

# Flexible working essay



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One organization that is currently in place is known as Time4balance and can provide assistance to individuals in the areas of: How to apply for a flexible working arrangement  
The different types of flexible working arrangements  
Devising a business case to support an application for flexible working  
Providing supporting evidence of successful flexible working arrangements  
Legal rights and issues (Legal Balancing Act 2006). It is a pretty sure bet that many more organizations such as this will begin surfacing, and there will be more and more resources for those employees seeking to explore the world of workforce flexibility. Lest we forget, employers have rights in these areas as well. “ Employers must also see they are on firm ground and have a legitimate reasons for refusing a request to work flexibly. ” (Time for Balance 2006).

The government legislation goes beyond the “ right to request,” and includes parental leave and marital discrimination among other issues. One of the issues in workforce flexibility is called “ valuing diversity,” in the sense that rigid employment policies that emphasise sameness offers few business advantages. John Whitely, Senior HR manager at Lloyd’s TSB argues persuasively for a strategy that includes the following: Diverse workforces better understand diverse customer needs Mirroring customer profiles is a valuable business too. Widening pools of talent will improve employer of choice and retention strategies Diversity improves quality of thought, behaviour and outputs Diverse teams reach higher quality decisions than homogenous ones.(Flexibility and 2006).

One of the key areas highlighted by the UK government for action by employers is that employers need to understand that part time does not

mean half-hearted. By giving an employee the opportunity to spend more time with his or her family, or to do some of the things in life that are meaningful to the employee, it is much more likely that during the periods of work the employee will be giving 100% all the time. (Work-Life 2006).

Another area the government stresses is that employers need to realize that both employers and employees benefit from work-life balance. This is not a one-sided deal, but rather a way of working that benefits both the employer (happier, more productive employee) as well as the employee (again, happier, more productive employee).

It really is a win-win situation for all concerned. (Work-Life 2006). The government further asks employers to let their employees enjoy their full holiday entitlement, encourage them to work from home when appropriate, enable employees to share jobs and adopt flexible hours in school holidays and to allow their employees full paid paternity and maternity leave.(Work-Life 2006) It is sincerely hoped by all that these excellent suggestions from the government can be implemented with good results for all. A case study that has tested flexible working time for work-life balance and efficiency comes from Cloisters, the barristers' chambers which provides legal advice and representation.

(Flexible Working 2006). The Cloisters has 40 barristers supported by 10.5 staff and the project was primarily aimed at that particular staff. The specific issues identified were: Absenteeism, morale, compliance with employment law and best practice and business improvements. (Flexible Working 2006). A flexible hours " framework" was drafted and developed to meet Cloisters' specific needs and with these objectives in mind: Enhance Cloisters'

corporate reputation Be an employer of choice for new recruits Reduce staff absence Introduce more manageable working hours Improve time-keeping Provide more robust telephone and reception cover Improve staff morale (Flexible Working 2006).

So, what was the outcome of the Cloisters' project? Discussions with the staff showed that an overwhelming majority of them felt this project had a very positive impact on their lives. Even those who were initially skeptical conceded the scheme had turned out to be beneficial, not only for colleagues, but for themselves as well. " All staff have now joined the flexitime scheme; participation remains optional and some staff took part only after the scheme had been operation for a while and colleagues were obviously gaining benefits from it." (Flexible working 2006). To end, I'd like to offer some quotes from the staff of the Cloisters' on Workforce Flexibility: I feel so much better. The week is no longer never ending.

I feel healthier and less stressed. It's good to know that, in future, I'll be able to attend some of my children's daytime school events. I actually have time now to relax in the evenings and can get ready to go out without rushing around. (Flexible Working 2006).

Works Cited Flexible Working and The Law, 2006. Flexible Hours in Barristers' Chambers. [Online] Available from: <http://www.flexibility.co.uk/cases/cloisters.htm>