Chapter 18
Offering Flexible Work Arrangements and Remote Work Policies

Hasnain Javed
University of South Asia, Pakistan

ABSTRACT

This chapter finds answers for three key questions: Are remote working arrangement and flexi-hour practices a permanent organizational feature? What is the impact of this new way of working on a workplace, employee engagement, and retention? What are the key features of flexible work arrangements and remote work policies? Companies that offer remote or hybrid working models need to make sure that they develop and implement a comprehensive policy document that covers all aspects of working from home. This will help employees understand what is expected of them and help the company avoid any potential disputes or misunderstandings.

THE NEED FOR REMOTE AND FLEXIBLE WORK ARRANGEMENTS

The global pandemic necessitated an unprecedented labour experiment, wherein a substantial proportion of enterprises, perhaps reaching up to 88%, swiftly transitioned to remote working arrangements. We have entered the third year post-COVID-19 and workplaces around the globe are no longer the same. Companies worldwide willingly or unwillingly to survive and thrive have drastically adopted a more flexible work culture (Hunter 2019). The regular 9 to 5 in many countries is a thing of the past unless the industry demands it. But wherever the possibility arises, employers and employees are choosing to tilt towards a more flexible approach. Many HR specialists today believe that the future is flexible and remote. By relying greatly on SMART KPIs, performance indicators and result-driven approaches, managers and human resource experts are becoming more comfortable with allowing employees to work remotely.

The Future of Time' study from 2021 stated that the desire for a flexible and remote work approach was found in all seven of the countries surveyed, including the UK, the U.S., Australia, New Zealand,

France, Germany, and Japan. Of these, Germans were the most interested in flexible work hours, with 56% of respondents saying they were in favour of it.

However, employers also have strong opinions about what kind of freedom is best. Research shows that if leaders think that workers are working from home to be more productive, like working long hours to meet job requirements, this is likely to be good for their careers. When people use flexibility for family or personal reasons, they get fewer rewards. There is evidence that when women use flexibility more than men, they get less money, their jobs get stuck, and they face backlash.

UNDERSTANDING FLEXIBLE/REMOTES POLICIES

Depending on the company's business plan or talent strategies, an effective policy lets employees work from home and could apply to a large number of workers. Therefore, developing flexible/remote policies based on a sound understanding and principles is of critical importance.

Flexible work arrangements and remote work policies are often used interchangeably, but they have distinct meanings when applied in the HR linguistics. Flexible work arrangements refer to the flexibility of when and where employees can work within their designated worktime. This means that employees have the option to start and end their workday at different times, as long as they complete the agreed number of hours. They can also choose to work from different locations, such as their home, secondary office location or a co-working space. Flexibility is the key aspect of this arrangement, allowing employees to tailor their work schedule to accommodate their personal schedules, such as childcare or personal appointments.

On the other hand, remote work policies focus more on allowing employees to work outside of the conventional office setting. This includes working from home, a coffee shop, or any other location that is not the central office. Remote work policies recognize and support the idea that work can be successfully accomplished regardless of working from a physical location. Such policies typically outline expectations for communication, productivity, and accountability and more.

A survey of American workforce conducting in the year 2023 reveals, a hybrid model is utilised by 28.2% of full-time employees, while 12.7% operate remotely. The fact that 12.7% of full-time employees are currently engaged in work from home, demonstrates the rapid assimilation of remote work environments into the working norm. Simultaneously, a substantial proportion of staff, specifically 28.2%, have adjusted to a hybrid work paradigm. Thus, it is through these recent surveys and studies that one can conclude that certain sectors and occupational positions are more inclined towards facilitating remote or flexible work arrangements compared to others. Gaining an understanding of these trends enables us to make predictions on the future trajectory of remote work (Hunter 2019).

In 2023, the computer and information technology sector emerged as the foremost industry in terms of remote/flexible work. This is consistent with the observation that tasks within the IT industry frequently involve digital processes, internet connection and online accessibility. Other sectors are not lagging far behind. Remote or flexible work has been adopted by various fields such as marketing, accounting and finance, and project management. These disciplines have incorporated the use of digital tools and platforms to facilitate the seamless continuation of work. The medical and health sector has experienced a transition towards remote labour, particularly influenced by the emergence of telehealth services and the

Related Content

Profiling Small and Medium Enterprises' Innovativeness During Periods of Economic Crisis: A Case Study From a Greek Region Using Strategic Groups
Ioannis Antoniadis, Elpida Tryfon Samaraand Thomai Karamitsou (2020). *Entrepreneurial Development and Innovation in Family Businesses and SMEs (pp. 125-148).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/profiling-small-and-medium-enterprises-innovativeness-during-periods-of-economic-crisis/257091

Green Knowledge Management for SMEs With an Emphasis on Human Resource
Rehmat Shah, Rana Yassir Hussainand Hira Irshad (2024). *Innovative Human Resource Management for SMEs (pp. 1-21).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/green-knowledge-management-for-smes-with-an-emphasis-on-human-resource/337905

Women on Boards Improving Women's Empowerment Through Entrepreneurship in Turkey
Meltem Ince Yenilmez (2019). *Handbook of Research on Entrepreneurial Leadership and Competitive Strategy in Family Business (pp. 22-41).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/women-on-boards-improving-womens-empowerment-through-entrepreneurship-in-turkey/225646

Contact Centers: Tool for Effective E-Business
Rui Rijo (2011). *Innovations in SMEs and Conducting E-Business: Technologies, Trends and Solutions (pp. 98-115).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/contact-centers-tool-effective-business/54171

Does Theory Really Fit Real Life Situations?: A Case Study on the Internationalization Process of a Technological Service-Based Firm
Julia Vasconcelos Furtado, Ana Rita Pereira, Inês Veiga Pereiraand António Carrizo Moreira (2019). *Handbook of Research on Entrepreneurship, Innovation, and Internationalization (pp. 419-438).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/does-theory-really-fit-real-life-situations/230723