



RECOMMENDATION:

Foster a culture of support and respect for a variety of work schedules.

According to the iaWia best practices survey, 92% of all respondents selected flexible working hours as the benefit that would make the most positive difference in their career satisfaction. Flexible schedules can be utilized by a wide range of employees, including those who would like to: ease into retirement; reduce commuting days; accommodate teaching, volunteer or community outreach opportunities; accommodate personal or family appointments and other family schedules.

92%
of respondents in the iaWia survey selected flexible working hours as the benefit that would make a positive difference in their career satisfaction.

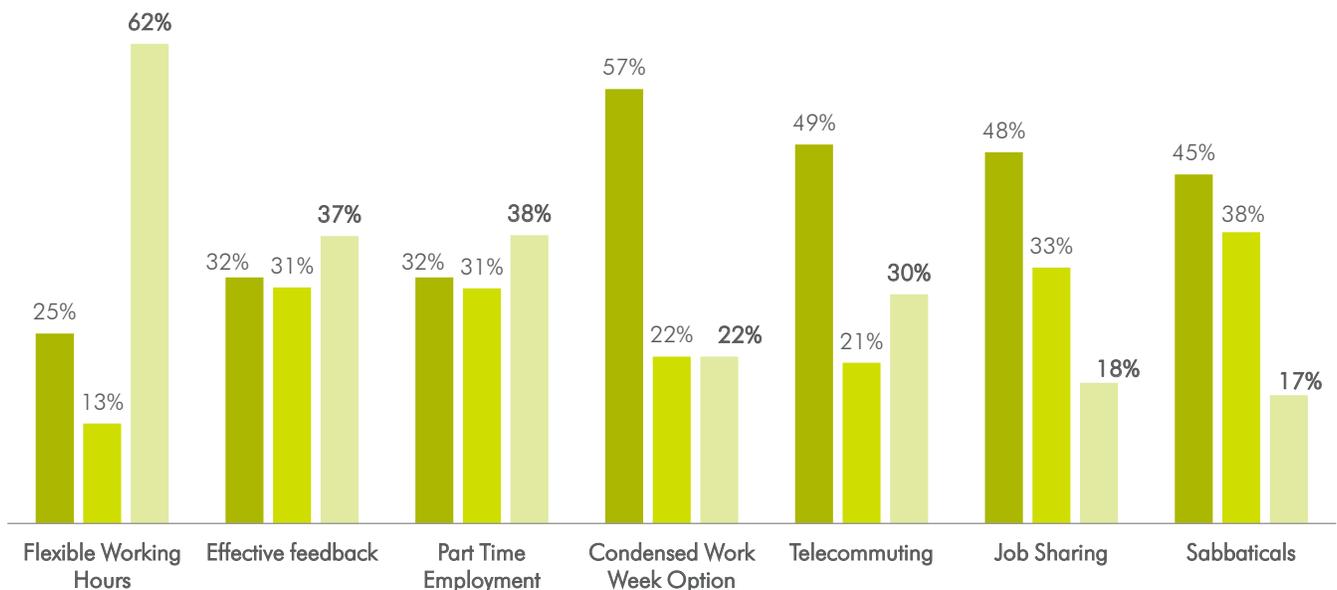
Fostering a culture that supports flexible schedules is an essential component of providing opportunities for flexibility. According to the Families and Work Institute, “data show that **a culture of flexibility is as, if not more, important than simply having access to flexibility options.** We measure the culture of flexibility by asking whether employees feel that they have to choose between advancing in their jobs and devoting attention to their families and whether there is jeopardy for using flexibility.”⁷

IAWIA SURVEY: Work Options | Policy Satisfaction

Level of satisfaction with firm’s policies/practices (1 = very dissatisfied, 5 = very satisfied):

Female Respondents

■ 1-2 ■ 3 ■ 4-5



IMPLEMENTATION OPTIONS/ALTERNATIVES

Allow flexible hours for occasional work-life balance issues on an as-needed basis.

Provide opportunities for traditional and daily flexible schedules, whether full-time or part-time.

