

Compressed work week

[Business](#), [Work](#)



Compressed work week is an alternative work arrangement where a standard workweek is reduced to fewer than five days, and employees make up the full number of hours per-week by working longer hours. The most common option in a compressed workweek is working four 10-hour days. Some organizations have been organized in measuring outcomes and perceptions amongst stakeholders, while other organizations are pleased to move to a compressed work schedule simply because management believes the employees are satisfied.

There are even organizations that are going back to a traditional work schedule after having implemented a compressed work schedule, due to lack of structure. Organizations today are being challenged with a variety of new obstacles. This is due to the results of much social, political, and economic confusion in the world today. These changes can have a huge impact on organizational behavior, such as today's global context in organizations. Global economy, in which businesses of different nations and cultures operate, come together to conduct business.

As a result of the change in the global economy there is a drastic increase in competition for consumers. Companies have had to make structural and behavioral changes just to stay afloat. Organizational structure, as we all know, is the relationship of responsibility and authority between groups, as well as individuals and the organization. The better the company knows their organizational structure the more effectively they can interact with it and know what is best for the organization.

In the 1940s, social psychologist Kurt Lewin developed a simple three step model as a way of looking at change that has helped many organizational

leaders manage resistance to change. The three steps that were developed by Kurt Lewin were: (1) Unfreezing (2) Moving (3) Refreezing. The first step helps identify what needs unfreezing; what significant event(s) occurred to make people most affected. Next, active participation by the affected parties in the change process is most effective and important for communication. It helps implement change and barriers that affect change.

This helps the movement step in order to analyze the results of the new system. The final step is the refreezing step which puts the new system into place, with backup from the analyze data. If the analyzed data is tested, debugged, and efficient then the new system is a go, but if there are flaws then maybe the beginning obstacle just needed tweaking, but not changing the system entirely. According to Lewin's force field analysis, " a person's behavior is the result of two opposing forces: the force that maintains the status quo (staying the same) and the force that pushes for change.

When the two opposing forces are equal, the current behavior is sustained, creating an equilibrium" (Cronshaw, 2008). " While Lewin's change model does not spell out in detail what change agents need to do to effect change, it does illuminate with remarkable clarity the major steps that each such effort must follow to be successful. As such, it is a powerful tool that deserves a place in the toolbox of every would-be change enabler" (Cronshaw, 2008). As with any change within a company, there are always weighted pros and cons.

Even though the advantages out way the disadvantages on this particular concept, a big disadvantage to look at would be the marketing aspect of the company. " Even though the compressed work week would provide job
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satisfaction for employees, what does it do to the customers” (Rotenberg, 1977). Management personnel would have to staff the office on the fifth day to maintain communications with customers, which would make for management personnel to come in and supervise.

This disadvantage would leave fewer days to provide service to customers, which would make them irritated and seek other companies. If your company is working a compressed work week and other business are not, then how can businesses work together if some operate a 9-5 business week? As much as this compressed work week sounds appealing, take a look at the working families and their struggles. “ Their stress levels are higher, especially for mothers because they are the ones doing most of the cooking and child care.

Longer days at the office can lead to a more stressed life for women due to the demand of responsibilities at home” (Carey, 1997). When both working spouses come home for a longer day at work, due to compressed work week, they are tired and only have time for dinner, shower, and bed. There are normally few hours left in the day to do odds and ends around the house or to spend time with their children going over their day; the more that chores that are “ put off” the more stressed parents get.

Another disadvantage to the seemingly appealing work week is the lack of actual work. “ Some workers on extended work days may pace themselves differently than workers on traditional shifts. Other employees may slow down at the end of a day as fatigue sets in” (Humphrey, 2012). This could also mean more break times or even longer breaks, which could mean less work is actually being done in a week when compared to a traditional work week. Something else to think about would be the holiday and vacation

hours. Employers typically pay holiday reimbursement as eight hours, requiring employees on extended work days to use their vacation pay to compensate. Some employees become unhappy when forced to use their vacation in this manner” (Humphrey, 2012). As organizations begin to find themselves having to deal with more complex environments, change methodologies that focus on the problem, such as Kurt Lewin’s three step method, will help put in perspective the ramifications of change.

Is it okay to put a few employees concerns at heart, but not look at the other half of the employees concern? Is it better to look at a different alternative to work schedules? What will benefit the company’s global aspect, customer service aspect, and employee aspect. What measures will be sufficient enough to bring higher performance, efficient marketing and employee satisfaction? All these questions and the help of Kurt Lewin’s method will help each organization make an educated judgment about their company.