Human Capital Innovations

Designing Work during COVID-19
Implications for Managers
& the Future of Work

HCI Research Brief

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Implications for Managers & the Future of Work

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COVID-19 is having a worldwide and significant impact on the world of work. Scheduling flexibility has taken on new meaning with employees working from home on a regular basis. Not only must these employees fulfill their work responsibilities, but in many cases, care for children and assist with schoolwork. Some may find working from home isolating and experience increased conflict between home and work responsibilities, while others may enjoy the flexibility and find that it increases productivity. A study administered early in the COVID-19 crisis found that 80% of those working remotely were happy doing so (Corliss, 2020).

Some estimates indicate that 56% of all jobs in the U.S. could be performed remotely, at least in part (Global Workplace Analytics, n.d.). A main deterrent, however, has been lack of trust and fear among managers that they will not know if an employee is actually working (Global Workplace Analytics, n.d.). Working remotely due to COVID-19 may show managers that these fears are unfounded, particularly as managers themselves have been working from home (Global Workplace Analytics, n.d.).

A compelling reason for an increase in working from home is decreased operating expenses (Levin, 2020), with some estimates indicating that employers can save U.S. $11,000 a year for each employee working at home half time (Global Workplace Analytics, n.d.). In particular, remote work improves office space efficiencies given that globally, employees are not at their desks 50-60% of the workday (Global Workplace Analytics, n.d.). Other data indicates that working from home increases productivity by 35-40% (Levin, 2020).

COVID-19 is expected to permanently change how and where people work. Some reports estimate that 75% of staff will ask for an increase in work from home hours on a permanent basis (Shen et al., 2020). Others forecast that 25-30% of the U.S. workforce will work from home several days a week by the end of next year (Global Workplace Analytics, n.d.). Companies are likely to be more flexible with work

arrangements given that employees have proven themselves in work from home situations (Arruda, 2020). This will mean giving employees more choices.

Certainly, a range of contexts and situations exist. Perhaps the most compelling reason for managers to expand work from home arrangements is considerations around employee engagement and job satisfaction, which, in turn, positively impacts customer retention, productivity, firm competitiveness, innovation, organizational commitment, and job tenure.

A series of studies comparing job satisfaction in 37 countries, based on data from the most recent wave of the International Social Survey[1], explores various work-life balance factors, job autonomy, and meaningful work (see Andrade & Westover, 2018a, 2018b, 2019; Andrade, Westover, & Kupka, 2019; Andrade, Westover, & Peterson, 2019). Findings from these studies offer important considerations for managers related to remote work and apply across generations of workers and countries.

Additional information about these studies is available in the HCI Research One Sheets that follow.

World Map of Study Countries

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[1] For a full summary and description of this research, see https://www.gesis.org/issp/modules/issp-modules-by-topic/work-orientations/2015/.

Considerations for Managers Designing Work during COVID-19

As managers determine how to move forward both during and after COVID-19, the following questions may be helpful in exploring future innovations aimed at designing jobs that motivate and engage employees, to drive better firm performance. See more about each of these topics in the HCI Research One Sheets that follow.

Meaningful Work

- Why does it matter if employees find their work interesting?
- How can I demonstrate to my employees that their work benefits the broader society?
- How do my employees feel about their work?
- How can I better design the jobs of my team so the work they do is more meaningful?

Job Autonomy

- What are some practical steps you can take today to enhance the sense of job autonomy in your team and within your organization?
- What are some specific ways members of my team experience a greater sense of job autonomy and how can I better support them?
- What are simple ways I can start implementing greater job autonomy in my business strategy today?
- What are ways my organization can start providing greater employee job autonomy today?

Working from Home (WFH)

- What parts of your employees' job descriptions could be achieved remotely?
- How can I simplify and efficiently implement WFH practices into employees schedules?
- Does my organization support WFH schedules at any level in the organization and how can you increase the scope of the existing programs?
- What potential benefits could be achieved by implementing WFH practices?
- Why should I look to WFH practices as a path towards higher employee satisfaction and retention?

Schedule Flexibility

- Is a flexible schedule possible for my employees? What factors may limit my ability to provide flexible scheduling options to my employees?
- Do I have any employees that are consistently late or leaving early for family related issues?
- What can a program that allows for greater schedule flexibility do for my employees' morale, retention, and job satisfaction?
- What are the potential benefits of implementing flexible schedules where possible for my workforce?
- How can I implement a simple, yet effective flexible schedule program?
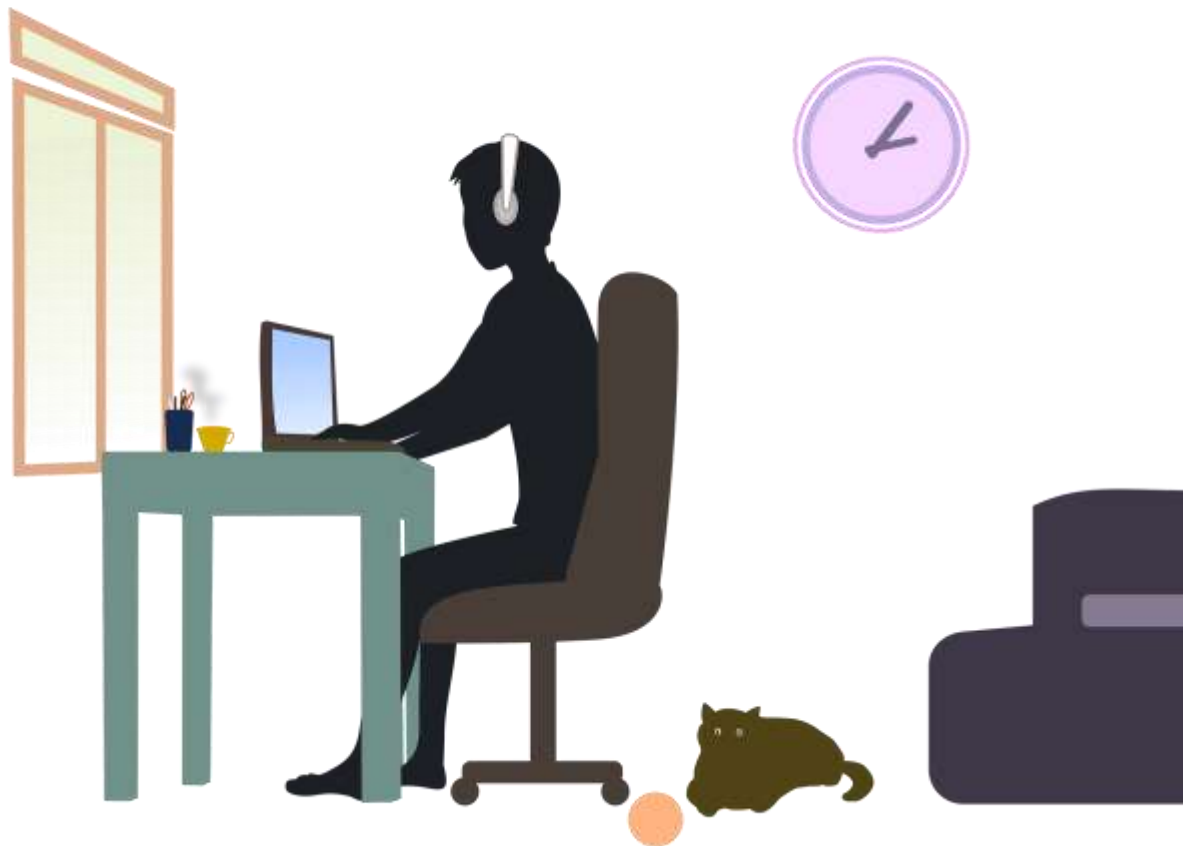
Flexibility to Deal with Family Matters

- How does your organization's culture look at employees who take time off every few weeks or months to deal with family matters?
- Would your organization look at them differently if they took time off more frequently?
- Looking at yourself in your position, is it easy for you to take a few hours to deal with family matters?
- Looking at those you manage, is the process for employees to take a few hours off difficult? What could you do to streamline this process?
- Does your organization have incentives for staying at work? How can you keep incentives but remove the pressure for employees to stay at work longer than necessary?
- Alternatively, does your organization have institutional mechanisms that punish employees who take time away to deal with family matters on a regular basis?

Reducing Work Interference with Family

- Does your organization allow for short notice schedule changes?
- Is there a time requirement for your employees to be present or is it a workload requirement? Could you organization's culture have both of these requirements?
- During performance reviews, are you asking your employees about hour preferences?
- Are you collecting data on what your employees want in regard to total hours or specific hours worked?
- How could you implement a more efficient scheduling system to accommodate employees who want non-traditional schedules?

