

Why Flexibility Matters: In Their Own Words



Here's what employer have to say about workplace flexibility:

Nonprofit organization, 10 employees

"Flexibility has helped build a dynamic working group that keeps the bottom line strong, generating new ideas for revenue. We strive to meet each employee's individual career and personal needs; that focus on the individual has translated into a highly committed team."

Executive sales company, 18 employees

"We began leveraging new technologies that let our employees access our entire set of online business tools from home. We are certain that our extremely high employee retention – and our 50 percent yearly growth over the last four years – are directly related to the flexibility we provide."

Hospitality business, 30 employees

"We reviewed our employees' needs, and by addressing them wherever we could, we have gained staff members who see themselves as devoted members of the team, fortifying each of our departments, reducing employee turnover and strengthening the bottom line."

Home mortgage business, 76 employees

"We've seen numerous positive business effects [with our flexibility practices], including increased loyalty and high morale, which have enhanced client interactions, customer referrals and bottom-line benefits."

Marketing firm, 36 employees

"Working today may not be a choice, but *where* the best talent works *is* a choice, particularly for people who want to lead interesting, meaningful lives—they want their time at work to support their life and family goals. Our company uses flexibility as a way to help ensure that people *like* their work and see it as something that benefits their family, rather than detracts from it."

Manufacturing company, 60 employees

"We believe our people do their best work when they can be equally successful as parents and community members. That's where flexibility matters. We make sure employees can attend school activities with their children, take parents to medical appointments and assist with community activities. Providing this balance has given us a more productive, stable and reliable workforce."

These excerpts and ideas were taken from *When Work Works, New Ideas from the Winners of the Alfred P. Sloan Awards for Business Excellence in Workplace Flexibility, 2008*. For additional information about *When Work Works* and other resources for workplace flexibility, including a toolkit with tip sheets and more examples, visit www.whenworkworks.org. Minnesota-specific examples are available at www.worklifechampions.org.

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Insurance company, 168 employees

“We’ve seen benefits from flexibility that includes extremely low turnover (less than 6 percent this year), a great reputation as an employer of choice and the ability to spend almost nothing advertising job openings or paying head hunter fees. For years we have had flexible work schedules, given our employees time off with pay to participate in voluntary efforts within our community and had employees who worked part time or from home. What makes me proudest about our insurance company’s commitment to workplace flexibility is that it has been engrained in our culture for so long that we do not really do that much to emphasize it; it is simply how we operate normally.”

Financial services company, 157 employees

“Our recruiting conversations highlight our values, emphasizing inclusion and flexibility... we walk the talk, so it doesn’t take new managers long to see that flexibility is part of our fabric.”

Insurance company, 14 employees

“When I inherited this company, it was fun to create a work environment exactly like one I’d want to work in. My father always saw the business as a vehicle for all of us to lead better lives – not just the owners, but all the employees.”