

What are flexible work practices management essay



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

\n[[toc title="Table of Contents"](#)]\n

\n \t

1. [Introduction](#) \n \t
2. [What are flexible work practices?](#) \n \t
3. [Flexible work options](#) \n \t
4. [Advantages and disadvantages of flexible working practices](#) \n \t
5. [Case studies](#) \n \t
6. [Conclusion](#) \n

\n[/toc]\n \n

Introduction

Before two or three decades, workers were expected to work as full time so that pay attention to their jobs from the employer's perspective, thereby satisfying the employer's desire (Greenberg & Landry 2011). However, in this day and age, with developing of human resource management and shortage of talents, flexible work practice becomes more and more common in people's work and life. It is an important topic in Human resource management. Because it has a deep influence up on both companies and employees, It is a widely evident that flexible work practices benefit for organization in terms of productivity and costs in order to make it to become more competitive and it gives an increasing pressure to alleviate the current crisis of unemployment in Western Europe (Odendaal & Roodt 2002; Brewster et al, cited in Creagh & Brewster 1998); besides, it enable employees, flexibility able to change work time or workplace when they need to adjust their work schedule (Odendaal & Roodt 2002). But others support that flexible working causes low skill, low wage, low security employment <https://assignbuster.com/what-are-flexible-work-practices-management-essay/>

(Pollert, cited in Creagh & Brewster 1998). This essay will focus on the understanding the definition of flexible work practice, describing some kinds of flexible work options, comparing disadvantages and advantages and researching some case studies.

What are flexible work practices?

There are numerous of flexible work practices in many countries.

Specifically, in American, it is often refer to flexible working as “contingency” work, which has negative implication (Tregaskis et al, cited by O’Brien & Hayden 2007). By contract, In UK and Irish, “ flexibility” is usually used with positive meaning. Thus, flexible work options are employment arrangements which aim to achieve the best possible match between the interests of the business and individual employees. It can improve productivity and customer service and supply employees with their own choices to achieve a balance between their work and personal responsibility (Davies 1997).

Flexible work options

Flexibility has become a key issue in organization and human resource management studies and it represents a real and intriguing challenge so that all members within the companies have to confront. In general, flexible working practices has seven options and these flexible work options affects all elements of work, such as working time, working places, contents, reward schemes, etc. and all the flexible work options have both advantages and disadvantages. Therefore it makes both employers and employees to re-think about the new definition of work and the way work is undertaken in their organizations.

<https://assignbuster.com/what-are-flexible-work-practices-management-essay/>

1. Part-time work

Part-time work offers flexibility for employers to better take advantage of employees, and “ more effectively and efficiently manage the delivery of services to customers “(Davies 1997). Generally Speaking, part-time workers in the same company have fewer turnovers than any other employee category (O’Brien & Hayden 2007). Part-time work provides benefits to both employers and employees because it allows for more flexible working places and employees can be allowed to opt for their suitable working patterns. Combining their work and family responsibilities is also the main problem for the employees. This option gives more flexible preference to employees to solve the problem. As a result, it increases life satisfaction through improved balance of activities (Davies 1997).

2. Job sharing

Job sharing is a voluntary arrangement and it means that the duties and responsibilities of one job are shared among full-time and part-time employees (Davies 1997). The employers are allowed to actualize many kinds of employment options and the employees are also provided flexibility to choose their work patterns which is fit for their lifestyles (New South Wales Premier’s Department Public Employment Office 1995). Job sharing has benefits for both the employers and their employees. For employers, job sharing can reduce turnover of employees and absenteeism, and it can increase productivity at the same time because increased flexibility can share peak workloads and there is a greater potential to solve the problems. For employees, job sharing has the flexibility in scheduling time at work and

it can effectively balance their work and leisure time so that it offers a greater job satisfaction (Davies 1997). In a word, this practice is used “ in response to the perceived need for more family-friendly policies or as a means of tackling the unemployment crisis in some economies” (Gunnigle et al., cited by O’Brien and Hayden 2007).

3. Part time leave without pay

Part time leave without pay allows employees to work part-time, however, the full-time service is kept. After the application is granted, employees can work part-time so that they can leave for some other needs, such as hospitalization, travel, part-time leave to care for the children, etc. After a period of leave without pay, employees get back to full-time work and the full-time service proceeds. (Davies 1997) This option has some benefits for both employees and employers. For employees, this option can help to achieve work and life balance so that life satisfaction will be increased. For employers, this option attracts those employees who are interested in working part-time and those who are only able to work part-time. Since turnover is reduced through this option, companies can save recruitment and training costs (New South Wales Premier’s Department Public Employment Office 1995).

4. Career break scheme

Career break scheme provides an opportunity for employees to have a period of special leave without pay between six months and five years. This option is distinct from the prior option part time leave without pay, which ratifies an unpaid leave of less than one year. (New South Wales Premier’s <https://assignbuster.com/what-are-flexible-work-practices-management-essay/>

Department Public Employment Office 1995) A career break can be granted for a number of purposes such as the care of children or parents, further education, voluntary work, etc. During the career break, it is the responsibility for employees and employers to keep in touch through emails or newsletters and employees can attend conferences and apply for training courses. After the break, employees can return to work at the same level. (Davies 1997) This option provides not only benefits to employers, but also opportunities for employees. For employers, career break scheme attracts a lot of skilled employees to replace those absent ones. For employees, this option provides employees with an opportunity for personal development. Moreover, it will widen their experience and enhance the skills they bring back to the workplace (Davies 1997).