Having Weekends Off

- What benefits do I see by allowing my employees to have weekends off?
- What obstacles are in the way of implementing a five-day work week for my business?
- How can I optimize productivity to allow weekends to be taken off regularly by employees?
- If weekend work is unavoidable, can it be accomplished with a rotating schedule or incentives to make it more appealing to employees?
- How would I make a rotating schedule fair for all employees?

Preparing for Worker Effectiveness during COVID-19 & for the Future of Work

Well-designed jobs, that provide meaning and purpose to employees, the autonomy to determine how they perform their work, and that provide for various work-life-balance benefits are proven to drive higher levels of worker satisfaction and engagement, which has enormous benefits for both workers and their employers alike. These benefits include increased productivity, innovation and creativity, and less job turnover and absenteeism.

Additionally, COVID-19 has provided an opportunity for managers to determine effective practices for working from home. Given that flexible work arrangements improve worker satisfaction and engagement globally and across generations of workers, managers should determine how to leverage and continue these arrangements as they work to support their employees and design jobs that drive performance.

Research Snapshots

The following HCI Research Snapshots provide a quick summary overview of a series of studies comparing job satisfaction in 37 countries, based on data from the most recent wave of the International Social Survey (see Andrade & Westover, 2018a, 2018b, 2019; Andrade, Westover, & Kupka, 2019; Andrade, Westover, & Peterson, 2019). Findings from these studies offer important considerations for managers related to remote work and apply across generations of workers and countries.

1. **The Benefits of Meaningful Work**

2. **The Importance of Job Autonomy in the Workplace**

3. **Working from Home (WFH)**

4. **The Importance of Scheduling Flexibility at Work**

5. **Flexibility to Deal with Family Matters**

6. **The Impacts of Work Interfering with Family**

7. **The Importance of Having Weekends Off**

What is meaningful work to an employee? And why is meaningful work important? Meaningful work is a combination of three variables that affect job satisfaction: the work is interesting, the work allows employees to help others, and the work is useful to society; If these three variables are properly addressed within a company's workforce, then major benefits such as a reduction in employee depression (Allan, 2018) and an increase in employee work-to-life enrichment (Johnson, 2017), will greatly increase employee job satisfaction throughout a company.

The data in the graph below is from the International Social Survey Program (ISSP) and is based on surveys administered to individuals across 37 countries who are part of the Silent Generation, Baby Boomers, Generation X, and Millenials. This data shows that generational cohorts who record a higher mean job satisfaction score also record the highest scores in the following categories: Interesting Work, Job Autonomy, Helping Others, and My Job is Useful to Society. Furthermore, addition regression analyses show that interesting work, helping others, and having a job useful to society (i.e. meaningful work) are all more salient determinants of job satisfaction than is pay, across all generations.

Table 1: Mean Meaningful Work Values across Generational Cohorts

| VARIABLE	Silent Generation	Baby Boomers	Generation X	Millennials	All Generations
Job Satisfaction	5.69	5.39	5.28	5.26	5.32
Interesting Work	3.84	3.86	3.82	3.78	3.83
Job Autonomy	4.07	3.88	3.81	3.71	3.82
Help Others	4.02	3.91	3.88	3.83	3.88
Job Useful to Society	4.06	4.01	3.95	3.86	3.94

Figure 1: Job Satisfaction Mean Score and Interesting Work Mean Score by Age Cohort—How Often Do You Feel That the Demands of Your Job Interfere with Your Family Life?
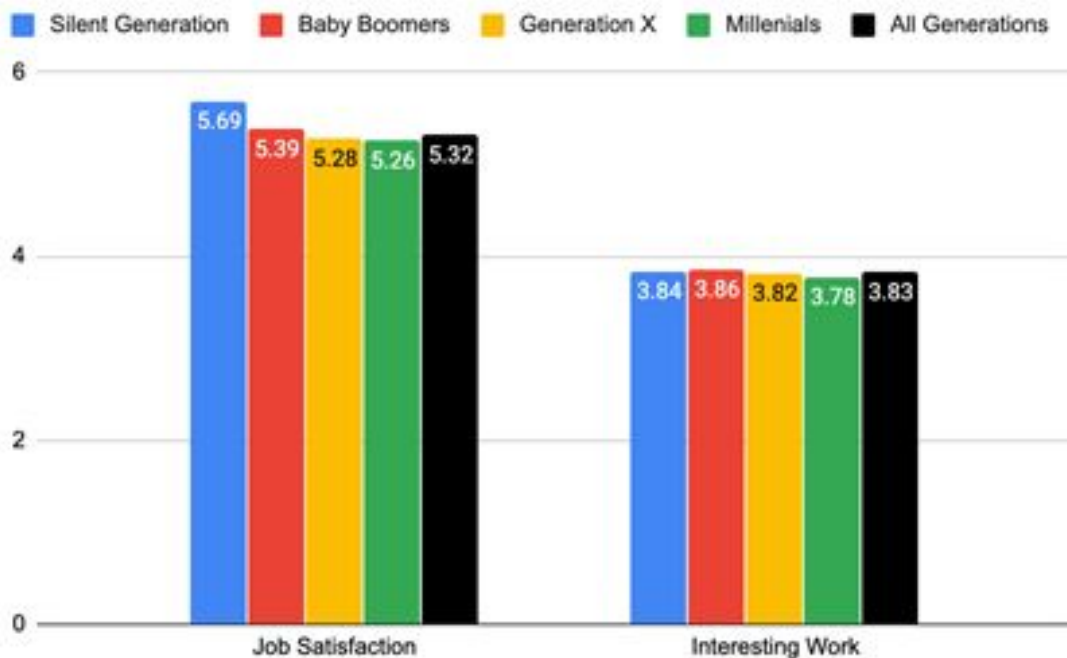
The following graph also uses data from the ISSP and shows the mean scores in 37 countries for workers' perceptions of the extent to which they have Interesting work, as compared to the global average. The United States has a mean score above the global average, showing that overall workers in the United States feel that their work is more in interesting, as compared to the rest of the world.

Figure 2: Interesting Work Mean Score, by Country
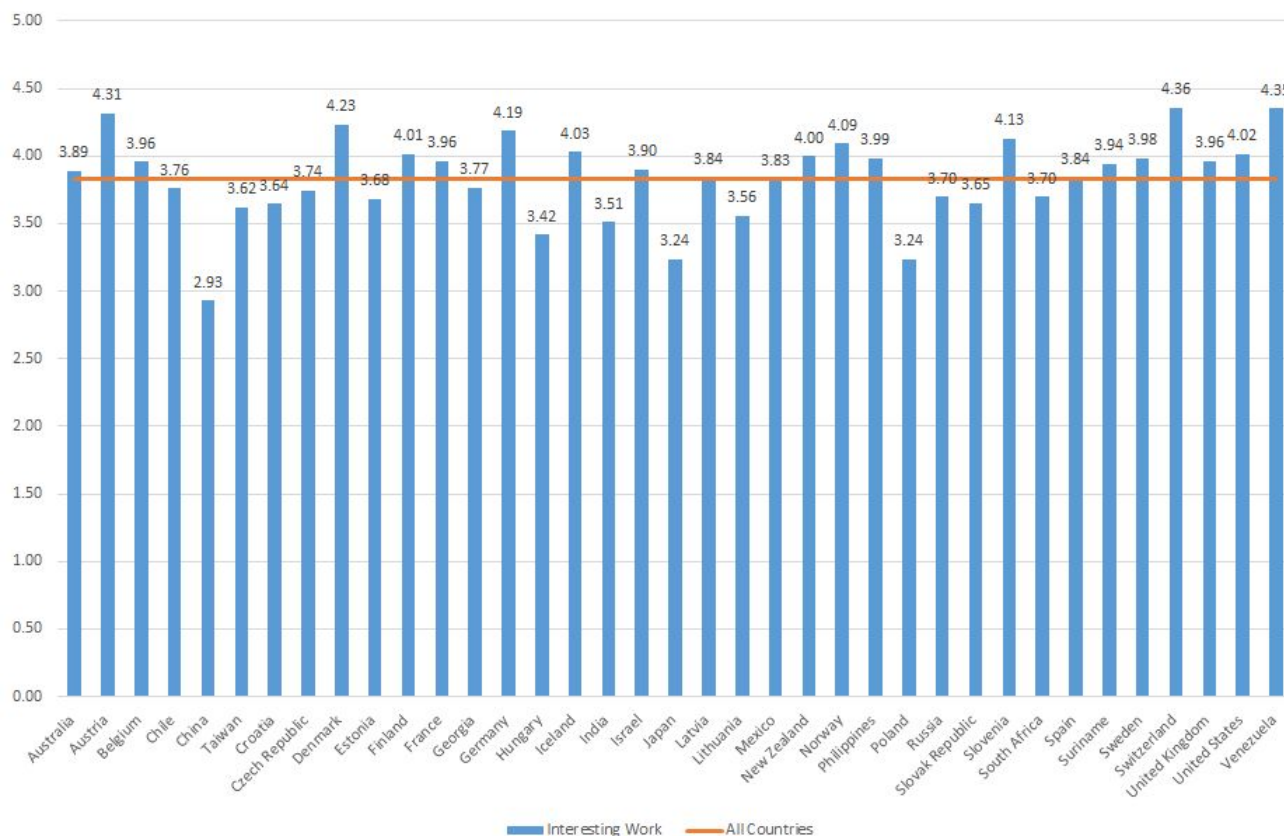
Based on these findings, organizational leaders and managers should carefully consider and expend resources on making work more meaningful for their employees, rather than focusing primarily on pay and other extrinsic motivators. Note that we are not suggesting that a company pay employees less than market value for a position; rather, once a company is paying a fair and equitable living wage, it should then focus on these other more salient extrinsic motivational factors.