Provide opportunities for condensed work weeks.

Provide regular review of employee/employer expectations and limits.

Consider setting core hours for full-time employees to assist in team coordination.

Coordinate project meetings/collaboration efforts with respect to employee's alternate work schedules.

Review expectations for handling situations where either the employer or employee needs to request a variance from the established, alternate work schedule. Provide advance notice for commitments outside of the alternate work schedule.

Provide equal opportunities for employees regardless of work schedules.

KEY ASPECTS

Fairness isn't sameness. Consider using a consistent framework and criteria for making decisions about work options for different employees and documenting why decisions were made based on the criteria.

Employees/employers need not provide a "special" explanation to clients that someone is part-time. Employees/employers should focus on when employees are available, not why they aren't.

Focus on the value of the employee, efficiency, and productivity over traditional scheduling and hours in the office.

Maintain a culture of acceptance and flexibility during workload scheduling, planning of meetings, and daily collaboration.

Allow and encourage open lines of communication between employee and employer, and among coworkers.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

What process will be used to determine who will be allowed to work flex hours?

Do part-time employees receive the same benefits as full-time employees?

How will coworkers and clients know when the employee is available for contact?

DEFINITIONS

Flex Time: Employees vary the duration and timing of the workday within limits set by management. Traditional flex time is a schedule with a fixed start and end time. Daily flexibility allows employees to vary their work hours on a day-to-day basis.

Compressed Work Week: Working full-time hours in a reduced number of days.

Core hours: A period of hours that all full-time employees need to be in the office for coordination purposes. Outside of the core hours, employees have flexibility.

Long Hours Work Culture: A workplace in which working long hours is perceived as corresponding to a higher level of productivity.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- According to a recent study by Georgetown University, employee stress from trying to find time for their children correlates with decreased productivity and increased absenteeism. The study found that unplanned absences were costing some businesses nearly \$1 million a year.”³
- 45% of those who cannot change their work schedules experience high levels of feeling overworked, versus 33% of those who feel that they can rearrange their working hours.⁷
- According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, 44 % of those in architecture and engineering professions work some type of flexible schedule, compared to 28% of those in the entire workforce.⁴



SOURCES/ REFERENCES

1. Boston College Center for Work and Family: <http://www.american.edu/hr/upload/BCCWF-Flexibility-EBS.pdf>
2. www.healthcare.gov/glossary
3. <http://www.forbes.com/2009/03/16/work-life-flextime-leadership-careers-flexible.html>
4. Bureau of Labor Statistics: <http://www.bls.gov/news.release/flex.t02.htm>
5. Mastering the Art of a Flexible Culture: http://www.cisco.com/web/about/ac49/ac55/Mastering_the_Art_of_a_Flexible_Culture.pdf
6. Sloan Award Criteria by When Work Works: <http://www.whenworkworks.org/>
7. Families and Work Institute’s National Dialogue on Workplace Flexibility: *Workplace Flexibility Among Professional Employees*, 2010 http://familiesandwork.org/site/research/reports/www_us_workflex.pdf
8. When Work Works: Flex at a Glance <http://whenworkworks.org/downloads/FlexAtAGlance.pdf>
9. Driving Cultural Change to Achieve Work-Life Balance, Robin Bishop www.communitybusiness.org/images/cb/.../2011/WLBGuide2011.pdf



RECOMMENDATION:

Create and clearly communicate policies for all work options.

Creating, communicating, and implementing policies for a variety of functional work options benefit both employer and employee. To achieve success and unity within a workplace, flexibility-oriented company policies must value both employees and results. A culture of support and respect for a variety of work schedules must be fostered for company-wide buy-in.

IMPLEMENTATION OPTIONS/ALTERNATIVES

Employee guidelines and instructional/informational videos.

Consistent team or office-wide meetings (e.g. monthly, quarterly, annually) to discuss options as well as any changes that have been made since the last meeting.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

Are work options policies in a handbook and clearly communicated to all employees?

Are there opportunities to provide feedback on the work options policies?

