

# Expert Group Meeting Work Life Policies, Practice and Potential 9-11 November 2010



Presentation to the Management Committee  
Office of the Focal Point for Women in the United Nations

19 November 2010

# Expert Group Meeting Participants

- + Corporations totalling approximately 400 billion dollars of asset value and totalling approximately 1 million employees
  - + Harvard and Wharton Business Schools
  - + Cranfield University, U.K.
  - + University of Navarra, Spain
  - + Non Profit Organizations dedicated only to Work-Life
  - + Civil Society representatives from four continents

# Flexibility Vision for the UN

## Quotes from the Experts

“Big Picture Dreams” for the UN with respect to flexibility:

- + “The UN as the normative model for work life balance.”
- + “The UN as setting the example: being the change, the state of the art.”
- + “A UN where behaviours , attitudes and communication are aligned.”
- + “Having policies that would allow every employee to be in their personal work life equilibrium.”
- + “A culture of trust that empowers employees to add flexibility to their lives.”
- + “Having the leaders realize that work life flexibility is about me too.”
- + “Work that helps to contribute to good mental health instead of bad mental condition.”

# Definitions of Flexibility

- + “How and when work gets done and how careers are organized so that work ‘works’ for both the employer and employee”
- + “Allows each person to work fully”
- + “A culture of flexibility is characterized by widespread use of flexibility, absence of perceived penalties for using flexibility and an emphasis on results rather than ‘face time.’”

Expert Group Meeting on *Work-Life Policy, Practice and Potential*  
United Nations, 9-11 November 2010

# Flexibility Implies

## Organizational Culture

- + A culture of trust that allows employees to add flexibility to their lives

## Flexible Work Arrangements - Work Methods that are:

- + Beneficial to both men and women
- + Reason neutral and without stigma
- + Increasingly expected as routine work process by younger work force

## Career Flexibility

- + Career paths that incorporate differences in organisational unit, functions, location, schedule and role over a full career.

# Key Messages

- + Flexibility should not be *presented or perceived* as a benefit, accommodation, or privilege to employees but rather as a responsibility for both the employer and employee so that both may thrive.
- + This is an age of decreasing resources and increasing demands; therefore, must do more with less.
- + Flexibility yields the “more” with relatively less, as surveys and studies consistently evidence

# The Case for Flexibility: Surveys and Studies

## Survey of Executives

### *Work/Life or Dual Centric vs. Work-Centric*

“Dual-centric” employees equally prioritize their work and personal lives, and they are equally likely to be women and men

- + A 2008 study\* of executives at 10 multinational companies asked: In the past year, how often have you put your:
  - + Job before your personal or family life?
  - + Personal or family life before your job?
- + The study revealed that:
  - + People who place the same priority on work and their personal/family life have the *highest ratings for feeling successful at work*
  - + 42% of work-centric people versus only 26% of dual-centric ones experience *moderate or high levels of stress*
  - + 56% of work-centric people report they find it *difficult* or *very difficult* to manage work and personal life demands compared to only 31% of dual-centric people

\*Source: *Leaders in a Global Economy* (Families and Work Institute, Catalyst, and The Center for Work and Family- Boston College)  
<http://www.familiesandwork.org/site/research/reports/dual-centric.pdf>

# The Case for Flexibility: Surveys and Studies

## Surveys of Managers

- + Surveys of managers at large corporations reveal that:
  - + Over 90% of managers say it does not require more time to manage people on FWAs
  - + Nearly 90% report no negative impact on their ability to supervise
  - + Over 65% say managing FWAs enhanced their management skills

Source: *Corporate Voices for Working Families* – [www.corporatevoices.org/publications/workplaceflex](http://www.corporatevoices.org/publications/workplaceflex)



# The Case for Flexibility: Surveys and Studies

## Surveys of Human Resources Professionals

- + According to a 2009 study conducted by the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM):
  - + *Two-thirds* of HR professionals believe that the implementation of flexible work arrangements positively impact:
    - + Employee morale, job satisfaction, engagement and retention
    - + The quality of employees' personal/family lives
  - + 85% of HR professionals reported that in the next 5 years, telecommuting would likely be more commonplace for organizations than it is today. In companies with telecommuting employees:
    - + Productivity increased in 32%, stayed the same in 63% and decreased in 5%
    - + Absenteeism increased in 5%, stayed the same in 53%, and decreased in 42%
- + Source: *Workplace Flexibility in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, Society for Human Resource Management (2010): [www.shrm.org/research](http://www.shrm.org/research)