Answering the questions below can assist you in finding ways to make work more meaningful for your people.

Questions for Managers:

- Why does it matter if employees find their work interesting?
- How can I demonstrate to my employees that their work benefits the broader society?
- How do my employees feel about their work?
- How can I better design the jobs of my team so the work they do is more meaningful?

References:

- Allan, Blake A.; Dexter, Chelsea; Kinsey, Rebecca; Parker, Shelby. (2018). "Meaningful work and mental health: job satisfaction as a moderator." *Journal of Mental Health.* 27(1), pp. 38-44.
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Job autonomy is the level of independence one has in the workplace. There are many benefits to organizations through the careful delegation of job responsibilities and creating more autonomy amongst its employees.
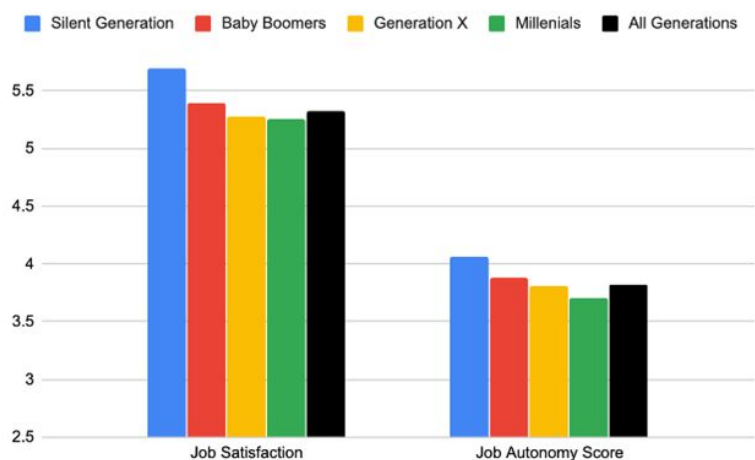
Brief benefits of job autonomy:

- Employees with job autonomy tend to have higher job satisfaction.
- Job autonomy reduces negative stressors.
- Job autonomy can inspire greater innovative performance.
- Job autonomy can provide job satisfaction for an employee of any generational cohort.
- Job autonomy is an effective way to reduce the negative impact of depression on employees.

Job autonomy reduces negative stressors, such as hindrance stressors (Peng, 2018). These stressors result from job demands that can impede employee development, achievement, and employee health (Cavanaugh et al., 2000; Crawford, LePine, & Rich, 2010; LePine et al., 2005). Job autonomy moderates the effects of hindrance stressors on innovation (Peng, 2018). Managers should find ways to reduce negative hindrance stressors by providing their employees with means to exercise greater job autonomy. If this is done correctly, employees can have increased personal, employee, and company-wide development, which makes them more effective and better equipped to achieve company/personal goals.

Job autonomy indirectly contributes to employee innovative performance. Negative work stress directly impairs innovation, and job autonomy decreases the amount of negative stress employees feel. Innovative performance is described as employees generating and implementing new and potentially useful ideas (Ng & Feldman, 2013a; Ng, Feldman, & Lam, 2010). Autonomy can improve worker selection, worker optimization, and worker compensation, which can then bring forth innovative performance in employees (Breevaart, 2018). Companies who seek innovation and creative ideas from their employees would benefit from creating a job autonomy and worker empowerment culture within their organization.

The table and figure below is based on data from the International Social Survey Program (ISSP) and shows generational differences and similarities (Silent Generation, Baby Boomers, Generation X, and Millenials) in mean job satisfaction, interesting work, job autonomy, helping others, and having a job that is useful to society. Workers with more opportunities to make decisions within the company — or with more job autonomy — tend to have higher job satisfaction. Leaders should enable employees to help make more decisions within the scope of their job duties.


VARIABLE	Silent Generation	Baby Boomers	Generation X	Millennials	All Generations
Job Satisfaction	5.69	5.39	5.28	5.26	5.32
Interesting Work	3.84	3.86	3.82	3.78	3.83
Job Autonomy	4.07	3.88	3.81	3.71	3.82
Help Others	4.02	3.91	3.88	3.83	3.88
Job Useful to Society	4.06	4.01	3.95	3.86	3.94

The graph on the following page uses data from the ISSP and illustrates the mean job autonomy scores across 37 countries, as compared with the global mean. The United States has higher than average job autonomy levels, but still falls behind many other countries.

HCI Human Capital Innovations

Figure 2: Job Autonomy Mean Score, by Country
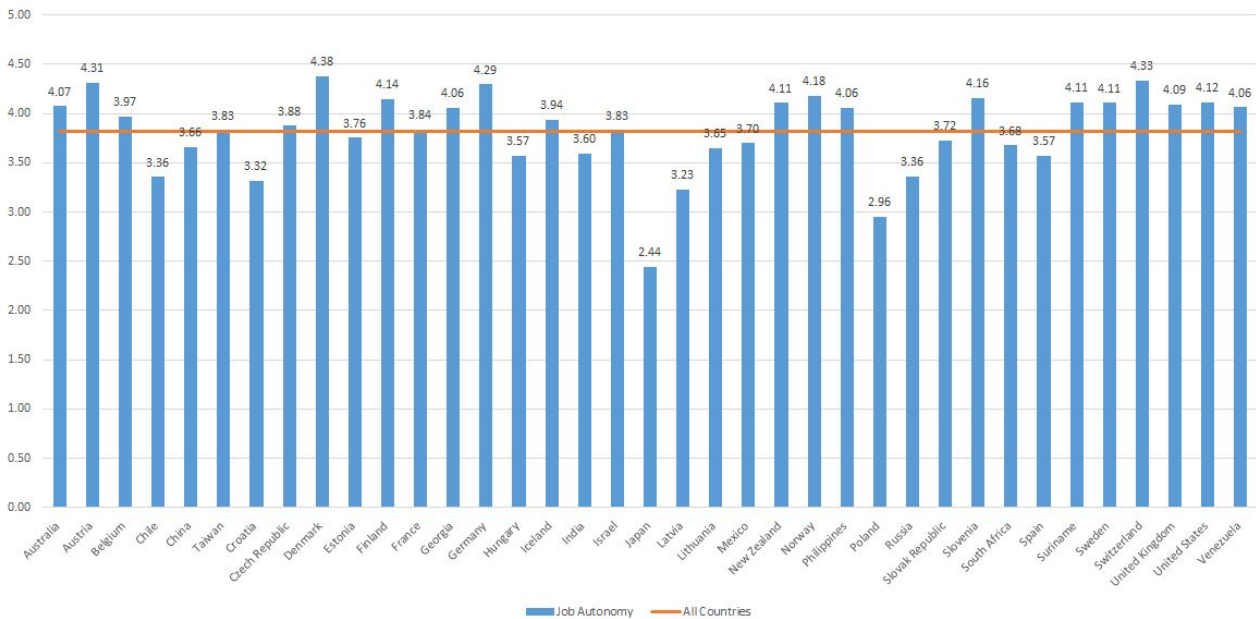
Job autonomy is a greater determinant of job satisfaction than pay alone. Employees who feel they are paid fairly tend to have more job satisfaction if they feel they also have job autonomy and freedom to make decisions in the workplace. Companies should give more time and resources to creating autonomy rather than just focusing on pay. Note that we are not suggesting that a company pay employees less than market value for a position; rather, that once you are paying a fair and equitable living wage, you should then focus on job autonomy and other workplace factors.

Answering the questions below can assist you in finding ways to provide greater job autonomy for your people.

Questions for Managers:

- What are some practical steps you can take today to enhance the sense of job autonomy in your team and within your organization?
- What are some specific ways members of my team experience a greater sense of job autonomy and how can I better support them?
- What are simple ways I can start implementing greater job autonomy in my business strategy today?
- What are ways my organization can start providing greater employee job autonomy today?

