

The HBR Guide to Managing Flexible Work

In today's rapidly changing workplace, flexible work is becoming increasingly common. Employees are demanding more control over their work schedules and locations, and employers are recognizing the benefits of offering flexible work arrangements. But managing flexible work can be a challenge. How do you ensure that employees are productive and engaged when they're not working in the traditional office setting?



HBR Guide to Managing Flexible Work (HBR Guide Series) by Harvard Business Review

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In this comprehensive guide, you'll learn everything you need to know about managing flexible work, from the benefits and challenges to the best practices and tools. You'll also get real-world examples from companies that are successfully implementing flexible work arrangements.

The benefits of flexible work

There are many benefits to offering flexible work arrangements, including:

- **Increased employee productivity:** Employees who have more control over their work schedules and locations are often more productive. This is because they can work when they're most alert and productive, and they can avoid distractions that are common in traditional office settings.
- **Improved employee engagement:** Employees who feel trusted and empowered to work flexibly are more likely to be engaged in their work. They're also more likely to be satisfied with their jobs and to stay with their companies longer.
- **Reduced absenteeism and turnover:** Flexible work arrangements can help to reduce absenteeism and turnover by giving employees more control over their work-life balance. When employees can work from home or other flexible locations, they're less likely to take sick days or to leave their jobs to find more flexible work arrangements.
- **Access to a wider pool of talent:** By offering flexible work arrangements, employers can access a wider pool of talent. This includes people who may not be able to work in a traditional office setting, such as parents with young children, people with disabilities, and people who live in remote areas.

The challenges of managing flexible work

While flexible work offers many benefits, there are also some challenges to managing it effectively. These challenges include:

- **Communication and collaboration:** When employees are working remotely, it can be difficult to stay connected and collaborate

effectively. This can lead to misunderstandings, delays, and missed deadlines.

- **Supervision and performance management:** It can be difficult to supervise and manage employees who are working remotely. This can lead to problems with accountability and performance.
- **Equity and fairness:** It's important to ensure that all employees have access to flexible work arrangements. This can be difficult to do in practice, as some employees may have more flexibility than others due to their job responsibilities or personal circumstances.
- **Technology and security:** Employees who are working remotely need access to the same technology and security resources as employees who are working in the office. This can be a challenge for companies that are not equipped to support remote work.

Best practices for managing flexible work

There are a number of best practices that can help you to manage flexible work effectively. These include:

- **Set clear expectations:** Before you offer flexible work arrangements to your employees, it's important to set clear expectations about what is expected of them. This includes the hours they are expected to work, the level of productivity they are expected to maintain, and the communication and collaboration tools they are expected to use.
- **Provide training and support:** Employees who are new to flexible work may need training and support to help them succeed. This can include training on how to use remote work tools, how to stay

connected with colleagues, and how to maintain a healthy work-life balance.

- **Use technology to stay connected:** There are a number of technologies that can help you to stay connected with your remote employees. These include video conferencing tools, instant messaging tools, and project management tools.
- **Be flexible:** Flexible work is all about being flexible. Be prepared to adjust your expectations and policies as needed to meet the needs of your employees.

Tools for managing flexible work

There are a number of tools that can help you to manage flexible work.

These include:

- **Video conferencing tools:** Video conferencing tools allow you to have face-to-face meetings with your remote employees. This can be helpful for building relationships, collaborating on projects, and providing feedback.
- **Instant messaging tools:** Instant messaging tools allow you to communicate with your remote employees in real time. This can be helpful for quick questions, troubleshooting problems, and sharing updates.
- **Project management tools:** Project management tools help you to track progress on projects, assign tasks, and manage deadlines. This can be helpful for keeping remote employees organized and on track.
- **Remote desktop tools:** Remote desktop tools allow you to access your work computer from anywhere. This can be helpful for employees

who need to access files or software that is not available on their home computers.

Real-world examples of flexible work

A number of companies are successfully implementing flexible work arrangements. Here are a few examples:

- **Google:** Google offers a variety of flexible work arrangements, including remote work, flextime, and compressed workweeks. This has helped Google to attract and retain top talent, and it has also led to increased employee productivity and satisfaction.
- **Salesforce:** Salesforce offers a "work from anywhere" policy, which allows employees to work from any location they choose. This has helped Salesforce to build a global workforce and to reduce its real estate costs.
- **Buffer:** Buffer is a social media management company that has been fully remote since its inception. Buffer has found that remote work has helped it to build a more diverse and engaged team, and it has also led to increased employee productivity and satisfaction.

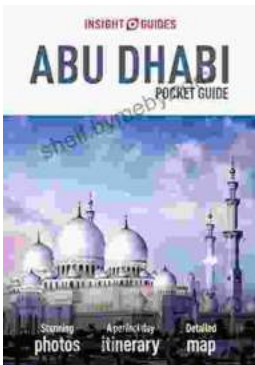
Flexible work is becoming increasingly common, and it offers a number of benefits for both employers and employees. However, managing flexible work can be a challenge. By following the best practices and using the tools described in this guide, you can successfully implement flexible work arrangements in your organization.

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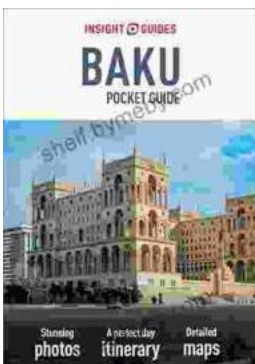


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