# The Case for Flexibility: Surveys and Studies

## Surveys of Human Resources Professionals ...con't

### The Top Five Positive Effects of Formal Flexible Work Arrangements

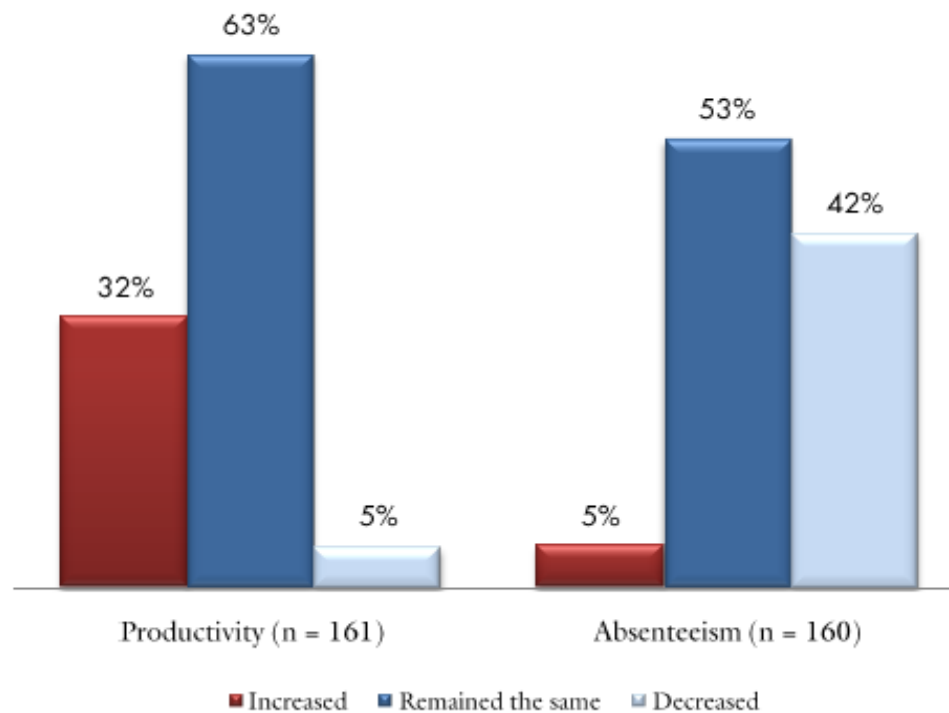


Source: *Workplace Flexibility in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, Society for Human Resource Management (2010): [www.shrm.org/research](http://www.shrm.org/research)

# The Case for Flexibility: Surveys and Studies

## Surveys of Human Resources Professionals ...con't

Productivity and Absenteeism Rates of Telecommuters



Source: *Workplace Flexibility in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, Society for Human Resource Management (2010): [www.shrm.org/research](http://www.shrm.org/research)

# The Case for Flexibility: Surveys and Studies

UN OSAGI / DM Survey Results 2009

Approximately 2500 Respondents

- + 64%-69% of FWA users reported higher levels of organizational loyalty and increased productivity, job satisfaction and motivation
- + Nearly 75% of respondents indicated a strong interest in using the existing FWA options
- + 67% indicated that FWAs are a modern tool allowing better work-life fit for employees
- + 73% of managers reported telecommuting arrangements were working well (DM survey)

# The Case for Flexibility: Surveys and Studies

## Relationship with Job Satisfaction, Engagement and Stress

- + Flexibility – even small measures – in when and where work gets done yields powerfully significant influence on:
  - a) **Job satisfaction** - Studies show a linear correlation between degree of flexibility and higher levels of job satisfaction
  - b) **Employee commitment and level of engagement** – Flexibility’s most powerful effect is an increase in employee engagement and commitment
  - c) **Lower levels of stress and work life conflict; improved health outcomes** -Stress is the leading cause across industries and institutions of unscheduled absences, and it is a major source of productivity loss due to presenteeism (i.e., when an employee comes to work and is “present” but not productive)
  