References

- Breevart, Kimberley. (2018). "Daily selection, optimization, and compensation strategy use and innovative performance: The role of job autonomy and time pressure." *Journal of Personnel Psychology,* 18(2), pp. 71-83.
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Working from home (WFH) is a job perk that has gained traction in recent years. Many employees look for the flexibility to split time between the office and their home when selecting a career. This leaves employers in a tricky position to weigh the benefits and costs of allowing WFH in their organization; however, based on extensive research, there are tremendous outcomes of WFH when implemented well. Companies can support WFH employees through five pillars: Management culture, manager trust, HR support, financial support and technical support (Baker, 2007). If implemented correctly, the chance of WFH employee success increases dramatically.

Better WFH outcomes are predicted when employees can perform different tasks than those performed in the office (Baker, 2007). Many employees will do tasks involving prolonged concentration from home and schedule meetings and interactions for their time in the office (Baker, 2007). Other organizations have had WFH employee meetings at other WFH employees' houses, creating a close knit team environment (Felstead, 2003). Strong WFH performance is also contingent on a high level of support from management and HR. Shifting the culture to give confidence to WFH employees through managers' trust and company policy has helped successful implementation of WFH approaches in companies. For example, WFH employees at IBM report an increased level of optimism towards their career advancement (Hill et al, 2003), something that often is not seen in WFH employees but has been attributed to the support of IBM management.

Financial and technical support are also critical to implementing a successful WFH culture in a company (Baker, 2007). This gives employees the confidence to work from home without worrying about the cost of creating a home office with adequate hardware to complete their work. Adequate technical support helps WFH employees, especially those from older generations, overcome the worry of technological issues getting in the way of their work.

"The availability of flexible work... seems to help employees experience greater enrichment from work to home, which, in turn, is associated with higher job satisfaction and lower turnover intentions" (McNall, 2009). This shows that WFH also leads to higher retention of employees. WFH has been part of the reason that employees have remained in the workforce with young children at home.

Figure 1: Job Satisfaction Mean Score by Work from Home—How Often Do You Work From Home During Usual Working Hours?
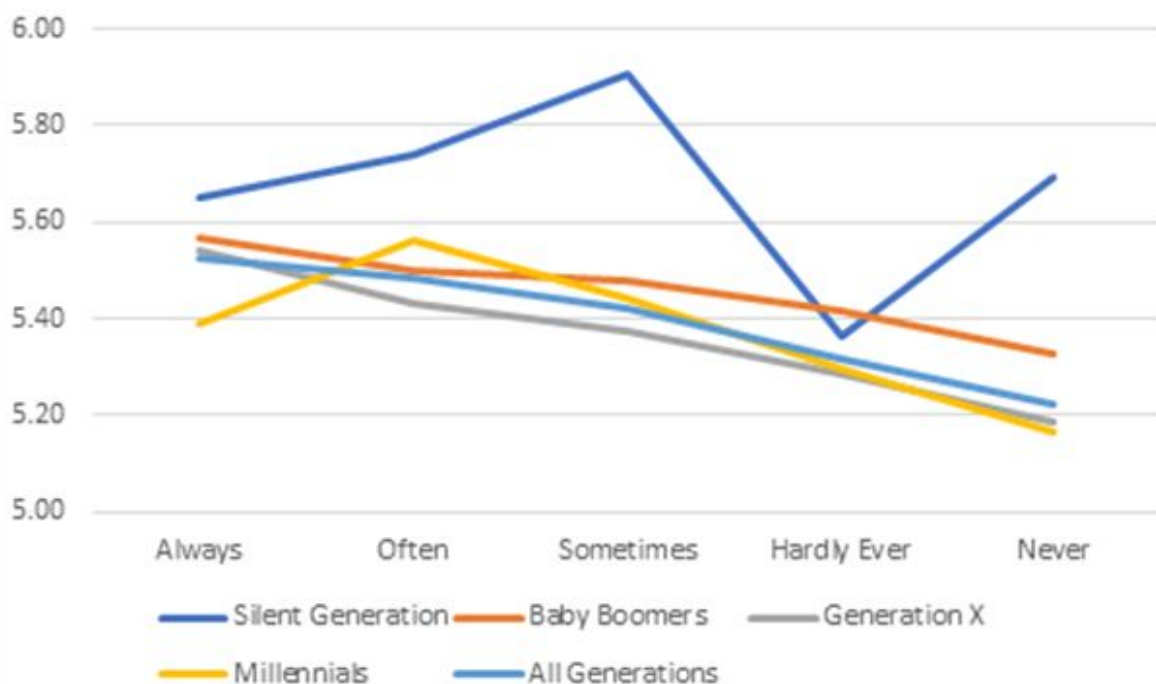
The previous graph shows worker satisfaction for each generation as they have less ability to work from home. On average, worker satisfaction increases as employees are able to work from home more throughout the week. The graph below shows mean work from how scores across 37 countries.

Figure 2: Mean Work from Home Score, by Country
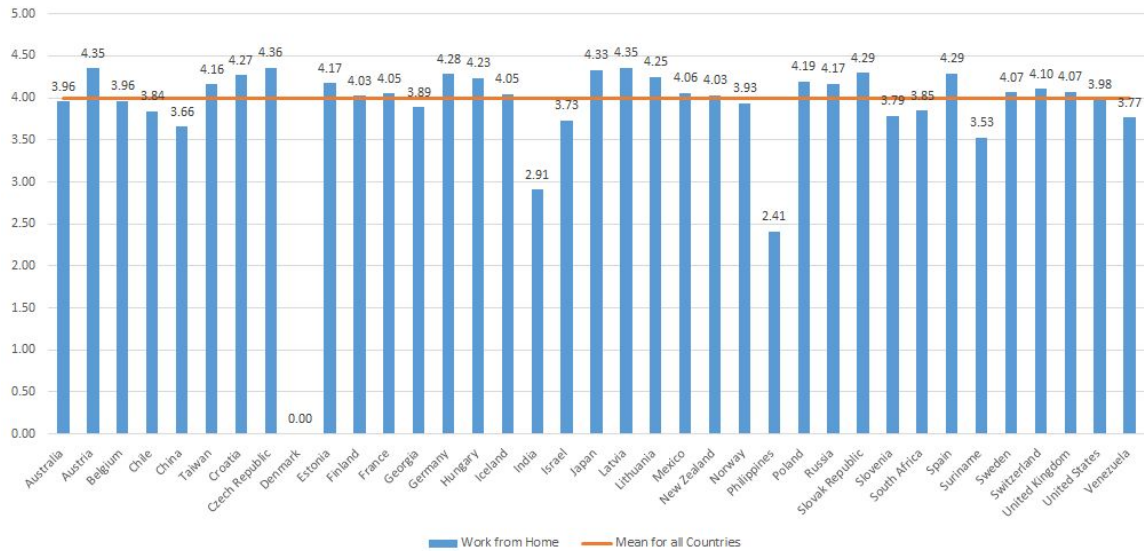
Based on our analysis of data from the International Social Survey Program (ISSP), we have found working from home increases job satisfaction in most developed countries, including the United States.

Creating a company structure that focuses on WFH success can be highly rewarding for companies and employees alike. Using company resources to improve WFH pillars can create higher ROI than using the funds for traditional activities, like pay increases (Colin, 2008), as job satisfaction increases more for positive business culture than just increased financial incentives.

Answering the questions below can assist you in finding ways to implement sustainable WFH programs.

Questions for Managers:

- What parts of your employees' job descriptions could be achieved remotely?
- How can I simplify and efficiently implement WFH practices into employees schedules?
- Does my organization support WFH schedules at any level in the organization and how can you increase the scope of the existing programs?
- What potential benefits could be achieved by implementing WFH practices?
- Why should I look to WFH practices as a path towards higher employee satisfaction and retention?

References:

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Over the past decade, there has been an uptick in the number of companies experimenting with increased schedule flexibility for their workers. Increasing schedule flexibility is linked to greater work-life and work-family balance, which can increase employee loyalty and organizational commitment (Michel, 2015). For example, a recent study showed that between 1998 and 2008 there was a significant increase in the variety and amount of overall benefits employees received, including an increased ability for employees to change start and end times of their day, with a 24 and 31 percent increase respectively (Galinsky, 2008). Another recent study found that there is a greater negative relationship between flexibility and work/family conflict for women than for men (Carlson, 2010). Employees that have children have also been shown to be the most consistent predictor of a schedule flexibility benefit being utilized in organizations (Tausig, 2001).

It is clear that many employees would benefit from having more schedule flexibility in their workplace. However, culture and management support is essential to implementing a flexible schedule environment effectively, as it is easy to blur the lines of work and homelife, expecting employees to take work home with them and eliminating the potential benefits of schedule flexibility (Schieman, 2017). To create a truly successful benefit from providing increased schedule flexibility, there needs to be a healthy balance in performance and productivity expectations, which can be established with open communication and regular dialogue about what is working and what isn't. Managers need to ensure that employees know what they are expected to do and other desired norms connected with the scheduling flexibility program. Successfully implementing scheduling flexibility for workers has been shown to increase worker satisfaction and engagement levels..