Which individual or group will decide who gets which flexible options?

Will an application process be used? Is the option by request only?

KEY ASPECTS

Create a culture of acceptance and flexibility.

Set guidelines for when which work options become available.

Incorporate flexible work options when creating project teams.

Include flexible work options in project management tools to better manage flexible schedule options (e.g. schedule coordination, hour projections).

Hold regular employee reviews to discuss arrangements and expectations. [Refer to Best Practice Recommendation: Facilitate a development program that provides lattice career path opportunities.]

Clearly communicate the process to seek alternate work options.

Provide employees the opportunity to comfortably discuss alternate work options and/or assess their current work options.

Fairness is not sameness: while a variety of flexible options are to be considered, a policy that works for one individual might not be the best policy for another individual; policies, operating within pre-established guidelines, may be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

DEFINITIONS

Flexible work options:	Non-traditional and/or varying work schedules, locations, and/or methods.
Employee Guidelines:	A published set of guiding principles for employees that are regularly reviewed, revised, and distributed.

SOURCES/ REFERENCES

1. Galinsky, Ellen; Brownfield, Erin; Backon, Lois; Friedman, Dana. E. Workplace Flexibility: A Guide for Employees. <http://familiesandwork.org/3w/tips/downloads/employees.pdf>
2. Friedman, Dana. E. Workplace Flexibility: A Guide for Companies. <http://familiesandwork.org/3w/tips/downloads/companies.pdf>
3. Managing Employees Who Work Flexible Schedules. Ceridian Corporation. 2004. <http://people.rice.edu/uploadedFiles/People/TEAMS/Managing%20Employees%20Who%20Work%20Flexible%20Schedules.pdf>
4. Flexible Work Options Guide for Staff Non-Union Employees. HR Services, University of Chicago. <http://humanresources.uchicago.edu/fpg/forms/compensation/FlexibleWorkOptionsGuide.pdf>



RECOMMENDATION: Support work away from the office.

With increasingly available technology and flexible work options, employees find themselves able to complete work tasks from a variety of non-workplace locations and on varying, non-traditional schedules. **Flexible off-site productivity can succeed when reasonable, well-communicated parameters are in place.**

IMPLEMENTATION OPTIONS/ALTERNATIVES

Regular schedule of working from home (e.g. once a week on a predetermined day)

Working from home on an as-needed basis (e.g. staying home with a sick child)

Provide hardware, software, and licensing. Provide in full or partially through cost share, lease, loan, check out, other . . .

Hardware includes: desktop computer, laptop computer, printer, netbook, tablet, etc.

Software licensing including: design, redlining, cost estimating, spec writing, video conferencing, etc.

Provide wireless, email and phone access (e.g. company cell phone, instant messaging programs, installing work phone in employee's home for conferencing)

Provide network access, remote desktop, and/or services such as LogMeIn

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

What telecommuting capabilities are currently in place?

Can telecommuting be a tax write-off, either for the employee or the company?
See links below.

How will efficiency be tracked? How will hours be logged?

Client and coworker contact: core hours of availability, communication methods (e.g. phone, web, video, text, email)

What are the requirements for granting telecommuting access?

Is a trial period required to prove efficiency and productivity?

KEY ASPECTS

Provide recommendations to employees on how to be most efficient when telecommuting (a dedicated home office space, technology needed to be successful, other).

Tax write-offs may be available for both employee and company.

Increased employee efficiency and productivity (e.g. ability to work from home with a sick child instead of taking PTO).

Create a culture of acceptance and flexibility.