- + Studies repeatedly demonstrate that FWAs reduce employee stress, yielding the product in the same or less time

# Flexibility Business Case – Conclusions

- + Whether measured by productivity, retention, job satisfaction, reduced stress, improved health outcomes and reduced medical costs, improved client orientation, the evidence is heavily weighted towards flexibility's positive impact.
- + The question is no longer, "What is the business case for flexibility?" *but rather:*
- + *"Why would an organization not act with intensity to capitalize on flexibility's powerful workplace potential?"*

# Public Sector Work Life Initiatives

## Some Examples

- + Singapore – Ministry of Manpower
  - + Flexi-Works! – grant of up to S\$100,000 for companies to hire new workers on part-time or flexible arrangements
  - + Work-Life Works! (WoW!) – up to S\$20,000 of funding available to each selected company to implement work-life strategies
  - + Work-life toolkit
  
- + Finland – Statistics Finland
  - + Comprehensive work-life policies
  - + Work-life surveys since 1977
  
- + United States – White House Flexibility Forum – Department of Labor
  - + New work-life office in the White House and one in every federal office in all U.S. states
  - + Women’s Bureau flexibility dialogue scheduled for Summer 2011 in New York, NY
  - + Work-Flex Event Starter Kit

# Private Sector Work Life Initiatives

## Some Examples

Flexibility Program	Description	Companies (notional – not comprehensive)
Comprehensive Strategic Approach to Flexibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+Managers and employees engaged in process from beginning</li> <li>+Company pledge modified to include specific commitment</li> <li>+Framework for analysis and decision-making developed</li> <li>+Ongoing communication campaign implemented</li> <li>+Internal flex consultants trained to provide coaching to employees</li> <li>+Metrics and outcomes defined and utilized</li> </ul>	Bristol-Myers Squibb (BMS), IBM Corporation, Deloitte, Takeda Pharmaceuticals, CultureRx, Best Buy, AstraZeneca Pharmaceuticals
Compressed Work Schedules	+Employees work 80 hours in 9 days and get Fridays off every other week	Raytheon, IBM Corporation, Edward Jones
Teleworking (Telecommuting)	+Employees work at a location other than their official office- full-time, part-time, or part day	Citi, Booz Allen Hamilton, Eli Lilly and Company, Dell Inc., McKesson Health Solutions, Cisco Systems, Google
Job-Sharing	+Two employees share one full-time position	TAP Pharmaceutical Products Inc., Hewlett Packard Company

Source: Executive Summary of *Overcoming the Implementation Gap: How 20 Leading Companies are Making Flexibility Work* (Boston College Center for Work & Family) – [http://www.bc.edu/centers/cwf/meta-elements/pdf/Flex\\_ExecutiveSummary\\_for\\_web.pdf](http://www.bc.edu/centers/cwf/meta-elements/pdf/Flex_ExecutiveSummary_for_web.pdf)



# Private Sector Work Life Initiatives

## Some Examples ...con't

Flexibility Program	Description	Companies (notional – not comprehensive)
Flex Hours	+Variable work schedule	IBM Corporation
Career Path Flexibility	+Employees can work part-time of adjust hours after pregnancy +Employees aged 59.5 can reduce hours and begin collecting retirement benefits	Deloitte, Intel, Mitre Corporation
Part-time/ Reduced Workload	+Employees can reduce their house to less than full-time when approved by manager, and in some cases, still receive benefits	First Horizon National Corporation, KPMG, Alcatel-Lucent, GlaxoSmithKline, Raytheon
Technology/ Communication	+Online and database resources to improve communication with and organization/ management of employees on flexible work arrangements	PricewaterhouseCoopers, McKinsey, Baxter Healthcare Corporation

Source: Executive Summary of *Overcoming the Implementation Gap: How 20 Leading Companies are Making Flexibility Work* (Boston College Center for Work & Family) – [http://www.bc.edu/centers/cwf/meta-elements/pdf/Flex\\_ExecutiveSummary\\_for\\_web.pdf](http://www.bc.edu/centers/cwf/meta-elements/pdf/Flex_ExecutiveSummary_for_web.pdf)

