern is a form of working arrangement which enables employees to decide the time, duration, and location of their work.^[28] Flexible working patterns has gained the interest of both academics and industrial practitioners in recent years, the reason is mainly because of its implementation into law in 1930. From Literature evidences highlight the fundamental importance of flexible working to both academics and industrialist as a means to establish a good work –life balance for employees, explaining how a good work-life balance for employees makes employees increase their efficiency of work, which in turns leads to increase in productivity of the organisation.^{[29][30]}

Academics literature have identified some benefits of flexible working patterns to employees such as life satisfaction, better wellbeing, and overall a good work-life balance,^[31] but some researchers argue that although there are such benefits, there are some negative effect such as work intensity, job insecurity associated with flexible working arrangement. Research works such as Evans et al., (2000) also highlight that flexible working pattern may not applicable to all occupational field, the authors also heighted the medical profession as one of such fields.^[32]

Industrial sources also have been able to highlight one of the positive effect of flexible working patterns being able to attract highly qualified profession, but the article by Brookins,(2015)^[33] article established some negative effect flexible working patterns had to employers as it adds expenses and responsibility on organisation, negative availability perspectives of employees on the customers, this was further explained as the employees may not be available when needed by their employers or organisation.

Both academics and industrial sources were established that in some professions flexible working arrangement may not be available or its availability will have a negative

perspective on employees by others with a non-flexible arrangement, example of such profession is the medical profession. The researcher done by Evans et al., (2000) on flexible working patterns in medical profession emphasized how some medical doctors may attributes negative perception with colleagues with flexible working pattern. In 1930, Employees in the United Kingdom were given the right to request for flexible working arrangement, but there was no instructions or guideline on the way for this would work. Flexible working concept is also a relatively new form of working arrangement and this has limited its application in other parts of the world such as some region in Africa.

Flexible working patterns is a working arrangement that enable employees to determine the duration, time and location of their work. It has been seen both by academics and industrial sources to have benefit sure as increase of work-life balance for employee, which in turns leads to increase in productivity for the employer or organisation. Organisations hoping to adopt this form of working pattern for its employee should conduct research on how flexible working pattern is done in its industries, to avoid the enquiring a large expenses some researchers have associated the conducted flexible working arrangement.

9 Flexible working time accounts

Flexible working time accounts is also known as deposited working-time accounts or work bank account system. It is derived from the German Federal Labor Government's reform program, which was passed by the German Federal Government on August 21, 2002. Then Federal Chancellor ,**Gerhard Fritz Kurt Schröder** , announced that the program will invite the former director of human resources management of Volkswagen company, Peter Hartz , chaired the Labour Market Reform Committee. This program's goal is to make the rigidity of the labor system more flexible and to change the old social welfare policy, in order to lighten heavy financial burden.^[34]

9.1 Definitions

The concept of flexible working time accounts is to establish labor-self accounts, and labors can save their working hours, just like saving money, into their own accounts. The working hours in their accounts are their assets, so that employers and workers both sides can increase or decrease the work required by each other without affecting the salaries and welfare. While achieving the purpose of flexible labor, and the account-system may be short-term, long or permanent (life-time) of the convention.^[35]

9.2 Characteristics

Flexible working time accounts system has the following four characteristics ^[36]

1. Flexible working time accounts shall be calculated for at least the period of one year.

2. The calculation of long-term account system is usually based on time and money, occasionally there may be passed on from other labors' accounts, the situation is only applicable to short-term working time.

3. When using long-term working time accounts, there are two features can be used to classify:

(1) Optional long-term accounts Most using of optional long-term accounts occur in the period that labors are still holding a post in their own company, labors can withdraw from accounts after negotiating between employers and labors, usually due to labors' personally needs.
(2) Aged-related long-term accounts Aged-related long-term accounts can be used when labors' career get mature, preparing of early retirement, semi-retirement, or preparation of retirement.

4. Unlike the short-term account system, there is the lowest limit standard of withdrawing hours, however, the setting of standard is according to different demand of labors.

10 See also

- Overtime
- Fair Labor Standards Act (United States)
- Office for National Statistics (UK)
- Equal Opportunity Employment
- Labour (economics)
- Labour market flexibility
- Time clock
- Work-life balance

11 References

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12 External links

- Advisory Conciliation and Arbitration Service (2006) 'Flexible working hours'
- The Value of Flexitime
- Reconciling labour flexibility with social cohesion — Facing the challenge

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