DEFINITIONS

Telecommuting:	Utilizing technology to perform work tasks from locations other than the primary place of work
Software licensing:	Gaining legitimate approval to utilize digital software on personal devices or those provided by the employer for off-site use
Remote desktop:	Access to an on-site work computer profile while on a remote device
Online meeting:	Attending a meeting by phone, video, or screen-sharing rather than in person
Video conferencing:	Attending a meeting or other interaction through the use of a video device

SOURCES/ REFERENCES

1. Telecommuting Considerations. The Architect's Handbook of Professional Practice, 13th edition. December 2006. <http://www.aia.org/practicing/bestpractices/AIAB091192>
2. Babauta, Leo. 20 Essential Tips for Telecommuting Success. 14, August 2007. <http://freelanceswitch.com/freelancing-essentials/20-essential-tips-for-telecommuting-success/>
3. Levin-Epstein, Amy. Work from Home: 7 Tips for Telecommuting Success. 17, March 2011. http://www.cbsnews.com/8301-505125_162-47540377/work-from-home-7-tips-for-telecommuting-success/
4. Case Study: Telecommuting. <http://inst.eecs.berkeley.edu/~eecsba1/sp97/reports/eecsba1d/report/telecommute.html>
5. Byrnes, Tracy. Taxing aspects of telecommuting: A look at deductions for home office expenses. 15, January 2002. <http://www.marketwatch.com/story/maximizing-telecommuting-home-office-deductions>
6. Helm, Jill. TELECOMMUTING. April 2010. <http://www.hhcpa.com/blogs/income-tax-accountants-cpa/telecommuting>
7. "Boston College Center for Work and Family Executive Briefing Series Business or Busyness: Strategy for Managing Workload" http://www.bc.edu/content/dam/files/centers/cwf/research/publications/pdf/workload_ebs.pdf

"One of the reasons people come to work for IBM is because we take workplace flexibility seriously. On any given day, worldwide, one third of our people are not at an IBM location - they are working onsite with customers, are telecommuting or are mobile. Today, we must reconsider our traditional concept of work and how it gets done, because Flexible Work Options allow our workforce to serve customers as never before." ⁷
– Samuel J. Palmisano Chairman of the Board and Chief Executive Officer IBM



RECOMMENDATION:

Accommodate transition time for employees returning from periods of extended leave.

There are many situations that cause an employee to utilize leave time. Most often, leave is used in times of major life transitions or challenges. **The return from leave for a major life transition can be a difficult time for many people and, for many types of leave, the conclusion of the life transition doesn't necessarily align with the return to work.** According to the Wellesley Center for Women, "Women and men who reported higher levels of work-family conflict were more likely to have clinically significant diagnoses of mood, anxiety, and substance abuse disorders. Not surprisingly, these strains are also associated with overall poorer physical health."(Research & Action Report, 2013). Providing employees with post-leave work options helps to alleviate the stress of work-family balance and allows an employee time to adjust to combining work with life transitions.

IMPLEMENTATION OPTIONS/ALTERNATIVES

Allow employees who are returning from leave the option to work 2-3 weeks part-time.

Allow employees who are returning from leave to work flexible schedules.

Conduct pre-leave and post-leave meetings to discuss return-to-work options, expectations, and limits.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

How long can a full-time employee use 'transition' time?

What types of leave earn 'transition' time (maternity, paternity, disability, bereavement, dependent care, medical, other)?

How do written policies support transition time after leave?

DEFINITIONS

Maternity leave: A leave of absence for an expectant or new mother for the birth and care of the baby.

Paternity leave: A leave of absence from a job for a father to care for a new baby.

Medical leave: Leave for treatment or recovery related to serious health conditions. Refer also to the definition offered through the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA). The FMLA's definition of a serious health condition is broad and encompasses pregnancy and many illnesses, injuries, impairments, or physical or mental conditions that require multiple treatments and intermittent absences.

Transition Time: *An agreed upon period of time, after returning from Leave, where an employee can work an agreed upon shortened or flexible schedule.*

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- Postpartum depression raises health care costs.

“Mothers’ better postpartum health status was also associated with several work-related variables, including lower levels of job stress, increased perceived control over work (and home) activities, and more coworker support.”³

“Strategies to Prevent Postpartum Depression and Save Healthcare Costs:

Create workplace policies that promote mothers’ recovery from childbirth and enable them to successfully resume work.