# Flexible Work Arrangements at the UN

- + Flexibility as a concept is not new to the UN: it already exists in many forms and in many entities. It is more than just the FWA options. *So, it is more about implementation, which is often reluctant and grudging.*
- + Maternity, paternity, sick/personal days and emergency leave are already entitlements and part of a culture of flexibility.
- + Therefore, more than a radical change – what is needed is a realignment of understanding and practice and broadening of implementation, especially of the specific Flexible Work Arrangements (FWAs)
- + Flexible work arrangements (FWAs) available to UN staff :
  - Staggered working hours
  - Compressed work schedules: ten working days in nine
  - Scheduled break for external learning activities
  - Work away from the office (telecommuting)
  - Job Share (but often limited to host country nationals due to visa issues)

# Challenges Identified in 2009 OSAGI Survey

- + **Organizational Culture: *Management Support Deficit*** – 20% and 27% of respondents perceived senior and middle management respectively as not supportive of the use of flexibility work arrangements
- + **Organizational Culture: *Trust and Implementation Deficit*** – Approximately half of respondents reported not exercising their right to request use of FWA primarily due to fear and certainty of refusal
- + **Flexible Work Arrangements: *Knowledge Deficit*** – A large percent of respondents reported poor or very poor knowledge of the flexibility policies – ranging from 50% for extended learning activity to 38% for staggered work hours

# Areas of Focus

## Expert Group Recommendations

- + Organizational culture - trust and respect constitute the foundational elements: You trust and respect my work-life needs and I will trust and respect your organizational needs: *UN could do more in this area*
- + Flexible work arrangements – organizational means to manifest culture of flexibility: *UN has the basic policy package and many UN employees are already working flexibly (formally or informally) – needs mostly to broaden and strengthen implementation*
- + Career path flexibility – flexibility to synchronize and meet larger life needs over a career path e.g. burdens of care: *UN has partially achieved this but more needs to be done, especially given demographic and generational attitudinal shifts*

# Organizational Culture Recommendations

- + Good flexibility practices can currently be found throughout the United Nations system, but must be more embedded and woven into workplace culture
- + Objective: Transform the UN into an “employer of choice” – not notionally but measurably using standard metrics (available on-line free)
- + Create UN partnerships with the greater flexibility field by fostering relationships with external organizations and initiatives, including:
  - + Families and Work Institute’s Sloan Awards for Excellence in Workplace Flexibility
  - + Center for Work Life Policy - Hidden Brain Drain Task Force
  - + Corporate Voices Workplace Flexibility Campaign
  - + Obama’s First White House Forum on Flexibility...and report publicly on developments

# Organizational Culture

## Recommendations ..cont'd

### + Communication and awareness-raising strategy

- Continue consistent and frequent highest-level support (SG and DSG)
- Reframe the discussion to position flexibility not as a “perk,” staff accommodation; rather as a powerful organizational tool and necessary component of optimal and modern management, productivity and outcomes
- Designate “champions” within each large department and/or large unit for FWA
- Use new and validated instruments to generate important metrics to measure for example employee engagement and commitment
- Make the organization aware of the results of the metrics pre and post flexibility pilots
- Conduct Stakeholder analysis which maps receptive and less receptive units – broadening systematically the success stories, working with pilot entities or departments or units to set examples
- Recognition is a powerful motivator for change: publicize good examples of management and staff stories

# Organizational Culture

## Quotes from Experts

### Leslie Perlow, Harvard Business School

- + “Work-life flexibility is everyone’s problem. What we are really trying to do is enable ‘good intensity’ and get rid of ‘bad intensity.’”
- + “Can we create a process that can enable us to change the system?”
- + “This is a problem in organizations—and it’s not just about any particular organizations—people have no life outside of work. They have to rethink how they live.”
- + What team-based flexibility did for BCG:
  - + “People began to open up because their calendar was mutual. They had to help each other so people who began by openly speaking about work also ended up speaking about their lives. There is a humanness to it.”
  - + “Created passion and care for each other and collective action.”
  - + “Created collective experimentation and increased efficiency and effectiveness, as well as predictability and control.”