Schedule flexibility can be particularly beneficial to employees who have children and other family care commitments outside of work. Allowing employees to choose start and stop times, as well as other breaks during the day (such as a longer lunch break to take care of family matters) will help employees to feel understood and valued, thus increasing employee commitment, engagement, and satisfaction.

The graph below uses data from the International Social Survey Program (ISSP) to show the average job satisfaction value by the experienced level of scheduling flexibility, across four generations. As employees have more opportunity to decide their start and finish times, their satisfaction increases.

Figure 1: Job Satisfaction Mean Score by Schedule Flexibility—Which of the Following Statements Best Describes How Your Working Hours are Decided?
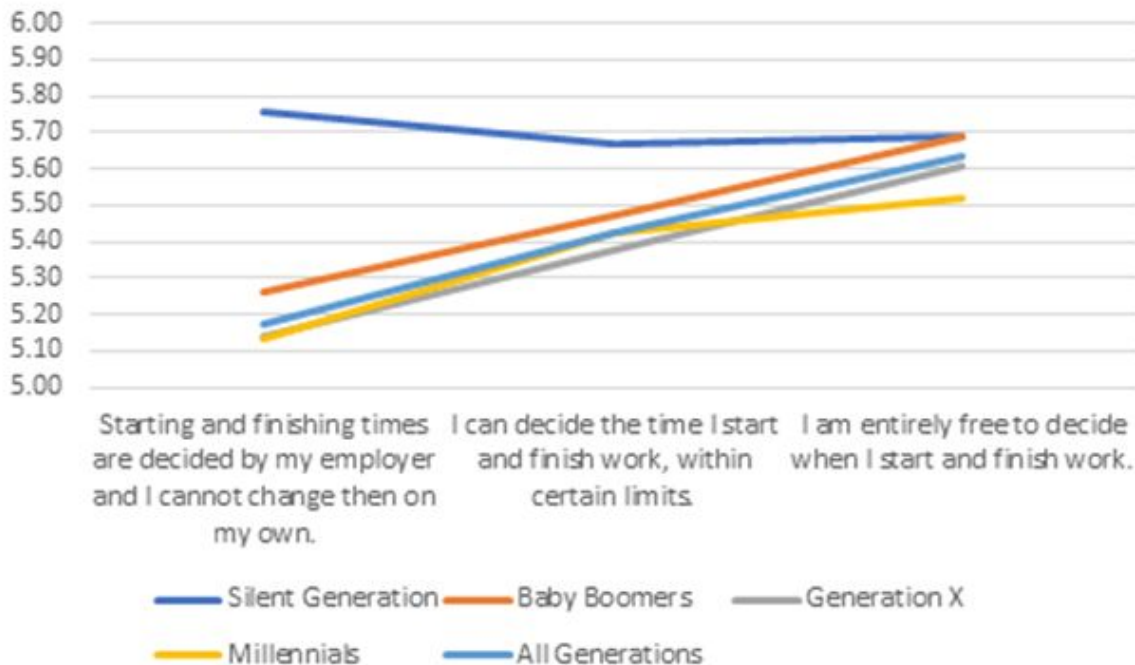
Additionally, based on ISSP data, the graph on the following page shows how much 37 different countries value schedule flexibility. The orange line is the average across all countries. The United States has a value that is equal to the global average, showing that employees from the U.S. value this job benefit but may not value it as much as in some other countries.

Figure 2: Mean Schedule Flexibility, by Country
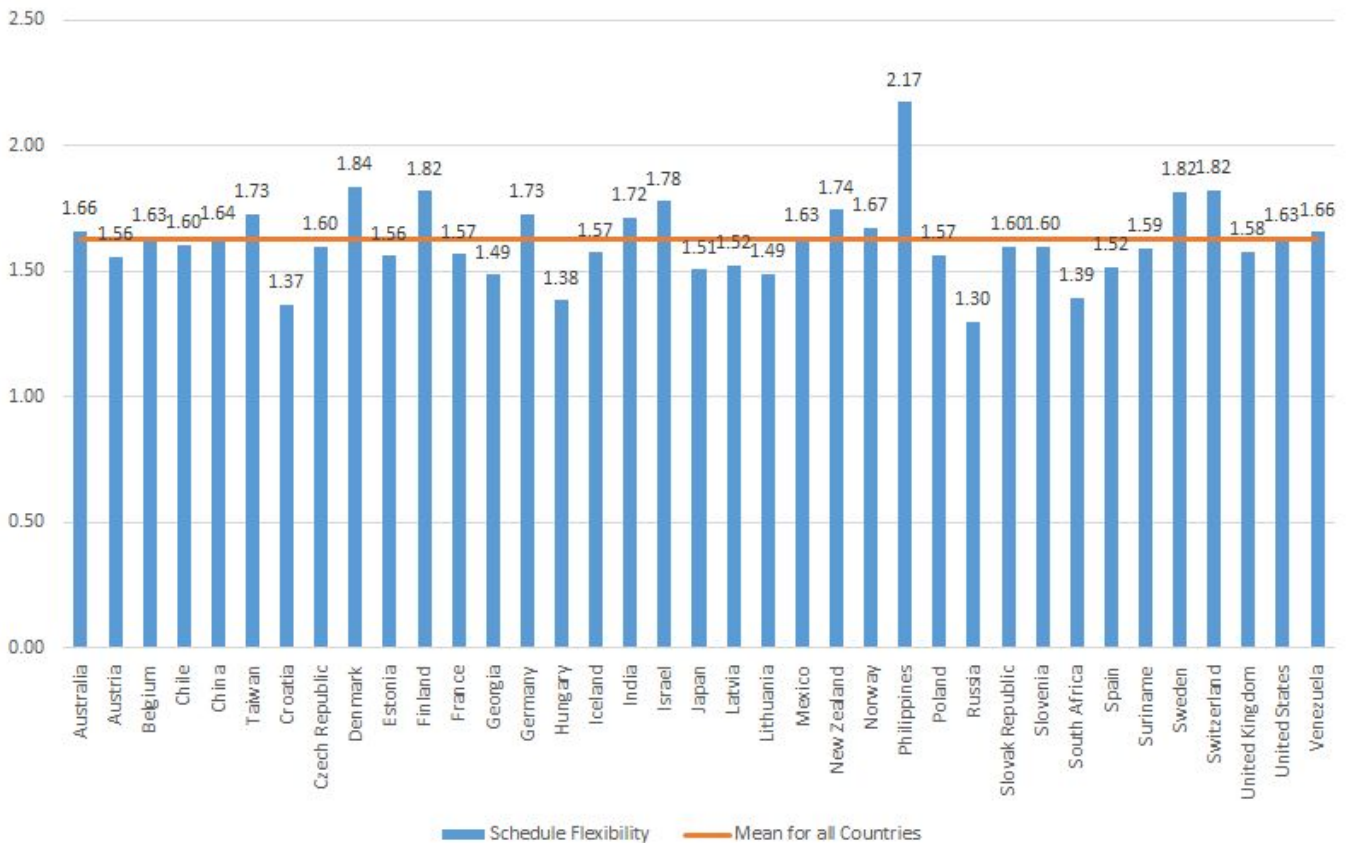
Schedule flexibility is a powerful tool to increase the morale, organizational commitment, engagement, and satisfaction of employees. When implemented correctly, it can have positive impacts in any workplace.

Answering the questions below may assist in finding ways to implement schedule flexibility into your workplace.

Questions for managers:

- Is a flexible schedule possible for my employees? What factors may limit my ability to provide flexible scheduling options to my employees?
- Do I have any employees that are consistently late or leaving early for family related issues?
- What can a program that allows for greater schedule flexibility do for my employees' morale, retention, and job satisfaction?
- What are the potential benefits of implementing flexible schedules where possible for my workforce?
- How can I implement a simple, yet effective flexible schedule program?