Examples of workplace policies that may help prevent postpartum depression include:

- *Pregnancy and parental paid leave benefits*
- *Flex-time and telecommuting options*
- *Option for reduced hours upon re-entry to work*
- *Providing support and space for breastfeeding and pumping breast milk”*

“In general, depression among workers has been shown to cost U.S. employers \$44 billion per year in lost productivity and about \$12.4 billion in health care expenditures.”⁴

- “It also is **less expensive for companies to retain workers than to find someone new**. For instance, Deloitte & Touche spends \$2,500 per person annually for its program to keep ex-workers in the loop. The cost of replacing an employee, however, is twice the worker’s salary, the company said.”⁵

SOURCES/ REFERENCES

1. Wellesley Center for Women, Research & Action Report, Spring Summer 2013. Volume 34- Number 2. (<http://www.wcwonline.org/Research-Action-Report-Spring/Summer-2013/research-action-report-spring-summer-2013>)
2. “Impact of Work Organization on Women’s Postpartum Health”, Wellesley Center for Women, 2012. <http://www.wcwonline.org/Archived-Projects/work-stress-and-womens-postpartum-health>
3. Mother’s Health and Work Related Factors at 11 Weeks Postpartum, Annals of Family Medicine, American Academy of Family Physicians. 2007 November; 5(6): 519-527, <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2094033/>
4. “Postpartum Depression Raises Healthcare Costs” Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine. Volume 54, Number 2, February 2012 <http://newsdesk.umd.edu/uniini/release.cfm?ArticleID=2650>
5. “Luring Mom Back to Work: More firms are acting to keep up ties with prized workers who took leave.” The Baltimore Sun. April 19, 2006



RECOMMENDATION:

Provide flexible schedules and facilities for mothers who are breastfeeding and reserving breastmilk.

Research supports the multiple benefits of breastfeeding for both the child and mother during the first year of the child's life, yet few American women are able to reach their intended breastfeeding duration goals. According to the National Business Group on Health, **“Breastfeeding is an essential part of the overall reproductive cycle for the mother, resulting in faster recovery from pregnancy. A healthy mother means an employee who is absent less often and able to contribute more productively to her workplace. Breastfeeding may also decrease employee absences associated with caring for a sick child since it has important short and long-term health benefits for both children and women.”**⁵ From a legal standpoint, the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act states that employers with 50 or more employees are required to provide “reasonable break time for an employee to express breast milk for her nursing child for 1 year after the child's birth each time such employee has need to express the milk.” Employers are also required to provide “a place, other than a bathroom, that is shielded from view and free from intrusion from coworkers and the public, which may be used by an employee to express breast milk.”¹

IMPLEMENTATION OPTIONS/ALTERNATIVES

Provide reasonable break time for an employee to express breast milk.

Provide a designated lactation room.

KEY ASPECTS

Accommodate a returning mother's pumping schedule and discuss meetings and other conflicts.

Communicate with new mothers to understand the number and length of reasonable breaks they need.

Nursing mothers' typically have a schedule they need to maintain in order to keep up with milk production.

The 'perfect' lactation room includes a sink, paper towels, refrigerator for milk storage, a lock on the entry door, comfortable seating, a mirror, table for pump with an outlet nearby, a small storage cabinet or closet, and a table for work/meal.

If the lactation room has other uses, ensure that use by returning mothers is given priority.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- A study reported in *Pediatrics* found that **low breastfeeding rates cost the United States \$13 billion each year in medical costs and resulted in more than 900 preventable deaths.** (www.ncsl.org)
- The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Economics Research Services estimates that \$3.6 billion in medical expenses could be saved each year if at least 50 percent of children were breastfed for at least six months. (www.ncsl.org)