# Organizational Culture

## Quotes from Experts ...con't

### **Amy Richman, WFD Consulting**

- + “People are operating as if they’re on the front lines of mortal combat all the time when really, at most organizations, there are key times when most places are busy, and other times, people can be off.”

### **Wendy Breiterman, Johnson & Johnson**

- + “Managers see that Gen Yers loyalty is to themselves so that retaining and engaging Gen Yers is a matter of letting them have control of their lives.”

### **Therese Valadez, American Express**

- + “There won’t be change without changing the culture.”



# Flexible Work Arrangements

**MYTH:** Massive exodus of staff clamouring to use FWA simultaneously and universally – especially telecommuting

**EVIDENCE:** At any given time only about 10-20% will use any sort of arrangement; therefore, fear of exodus unsupported across industries

# Flexible Work Arrangements Recommendations

Move from Accommodation to Integration

## Implementing Flexibility: A Spectrum of Practice

### Accommodation-based Flexibility:

- + Private deals based on an individual's needs
- + Inconsistent implementation, often in secret
- + Restricted access to flexibility

### Business-based Flexibility:

- + Decisions based on both businesses and individual needs
- + Policy infrastructure that defines scheduling options and supports consistent implementation

### Culture of Integrated Flexibility:

- + Incorporates options for formal arrangements as well as widespread, informal flexibility
- + Culture that rewards results achieved rather than time spent
- + Flexibility viewed as a management strategy

# Flexible Work Arrangements Recommendations

- + Establish a Steering Committee to oversee and encourage implementation of flexibility
- + Adopt principles/guidelines for flexibility that aid in establishing, monitoring and contributing to successful FWA outcomes
- + Add a FWA that may allow for seasonal flexibility (e.g. GA extended hours compensated non financially during flexibility at other times)
- + Encourage use of team (e.g. business unit) vs. individual approach to FWA implementation
- + Integrate flexibility into mainstream management practices: Include flexible management as an explicit competency/requirement in job descriptions
- + Select some managers to lead by example (and convince themselves that it works) i.e. pilot output and not face-time based staff assessment
- + Systematically use metrics instruments such as surveys to document change in perceptions and use of FWAs, as well as to educate
- + Publicize/designate FWA FPs tasked to assist with informal resolution of FWA cases in each department without burdening administration
- + Monitor requests, approvals and general issues with implementation
- + Showcase current good practices
- + OSAGI/ EO survey is now underway

# Flexible Work Arrangements

## Quotes from Experts

### Amy Richman, WFD

- + Across industries, people spend 20% of time on low value work. So what can we do about that? Imagine all the things people could do if we could fix it so employees would have better work life harmony and companies would have higher productivity. This type of low value work depresses engagement and is especially frustrating for high performers.”
- + “Having control of how you work is a very strong predictor of health.”
- + On PNC Financial Team Approach to Compressed Work Week: “It makes everyone into a leader.”
- + “Strategies have to come from both directions—top down but also a huge part of it is involving the employees—unleashing that potential of employees to solve the problem.”
- + “[Compressed work week] can’t just be about stretching the work out over fewer days. It has to be about what is the work? If you plan it out, you get better, more meaningful work done. Companies who are playful get more productivity.”
- + A question to ask at the UN: “Are you spending your time on key deliverables—where do you have time and energy for innovation?”
- + Slogan from a manufacturing company: “Go home on time, be home when you’re home, make parts not charts.”

### Anne Weisberg, Deloitte

- + “Work is what you do, not where you go.”

# Career Path Flexibility

**MYTH:** Flexibility needs to be limited only to the organization's daily or weekly work

**FACT:** Flexibility can be applied equally to longer term horizons – monthly, seasonal (e.g. GA Session), and/or yearly work or over a career

# Career Path Flexibility Recommendations

## *Recommendations*

- + Encourage experimentation with sabbaticals or seasonal schedules that reflect the ebb and flow of work demand, available personnel, employee requests for FWAs, and human well being, e.g. *to combat burn out, brown out, increasing levels of stress and physical/mental distress*
- + Create Leave Bank – gifting of unused leave to another individual with emergencies or care needs
- + Incorporate tools or methods such as Mass Career Customization (MCC) or Total Leadership models
- + Encourage discussion on what matters for the work team, manager, organization and individual so that the outcome is manageable
- + Integrate Succession Planning – its absence in the UN is a surprise

