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What is Flexible Working?

At Proflex we define flexible working as any work pattern that differs from the traditional “five day week” option. Whilst this includes part time work it also embraces full time working that is undertaken in fewer longer days or through a mix of office and home based working.

It is our belief that there are very few roles that cannot be undertaken by some form of flexible work pattern and the Directors of Proflex have themselves fully embraced this concept within their own working environment.

Why Flexible Working is expanding

The move towards flexible working is gathering momentum for a number of reasons of which the recent changes in legislation is just one. The government has given its backing to this concept with its family friendly legislation and there are now a raft of measures that govern such things as the length of the working week, rights to parental leave, enhanced rights for part time staff and the need to consider flexible working requests.

However this is by no means the only reason why the trend towards more flexible work patterns is increasing. Expectations amongst professional people are changing. There is growing publicity about the stress and pressures of modern life and stories are in the media daily about high flying executives downsizing in their quest for a more balanced lifestyle. An entire genre of lifestyle television programmes is selling the dream of a different work life balance.

There are also compelling business reasons to consider flexible working:

- Many services are now expected to be accessible 24/7 and the global market means businesses are operating internationally and across time zones. Companies need to access resources that are accessible over and above the standard 9 to 5 working week.
- In addition there is a significant gap between the skills available in the market place and the skills employers want and this is predicted to widen over the next decade. Combined with an aging workforce with lower pension values this mean employers will need to look at more imaginative solutions to their staffing needs.
- Amongst the professions there are a greater number of working women who are delaying mother hood until they have achieved career success. Without attracting these women back into the workforce post maternity leave then business faces the loss of a major skill base, one that they have themselves invested heavily in.
- Technological change is also fuelling the flexible working revolution. It is no longer necessary for individuals to come into the office on a daily basis and most work can be performed as effectively from home or any other remote location. This is making people’s dreams of a different way of life a more realistic option.

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- Finally those companies that embrace the concept are experiencing significant other benefits in terms of the positive way in which they are perceived by their workforce. There is growing evidence that flexible workers demonstrate enhanced commitment, reduced absenteeism, increased loyalty and high levels of productivity. The positive PR they achieve and the perception of the organisation as a progressive employer additionally has a knock on benefit to other roles that they are managing and/or for which they are recruiting.

Flexible Work Options

- **Work Shift Patterns**
 - Full time work completed over a non-standard work pattern, for example, 3 longer days of 12-hour shifts
- **Teleworking/Home working**
 - Working all or a proportion of your week from home or from a location remote from your office base
- **Part-time**
 - Working a reduced number of hours per week either five shorter days or a fewer number of full days or any combination thereof
- **Job Share**
 - Responsibilities and time are divided between yourself and a colleague for example you both may work 2.5 days each or one might work 3 days and the other 2 or you both might work 3 days leaving a crossover day for meetings and handovers.
- **Term time working**
 - Full time work but limited to outside of school holiday time.

In order to consider the most appropriate option the needs of the business and the demands of the role must be taken into account.