References:

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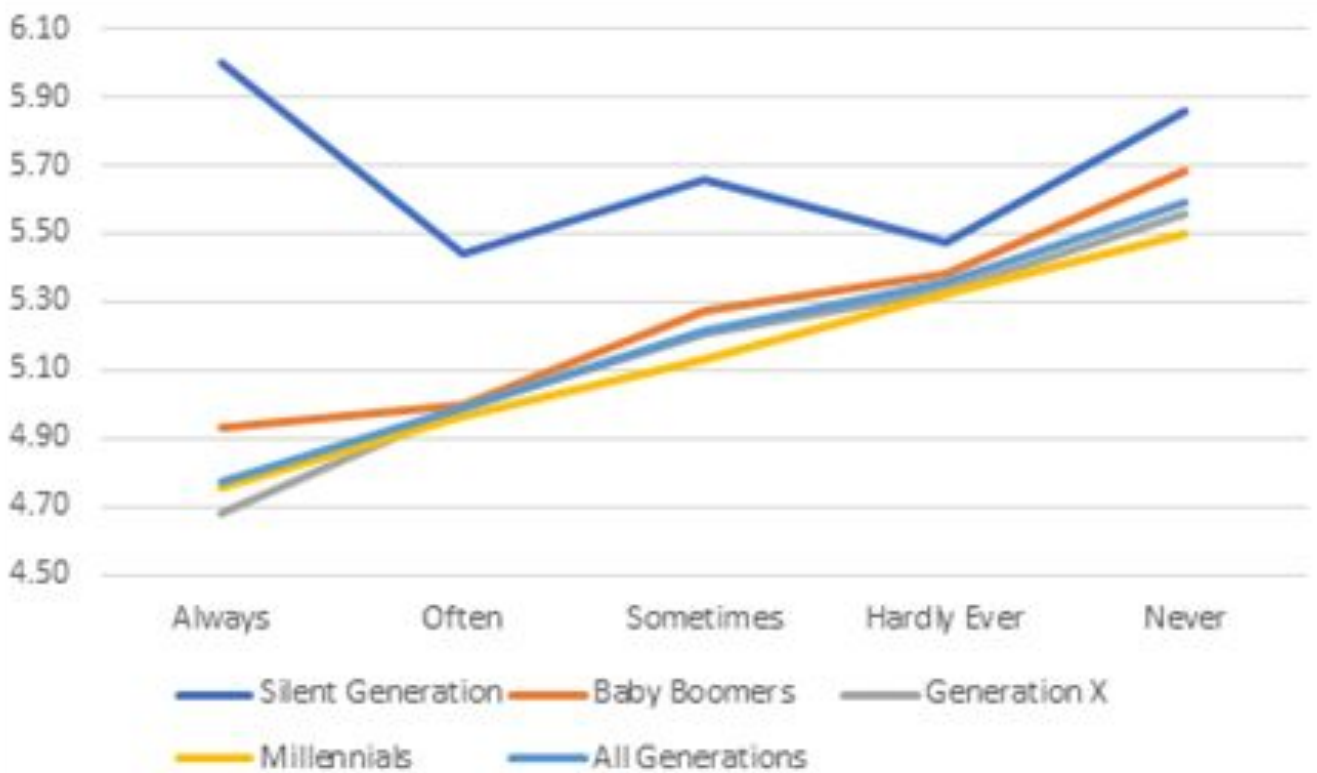
Balancing the relationship between work and family life has been an objective for employees for as long as there have been jobs. The challenge for balance is usually caused by conflicts of time between work and family (Adams, 1999). Many people have differing definitions of what this balance could and should look like and where it should come from. Some believe that this balance should be created by the executives of a company and given freely to employees as a benefit from scheduling, while others think that it should be created at home and left to the employees to curate.

Regardless of where this balance comes from, some employees experience more interference than others. Women, married couples, and those with children are among the demographic that experience this the most (Shamir, 1983; Adams, 1999). This is further exaggerated when taking into account the growing number of dual income households, hours worked, and overtime worked (Golden, 2001; Adams, 1999). Increasing demands of work create more interference in employees' lives. Many workers would be willing to adjust hours up or down, with a proportional change in pay, if they had the option (Golden, 2001).

Workplace culture is important to manage when attempting to minimize the interference between work and family for employees. In some instances the interference comes from company culture as some organizations have a tradition of employees staying until the boss leaves. Allowing employees to leave when the work is done may relieve much of the pressure of work interfering with family life.

The graph below uses data from the International Social Survey Program (ISSP) and shows the mean job satisfaction score for multiple generations in relation to their perceived level of work interfering with family. This suggests that, with exception of the silent generation, work satisfaction goes up as work interferes with family less.

Figure 1: Job Satisfaction Mean Score by Work Interferes with Family—How Often Do You Feel That the Demands of Your Job Interfere with Your Family Life?
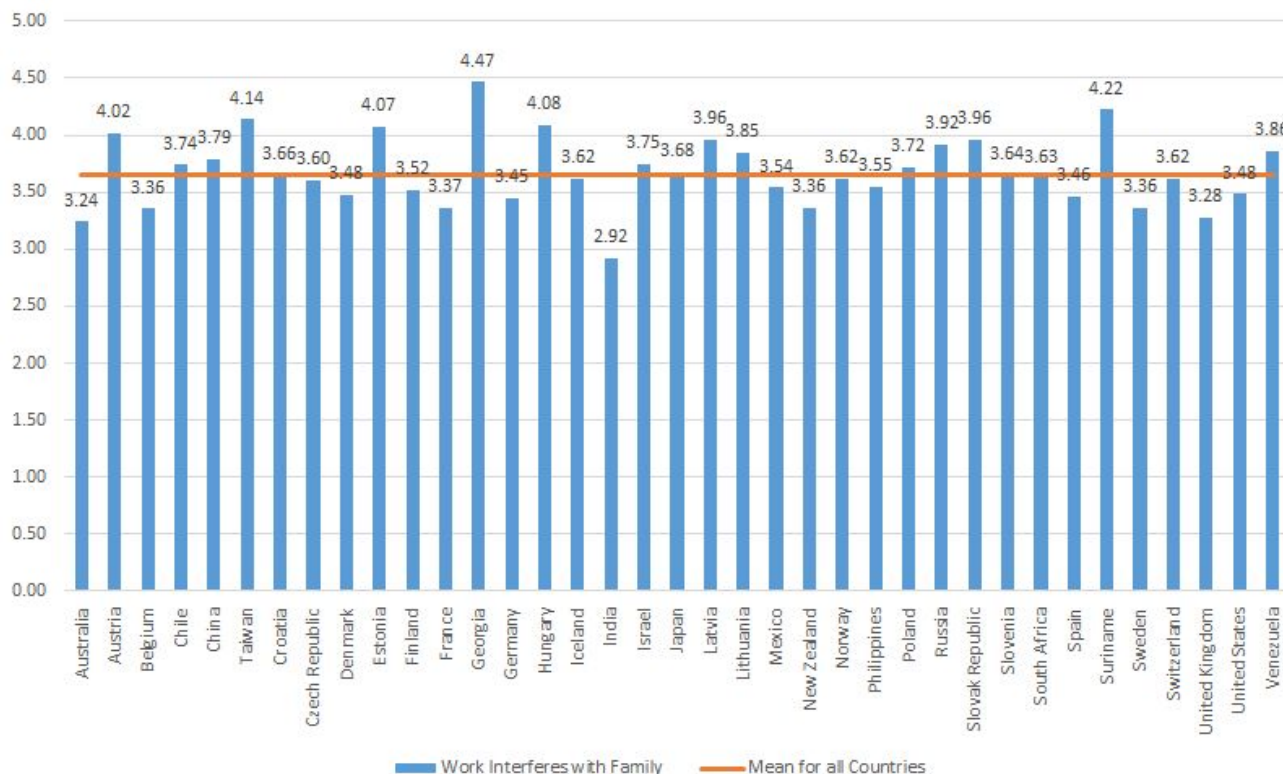

The chart on the following page uses data from the ISSP and shows the mean scores for work interfering with family in 37 countries, as compared to the global average. The United States has a score below the global average, showing that overall there is a low amount of interference in the United States compared to the rest of the world.

Figure 2: Work Interferes with Family Mean Score, by Country

Work interfering with family life is a major obstacle for some employees. Because the majority of these conflicts are time-based, there are many options for organizations to address the problem. Having a company culture that allows for employees to take time off when needed would reduce the interference. Flexible schedules, like shifting start and stop times, would prove beneficial in addressing this issue. Another method to assisting employees in finding time is by teaching time management skills. These two methods can be used in tandem for added efficiency by giving employees the needed skills and ability to finish necessary work and take time away when needed.

Answering the questions below can assist you in finding ways to reduce work interference with workers' family responsibilities.

Questions for Managers:

- Does your organization allow for short notice schedule changes?
- Is there a time requirement for your employees to be present or is it a workload requirement? Could your organization's culture have both of these requirements?
- During performance reviews, are you asking your employees about hour preferences? Are you collecting data on what your employees want in regard to total hours or specific hours worked?
- How could you implement a more efficient scheduling system to accommodate employees who want non-traditional schedules?