5. Variable-year employment

Variable-year employment allows employees to take unpaid leave for one year or more after working for a number of years. (Davies 1997) There are advantages for both employers and employees. For employers, this option can help to attract those employees who are on part-time leave without pay or career break scheme. It also provides development opportunities for other employees. For employees, it provides an opportunity to plan a long absence and to combine work with other needs and interests (New South Wales Premier's Department Public Employment Office 1995).

6. Working from home

Working from home means that some companies allow employees to work away from the normal workplaces, mostly to work from home. (Davies 1997) <https://assignbuster.com/what-are-flexible-work-practices-management-essay/>

This option offers benefits to both employers and employees. For companies, this option helps to reduce costs and energy usage, while it increases productivity. For individuals, it can save time and money that are spent on travelling, and it can increase family time. Since personal time and affairs can all be managed by employees, working from home can help to reduce stress and work-life balance will be improved (New South Wales Premier's Department Public Employment Office 1995).

7. Short term absences for family community responsibilities

This option allows employees to take a short-term leave of a few hours or several days to meet family and community responsibilities, such as requirements of children's school or nursing home, or to make a medical appointment for a sick family member. (Davies 1997) This option also has benefits for both employers and employees. For employers, it helps to reduce turnover because the needs of employees are met so that their satisfaction will increase. For employees, they have opportunity and ability to achieve their short-term needs (New South Wales Premier's Department Public Employment Office 1995).

Advantages and disadvantages of flexible working practices

Generally, there are some positive aspects to arrange flexible work practices. For organizations, according to the fifth annual survey of Long Term Employment Strategies, it boosts the business success (Flexible working practices boost business success 1996). More specifically, firstly it can increase productivity and less stress and absenteeism. Secondly, according to research of Kerlake and Goulding (cited by O'Brien & Hayden

2007), working flexible creates different output with working normal hours. Their found happier workplace can motivate people to have some high level of morale, people were willing to be commitment, reliability and productivity in their jobs. Finally, Guthrie (2001) indicate in his research that using flexible work arrangement is god way to get lower turnover, thus, it saves effectively investment for the company. For employees, to begin with, flexible works are family-friendly. It is the better way to enable people balance their working and their families and release their stress (Lewis 1997). Furthermore, it can make jobs to change wider and more interesting, but also involving job losses, stricter controls whilst at work and an intensification of work. Finally, it benefits for women who has main some responsibility in terms of child-care, home maintenance and home caring (O'Brien & Hayden 2007). For environment, it has a Positive effect upon the environment, such as decrease cars on the road and reduced traffic jam in rush hour and has enough parking. (O'Brien & Hayden 2007)

However, flexible working practices give rise to some negative effect for both individuals and companies. First of all, business owners and managers need to recognize that flexible work arrangements are not always appropriate for all people, jobs, or industries. First of all, business owners and managers need to recognize that flexible work arrangements are not always appropriate for all people, jobs, or industries. Critics also argues that flexible programs often leave managers in exceedingly difficult situations. Finally, many observers argue that company has not enough sufficient preparation to run flexible work plan. (O'Brien & Hayden 2007)

Case studies

Gwenda Jayawardhana was a management accountant for a Brisbane-based engineering firm. After her pregnant with her first child, she realized that she might need to look at the flexible working possibilities so that she could balance the work and her family. Later she quit her job, and she created a microbusiness cashbook accounting software package with the help of her husband who is an IT expert. This couple set up a small business through a website and Gwenda is able to work from home. Now they have three children, and they have a two-storey office in the backyard of their home in north Brisbane (Tarrant 2007)

Flexible working can work for the employer and the employees as well. It can reduce costs and increasing business potential. From researches, we know that only 40% of small and medium sized businesses allow employees to work from home, while 76% of large companies allow employees to work from home (flexible working 2010). A large reason is the perception that the technology to enable effective flexible working is too expensive.

There are three kinds of example form Creagh & Brewster's article(1998), they choose a good cross-section of the European working population in order to reflect a lot different kinds of flexible working arrangement in Italy, Sweden and UK. Though the research to gave a conclusion, it is good practice in flexible working, this case also show that flexible working is a two-edged sword for both individuals and origination. The organisational problems which caused by flexible work that ' they face occur at the same time that local unions may find themselves with a greater say in the management processes of the organization.

<https://assignbuster.com/what-are-flexible-work-practices-management-essay/>

Another case in Nigerian, the authors (Oke, MI & Oke A 2011) selected two small local companies. The finding implied that the manager plays important role in flexible working, especially in developing countries. They need to deal with some economic and political factors in different Africa countries.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it has been a very popular topic in three decades years and some arguments always exist. The article firstly shows the definition of the board topic area, following a variety of different options, pros and cons of topic. The case is given in the back which needs to investigate in the future. Because some cases in this article maybe bias, it is better to find more articles in different places and different jobs. This report has some limitations, such as lack of some data, less evidences and cases. In the future, the direction will follow the way of how to address the negative of flexible working practices.