## *Example of good practice:*

- + Deloitte – Mass Career Customization – <http://www.masscareercustomization.com/>
  - Employees work with manager to customize career pace, workload, location and schedule, and role based on individual needs at current stage of life
  - All of the above dimensions can be dialed up or down

# Career Path Flexibility

## Quotes from Experts

### Anne Erni, Bloomberg

- + “There needs to be a system to assess workload and value so you can apply flex-time schedules. You need to be able to assess that even though an employee is doing less work, the work is more valuable and this is why.”
- + “Not only is there a culture inherent to the UN, the different demographics also have different cultures—so it’s about mirroring the strengths of the talent pool with the needs of the environment. It’s about aligning better the strengths of the talent pool with the demands of the work place.”

# Flexibility Metrics Recommendations

- + Conduct surveys on flexibility – what is not measured becomes invisible and what is invisible ceases to exist i.e. no accountability
- + Participate in Alfred P. Sloan Foundation Award for Workplace Flexibility, which:
  - + Measures entities/departments against set of established norms
  - + Educates about flexibility in the workplace
  - + Is often catalytic especially if used for unconventional department or office with respect to flexibility
  - + Can be completed via online application- top 20% of employers who apply will be identified to take survey



# UN Women – the New Gender Entity

- + The composite entity will have eight functions, as outlined in the Deputy Secretary-General's papers of August 2007 and July 2008. These include:
  - (h) Monitor and report on system-wide compliance with intergovernmental mandates on gender balance, including at the senior and decision-making levels. (Page 6 of A/64/588)
  
- + C. Headquarters-level functions
  11. At Headquarters, the composite entity will provide substantive support to Inter-governmental processes. In addition to other global functions, it will support regional and country-level activities. For its key Headquarters functions, the composite entity will:
    - (e) Monitor and report on United Nations system compliance and efforts to develop and apply internal United Nations gender equality policies, including achieving gender balance, eliminating harassment and promoting work-life balance; (Page 10 of A/64/588)

# Role of UN Women

Strengthen coordination, accountability and implementation of policy and practice in all matters related to gender parity including work life

## Organizational Culture

- + Communication and advocacy strategy at the highest level
- + Coordination of network of focal points
- + Remain accessible to the base to gauge the pulse/trends on flexibility culture
- + Create a UN award to recognize good practices

## Flexible Work Arrangements

- + Provision of package of potential policy and tools
- + Systematic surveys of managers and staff for qualitative and quantitative monitoring
- + Maintain records of illustrative situations and their resolutions, culling and disseminating lessons and solutions

## Career Flexibility

- + Advocacy and assistance to UN organizations to embed various broader forms of career flexibility
- + Highlight examples of women and men with successful flexible careers

# Conclusion

- + The United Nations is in a position to lead by example *by implementation of policies that already exist and innovating further.*
- + A culture of flexibility aligns with modern management methodology yielding powerful gains in employee engagement and satisfaction as well as productivity
- + Flexibility is formally already part of the strategic management methods employed across industry and institutions in the public and private sectors alike.

# Resources

Families and Work Institute:

[www.familiesandwork.org](http://www.familiesandwork.org)

2011 Alfred P. Sloan Awards for Business Excellence in Workplace Flexibility  
(The Alfred P. Sloan Foundation):

<http://familiesandwork.org/3w/awards/2010index.html> (information)

<http://familiesandwork.org/3w/awards/2010LSER.pdf> (application form)

Obama's Dialogue on Workplace Flexibility, Summer 2011, New York, NY:

[www.dol.gov/dol/workplaceflexibility/](http://www.dol.gov/dol/workplaceflexibility/)

Corporate Voices Workplace Flexibility Campaign

[www.corporatevoices.org/our-work/flexcampaign](http://www.corporatevoices.org/our-work/flexcampaign)

Hidden Brain Drain Task Force:

[www.worklifepolicy.org/index.php/section/initiatives](http://www.worklifepolicy.org/index.php/section/initiatives)

U.S. Council on Women and Girls Workplace Flexibility Kit

[www.whitehouse.gov/work-flex-kit](http://www.whitehouse.gov/work-flex-kit)

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