References:

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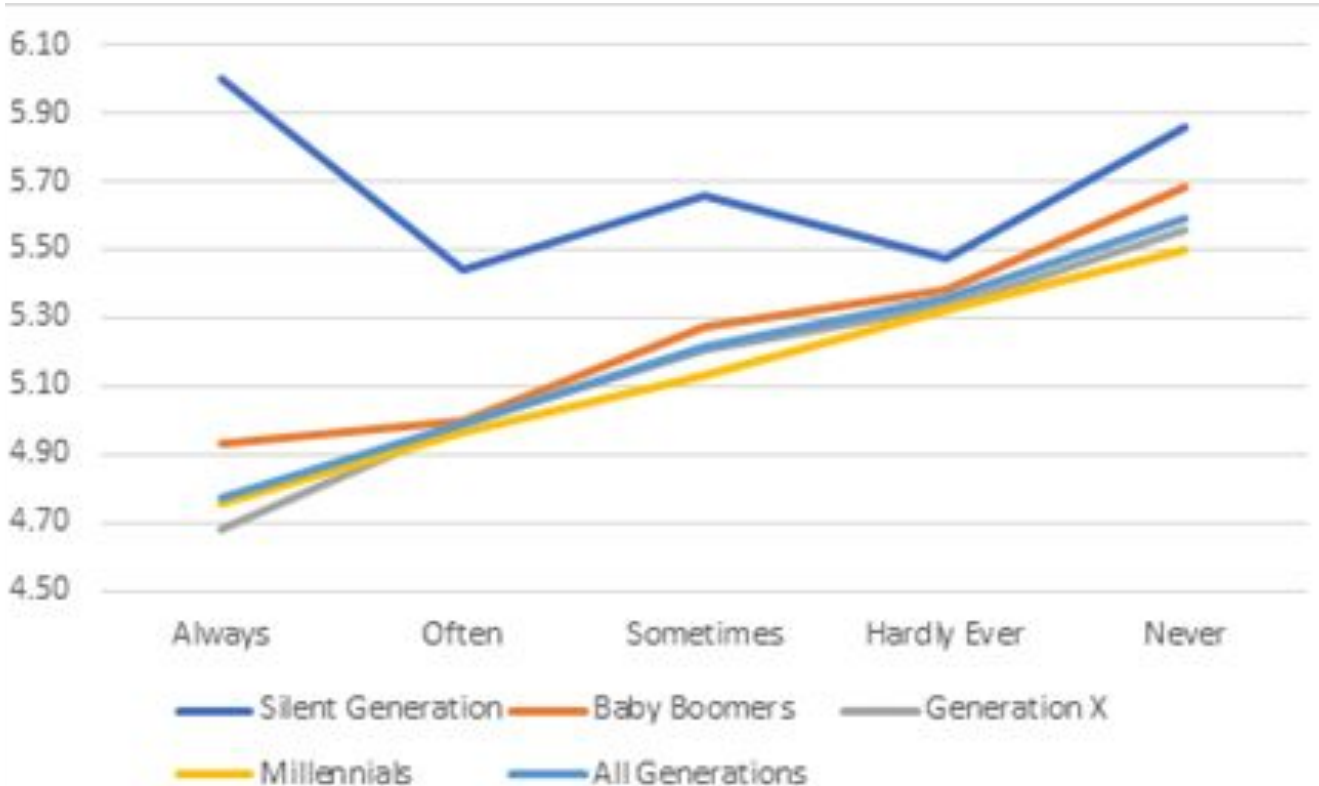
Balancing the relationship between work and family life has been an objective for employees for as long as there have been jobs. The challenge for balance is usually caused by conflicts of time between work and family (Adams, 1999). Many people have differing definitions of what this balance could and should look like and where it should come from. Some believe that this balance should be created by the executives of a company and given freely to employees as a benefit from scheduling, while others think that it should be created at home and left to the employees to curate.

Regardless of where this balance comes from, some employees experience more interference than others. Women, married couples, and those with children are among the demographic that experience this the most (Shamir, 1983; Adams, 1999). This is further exaggerated when taking into account the growing number of dual income households, hours worked, and overtime worked (Golden, 2001; Adams, 1999). Increasing demands of work create more interference in employees' lives. Many workers would be willing to adjust hours up or down, with a proportional change in pay, if they had the option (Golden, 2001).

Workplace culture is important to manage when attempting to minimize the interference between work and family for employees. In some instances the interference comes from company culture as some organizations have a tradition of employees staying until the boss leaves. Allowing employees to leave when the work is done may relieve much of the pressure of work interfering with family life.

The graph below uses data from the International Social Survey Program (ISSP) and shows the mean job satisfaction score for multiple generations in relation to their perceived level of work interfering with family. This suggests that, with exception of the silent generation, work satisfaction goes up as work interferes with family less.
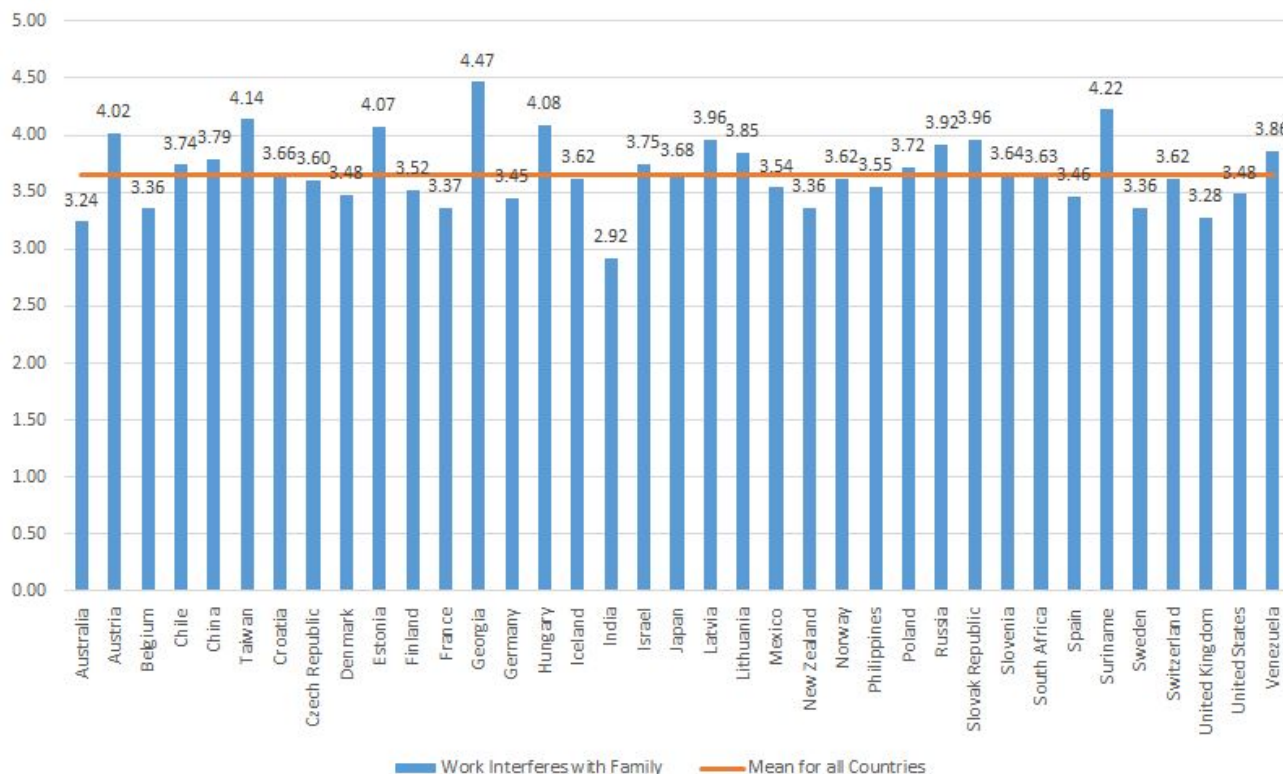
Figure 1: Job Satisfaction Mean Score by Work Interferes with Family—How Often Do You Feel That the Demands of Your Job Interfere with Your Family Life?

The chart on the following page uses data from the ISSP and shows the mean scores for work interfering with family in 37 countries, as compared to the global average. The United States has a score below the global average, showing that overall there is a low amount of interference in the United States compared to the rest of the world.

Figure 2: Work Interferes with Family Mean Score, by Country

Work interfering with family life is a major obstacle for some employees. Because the majority of these conflicts are time-based, there are many options for organizations to address the problem. Having a company culture that allows for employees to take time off when needed would reduce the interference. Flexible schedules, like shifting start and stop times, would prove beneficial in addressing this issue. Another method to assisting employees in finding time is by teaching time management skills. These two methods can be used in tandem for added efficiency by giving employees the needed skills and ability to finish necessary work and take time away when needed.

Answering the questions below can assist you in finding ways to reduce work interference with workers' family responsibilities.

Questions for Managers:

- Does your organization allow for short notice schedule changes?
- Is there a time requirement for your employees to be present or is it a workload requirement? Could your organization's culture have both of these requirements?
- During performance reviews, are you asking your employees about hour preferences? Are you collecting data on what your employees want in regard to total hours or specific hours worked?
- How could you implement a more efficient scheduling system to accommodate employees who want non-traditional schedules?

