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## Does flexible working work for businesses?

Did you know that 8 million people work part time (30 hours a week or less) and around 4 million usually work from home. On top of this an estimated 8.7 million UK-based full time workers want to work flexibly right now (whether part time or more remotely)? With astounding figures, we wanted to know why flex is working for so many businesses.

We met with Lorna Davidson, CEO of Short-Term Recruitment Agency, RedWigWam. RedWigWam believes it's absolutely essential all staff are treated in a way they deserve. They employ all their staff, providing them with the benefits of being fully employed (such as; National Insurance, Tax, pension contributions and holiday pay) with all the benefits of flexible, part-time work – regardless of how many hours they work. We asked Lorna her thoughts on all things flexible working, and the stories behind the stats.

## Flexible working stat: 69% of managers believe flexible workers are 'less ambitious' than full time workers

This seems like an archaic view of the modern workforce. There is always going to be varying quality of workers whether they choose to work full time or flexibly. From experience, it could be argued that flexible workers are more ambitious as they are repeatedly faced with challenges in getting and completing work. Often managers make them feel too embarrassed to ask to work the hours that suit their lifestyle and family commitments.

Managers need to change their practices as the workforce changes from the generation called the 'baby boomers' to 'Millennials'. Baby boomers grew up in organisations with corporate hierarchies rather than flat management structures and teamwork based jobs. Their skills are often said to include organizational memory, optimism, and willingness to work long hours. Whereas, Millennials are well educated, skilled in technology, self confident, multitaskers with plenty of energy. They prefer to work in teams and seek challenges, yet work life balance is of utmost importance. They do, however, realize that their need for social interaction, immediate results in their work, and desire for speedy advancement may be seen as weaknesses by older colleagues.

## Flexible working stat: 83% agree flexible working has benefitted their business

A recent study by economists at the University of Warwick found that happiness led to a 12% spike in productivity, while unhappy workers proved 10% less productive. Part of providing happiness at work can be by offering flexible work. Surprisingly, financial incentives often only play a small part in this happiness. It's a combination of remuneration, healthy relationships, a good work life balance and so much more.

Those who work flexibly will tend to feel more trusted and as a result may work harder for you. Additionally, by working from home, the rush hour commute is missed, meaning workers often start earlier as well as in a better mind set.

We've seen a real change at RedWigWam, growing our database from 0 to 61,000 in just a few short years. With more Mums and Dads choosing to stay at home rather than spend most of what they would earn on childcare! The workforce is adapting and becoming smarter with workers choosing to top up their income/earn in a variety of different ways. With the rise of Deliveroo, Uber and other service industries many flexible workers have new sources of income without barriers that used to exist.

## Flexible working stat: 89% of self-employed people work flexibly

What's the main benefit of 'being your own boss'? Choosing your own hours! With busier lifestyles and increased financial pressures, more and more of us are choosing to become self-employed.

This can have massive advantages in terms of being able to work when you want to. Apps like Uber, Deliveroo and Amazon Prime now

have encouraged this new way of working and made it accessible to the masses. One minute you can be sat at home in your pyjamas and the next you can be out earning money simply by using your car and driving licence!

However, importantly, by not being an employee you are more vulnerable should you become ill and don't get paid when you have time off! There has been a lot of criticism recently about the 'gig' economy and flexible working as often workers can be exploited.



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