

## Workflex Primer

### What is Workflex?

Short for workplace flexibility, workflex defines how, when and where work gets done in ways that work for everyone (including families, clients, coworkers, and communities). Workflex is a dynamic process by which employers and employees collectively create work strategies to help employees simultaneously achieve personal and professional goals.

### What can Workflex do for my organization?

Many organizations have found that workflex isn't just for the benefit of employees. When workflex becomes part of an employer's business strategy there are an array of potential bottom-line benefits, including managing employees across time-zones in a global economy, greater productivity, staying in operation during a natural disaster, reducing turnover and absenteeism due to work-life conflicts, increasing employee engagement and commitment, and reducing real estate costs.

### What are the different types of Workflex?

- **Flex Time and Flex Place:** includes various forms of flexibility that affect when and/or where employees do their job, such as flex time, telecommuting and compressed workweeks.
- **Choices in Managing Time:** reflects the degree to which employees can exercise some choice about when they work—from scheduling hours and overtime to deciding when they take breaks—and about how their time at work is spent. This category also looks at differences that may exist between different employee groups (e.g. hourly and salaried employees or office and production line employees).
- **Reduced Time:** includes options for working fewer hours while staying in the same position. It includes such things as access to part-time or part-year schedules. Reduced time is often used in order to retain talented, experienced and otherwise valued employees through periods of high home and personal life demands or through transitions into or out of full-time work (e.g., phased retirement, or return to work programs for veterans).
- **Caregiving Leaves:** looks at whether the organization offers its employees leaves for birth, adoption and caregiving of ill family members and whether any of this leave is paid. It also considers how the organization will continue operating during the leave and how the employee will be reintegrated after the leave.
- **Time Off:** includes policies and practices that apply when employees take time away from work, including scheduled absences (such as vacations and time for training) as well as formal policies for taking sick days and planned sabbaticals. It also includes informal access to time off for unanticipated or unplanned events. Time off discussions also consider how the organization will continue operating while an employee is off.
- **Flex Careers:** refers to flexibility over the course of an employee's career or working life, including provisions that enable employees to enter, exit and re-enter the workforce and to increase and decrease their workload or pace.
- **Task Flexibility:** includes efforts to create reasonable work demands by adjusting job descriptions to leverage employee strengths, distribute job tasks more equitably, and focus employee efforts and evaluations on high value activities.
- **Culture of Flexibility:** reflects whether supervisors are knowledgeable about flexible practices and promote and communicate them effectively.

### How do I assess Workflex in my organization?

When Work Works conducts free, annual assessments of workflex for participating organizations through the annual [When Work Works Award](#). The assessment compares employers' policies to nationally representative data on workflex. The top scoring employers are invited to complete an employee survey to confirm that employees are getting the most out of an organization's policies. All participants are given a free benchmarking report on how their workflex compares to the national average and to other participants. High scoring organizations are eligible to be recognized as winners of the [When Work Works Award](#) and receive free national publicity from [When Work Works](#), the [Society for Human Resource Management](#) and local publicity from [When Work Works community partners](#).

When Work Works (WWW) is a national initiative, led by the partnership of the Families and Work Institute (FWI) and the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM), to help businesses of all sizes and types become more successful by reinventing their workplaces. The initiative administers the annual [WWW Award](#), which recognizes exemplary employers for creating effective and flexible workplaces to increase business and employee success.

Visit [WhenWorkWorks.org](http://WhenWorkWorks.org) and email us at [WhenWorkWorks@shrm.org](mailto:WhenWorkWorks@shrm.org) to join our email list.