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From office jobs to factory shift work, the value added by having certain days off is not created equally. Simply stated, having some specific days off is more beneficial than having other days off. A shiftworker in London concisely addressed the issue by stating "Wednesday is not saturday" (Sergean, 1971). A survey looking at the Dutch military police force found that having a fixed schedule that included weekend work had a higher burnout rate than a rotating schedule that included weekend work (Evangelia, 2004). This suggests that in some instances, a lack of schedule consistency is superior to consistent work on weekends. If businesses need to remain operational on weekends, a rotating schedule for who works these shifts is beneficial in reducing burnout.

Female employees gain the greatest utility from work schedules that avoid working the weekends. This is due to a disproportionate number of female employees that are responsible for childcare at home (Carr, 1998). A study analyzing workload and unpaid tasks outside the workplace due to family responsibilities found that on average women are twice as likely to have childcare responsibilities at home (Gunilla, 2005). Although women are the main childcare providers, both men and women can benefit from having added time on the weekend to tend to their families' needs (Gunilla, 2005).

Figure 1: Job Satisfaction Mean Score by Work Weekends—

*How Often Does Your Job Involve Working on Weekends?*
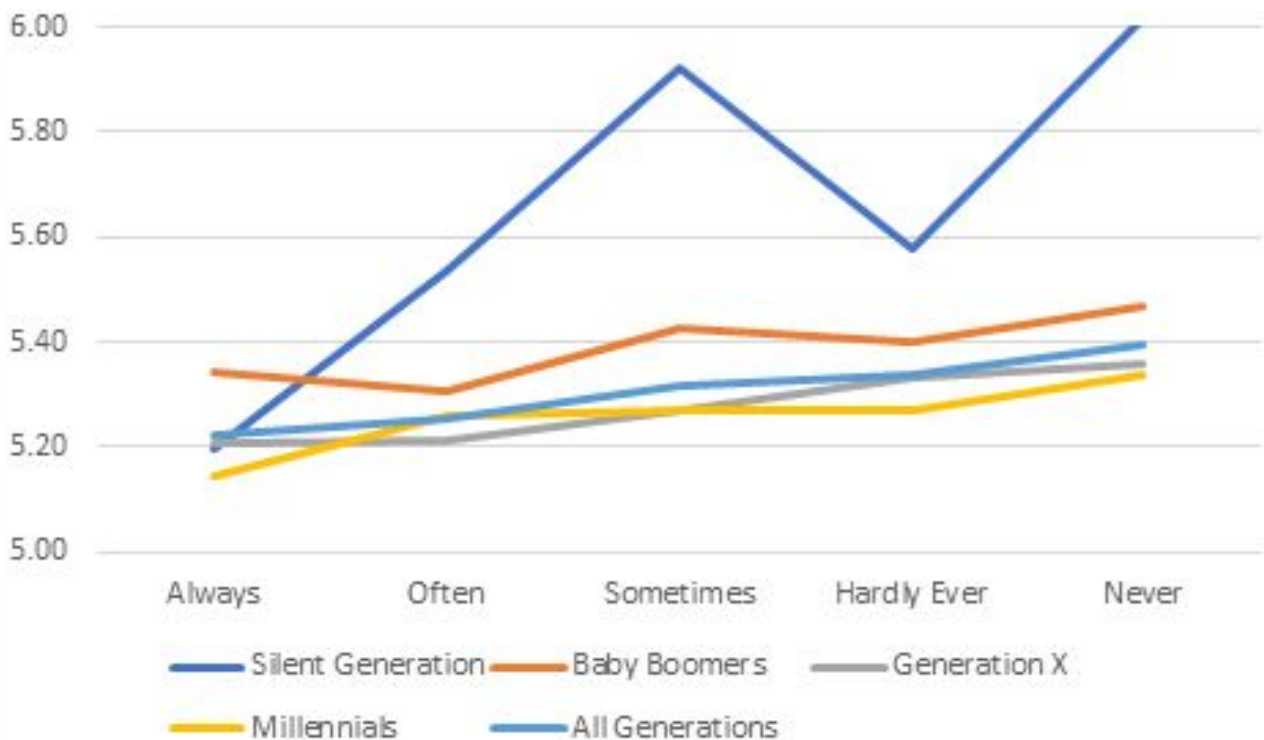
The figure above uses data from the International Social Survey Program (ISSP) and shows the impact of working weekends on job satisfaction across generations. For every generation, satisfaction increased as weekend work became less frequent. Freeing up the prime hours on the weekends for employees to use at their discretion can have great benefits on employee morale, engagement, worker satisfaction, productivity, and organizational commitment.

The graph on the next page uses data from the ISSP and shows the mean value of working on weekends for 37 different countries, as compared to the global average. The United States scores just below the average, suggesting that employees react better than average working weekends in the United States compared to other countries.

Figure 2: Mean Work Weekends Score by Country, 2015
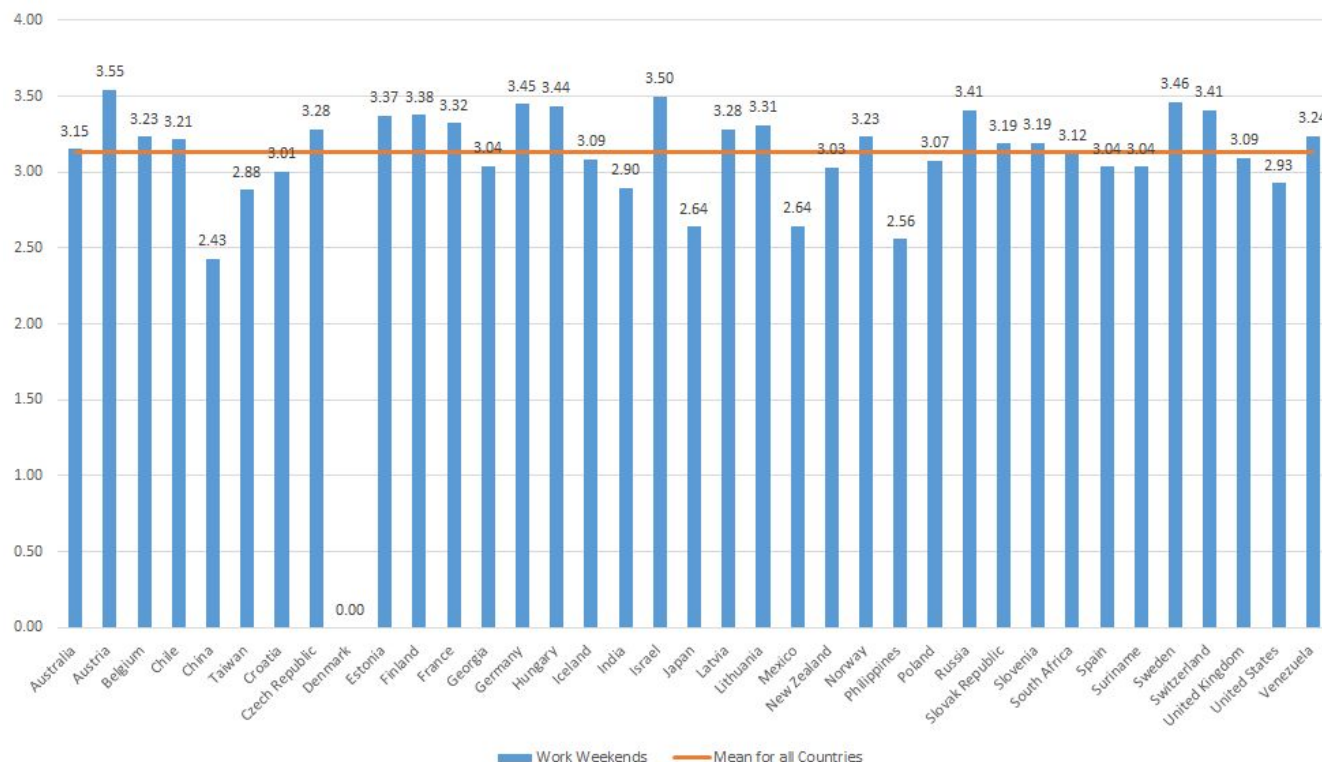
Answering the questions below can assist you in finding ways to implement sustainable WFH programs.

Questions for Managers:

- What benefits do I see by allowing my employees to have weekends off?
- What obstacles are in the way of implementing a five day work week for my business?
- How can I optimize productivity to allow weekends to be taken off regularly by employees?
- If weekend work is unavoidable, can it be accomplished with a rotating schedule or incentives to make it more appealing to employees?
- How would I make a rotating schedule fair for all employees?

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