

Re-inventing the workplace

Five practical tips

THE PERSPECTIVE SERIES

New insights into the UK workplace

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Final thought...

Whatever type of business you're running, we're all striving to create the best environment for both financial and human gain – organisations and people working in better and healthier ways benefits us all.

In these tough economic times, forward-thinking businesses realise that the most important innovations are not just in technology, but in embracing better working practices. If they do that, they will not only become better places to work, but will also offer a better product or service to their customers. And the same applies wherever you work – from a home-office, on a smartphone or tablet on the move, or in a large serviced office.

In an era of big data, flexible working and collaboration, 4G technology could amplify the benefits for your business and help you stay ahead of the competition – 69% of our respondents say communication needs to be faster and more responsive.

Our research, conducted with 554 organisational leaders, uncovered some fascinating insights into the world of business. For instance, 70% of business leaders believe that flexible working helps businesses retain top talent and 74% think their business would benefit from it. However, an alarming number feel that today's under-delivering technologies are hindering adoption.

Flexible working is far from a one-size-fits-all concept; every business needs to apply it in the appropriate way. But if you're looking to stay ahead of change, here are 5 top tips...

Five tips for re-inventing the workplace

Tip 1

Focus on results before attendance

A desk-bound employee isn't always a productive one. In a world where businesses are being launched every day without any physical premises at all, most business-based tasks can be completed even more efficiently away from the office using cloud-based technology – such as web conferencing and remote desktop access. As flexible working methods become embedded into organisations, more and more employees are discovering that productivity and better work/life balance can go hand in hand. But there is still an onus on managers to start measuring contribution and results rather than hours spent in the office.

Tip 2

Technology is only part of the story

Don't expect flexible working to just 'happen' the moment your business invests in cloud computing or tablets and smartphones. Technology is merely the tool for the job. For flexible working to be effective, businesses must set up a framework for employees that includes training, support and a culture that allows and encourages the most efficient and appropriate working methods.

Tip 3

Get buy-in from everyone, including management

Flexible working is a top-down, bottom-up concept. It needs acceptance and advocacy at all levels of the business to be successful. For instance, only if management buy into it (and do so publicly) will employees feel they have the license to work remotely.

Tip 4

Don't expect overnight results

Flexible working can yield fairly immediate benefits, like an uplift in productivity or a spike in employee motivation, but don't expect instant business transformation. Some of the truest measures of business success – like profitability and employee retention – may only be impacted once flexible working has been ingrained within the culture, and used in the most effective ways.

Tip 5

Flexible working has benefits right across the business

It's not just about working on the move, productivity and efficiency. Flexible working has knock-on effects across a business that you might not expect. For instance, if your people are working remotely on tablets and smartphones, the cost of your office overheads, like utilities, may shrink. You might even be able to downsize your office and pay less rent. And your HR department may well find it easier to hire good people, by using flexible working as a potential 'perk'.

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