

Flexible Working and Teleworking Are Revolutionising the World of Work

Research has shown that flexible working can result in increasing productivity of your business by 15%.

Why is this?

Well, it is partly due to the fact that flexible workers tend to put in more hours working overall and partly due to the fact that ICT is now enabling working on the move, which means that there is less downtime. Another factor is that staff who are flexible working tend to take less sick leave.

Through enabling working more at home or remote working, businesses are able to reduce their office overheads and some businesses have managed to dispense with the need for office space altogether. The savings in overheads can be immense.

Another advantage of flexible working is that it can be a way for a business to expand and take on more staff, without the need to take on the expense and commitment of additional office space.

Flexible working and teleworking also make it easier for businesses to attract and retain the best staff. Women are far more likely to return to work after maternity leave if they can work flexibly. It also makes it possible to retain the skills and expertise of staff who move away from the area - there is no reason why they cannot still use ICT to work flexibly for the same employer.

Research shows that flexible working employees tend to be more motivated and they can choose to work at the time when they are at their personal peak. Some people are owls and some are larks, so it does not make sense that everyone should **work 9-5**. If people work when they are at their best, the business benefits from their improved performance.

Today, many people have to combine work with family care commitments. And many others have personal interests that they would like to be able to devote more daylight hours to. By offering employees the opportunity to work from home or work unconventional hours, they can enjoy more flexibility in their lives and improve their work life balance.

There is also a saving to be made in travel to and from the office. With rising fuel costs, this is an increasingly vital consideration and there are economies to be made both by the employee and the business.

What's more, the environment also benefits as a result of reduced carbon emissions.

But the biggest advantage of flexible working is that it can help businesses to become and stay competitive. In today's business world, competitive advantage comes from being able to anticipate customer's needs, react quickly and provide excellent customer service 24/7. By having staff working flexibly and exploiting the latest ICT, businesses can extend the hours the business is available to customers.

For businesses operating globally, flexible working can also make it easier to service customers in different time zones. Working from home and remote working makes it easier to respond to customers outside conventional UK office hours.

Stafford Sumner, Managing Director of Jarrang, an email marketing agency based in Cornwall, says: "*We are able to work overseas, allowing us to turn around client projects faster than before by taking advantage of time zone differences. Everything is linked to our UK operation through the use of cutting edge technology and services like VoIP to present a top class service interface to the world.*"

About the Author

Julian Cowans is Project Manager of [actnow flex](#), a project funded by the South West Regional Development Agency, Cornwall Enterprise, BT and other partners. actnow flex offer a range of [flexible working case studies](#) for UK businesses.

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