SOURCES/ REFERENCES

1. Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, H.R. 3590 and the Reconciliation Act of 2010, H.R. 4872: Section 4207 of the law amends the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) of 1938 (29 U.S. Code 207)
2. National Conference of State Legislatures, Breastfeeding Laws. <http://www.ncsl.org/issues-research/health/breastfeeding-state-laws.aspx>
3. US Department of Labor, Fact Sheet #73: Break Time for Nursing Mothers under FLSA. August 2013. <http://www.dol.gov/whd/regs/compliance/whdfs73.pdf>
4. “Breastfeeding Saves Lives and Money” National Conference of State Legislatures, July 2010. <http://www.ncsl.org/issues-research/health/breastfeeding-saves-lives-and-money.aspx>
5. “Investing in Workplace Breastfeeding Programs and Policies: An Employers toolkit” National Business Group on Health. 2009. <http://businessgrouphealth.org/pub/f2ffe4f0-2354-d714-5136-79a21e9327ed>
6. “American Academy of Pediatrics: Breastfeeding and the Use of Human Milk” <http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/115/2/496.full>



RECOMMENDATION:

Create a travel-for-work policy and provide options for personal life.

Traveling for work can affect an employee’s mental, emotional, and physical health. It often negatively impacts work performance as well as personal and family life. While traveling for work is often unavoidable, steps can be taken by the employer to ease the disconnect between business travel and family time. These steps can increase both morale and productivity, whether they are in-home solutions or options utilized while away for work.

IMPLEMENTATION OPTIONS/ALTERNATIVES

Company-supported childcare (e.g. on-site childcare, hospitality childcare)

A trusted “nanny pool” to choose from, provided all or in-part by the company

Family-sized hotel room with option of in-room childcare during meetings

Family “check-in” services for employees with older children

After school activities

Lactation options: bring child along (and possibly spouse or other caretaker); lactation facilities while out of town; breast milk shipping services (see links below)

Provide a cleaning service for employees traveling for work

Provide option for meal delivery service

Company-supported elder care (e.g. day care similar to child care, transportation to/from senior centers)

Options for pet care (e.g. pet-friendly hotel options, in-home check-ins, boarding)

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

How does the firm effectively *set and communicate travel expectations* that allow employees to make necessary home-life arrangements?

What policies are in place to consider family needs when an employee must travel for work?

What minimum trip duration and/or frequency are required to obtain benefits?

KEY ASPECTS

Clearly communicate work travel requirements and expectations during the hiring process and regularly thereafter.

Establish reasonable expectations for advance notice of work travel to allow employees to make appropriate arrangements.

DEFINITIONS

Hospitality childcare:	Child care programs provided by or through hotels or travel companies that include sitter services, travelling nannies, and educational programs and events for travelling families; in-home elder care and hotel pet-sitting are additional options for travelling employees.
Meal delivery services:	Family-sized delivery and pick-up catering services intended to reduce the time and effort needed to prepare meals.
Lactation facility:	A sanitary, private room used by mothers to express/reserve breast milk for later use or to nurse their children.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- According to a 2003 Work/Life Benefits report by Hewitt Associates, “child care assistance remains the most prevalent work/life program, with 95% of employers today offering some kind of assistance to their employees (up from 87% in 1998).”¹
- “Many surveyed employees viewed the [on-site] childcare center as an important asset in helping the company to survive and remain profitable, by reducing turnover, absenteeism, and increasing productivity among workers.”²
- “Research has found that companies can get a \$3 to \$13 return on every \$1 invested in their benefits program, because such programs reduce the ‘hidden costs’ that result when employees try to balance their work and family responsibilities.”³

SOURCES/ REFERENCES

1. Questions and Answers about Employer-Supported Child Care: A Sloan Work and Family Research Network Fact Sheet, March 2009. <https://workfamily.sas.upenn.edu/sites/workfamily.sas.upenn.edu/files/imported/pdfs/ESCC.pdf>
2. Employer-Sponsored Daycare Can Be Profitable, New Study Shows. 7, January 2005. <http://www.bowdoin.edu/news/archives/1academicnews/001791.shtml>
3. Supporting Employees with Child and Elder Care Needs. Portland State University. June 2001. www.caregiverslibrary.org/portals/0/Employers_Sourcebook.pdf
4. Business Travel: Make It Work for You and Your Baby. New Beginnings, Vol. 17 No. 4, July-August 2000, pp. 140-142. <http://www.lalecheleague.org/nb/nbjulaug00p140.html>