

A guide to...

FLEXIBLE WORKING

A FREE eBook from Blue Spot Computers - Empowering business through technology



Blue Spot Computers
EMPOWERING BUSINESS THROUGH TECHNOLOGY

SOME 23% OF US EMPLOYEES QUIT THEIR JOBS
BECAUSE OF BAD COMMUTES TO WORK.

ROBERT HALF, 2018



Introduction



There's no doubt about it, flexible working is on the rise - and it's with good reason. As technology improves so does the ability for companies and their employees to share and collaborate instantly, whether they're sat next to each other in an office or the other side of the country, communication should no longer be an issue.

June 2014 saw a change to the 'right to request flexible working' legislation meaning that now, any full-time employee who has been with a company for 26 weeks or more can request flexible working.

This same legislation means that employers must, by law, consider any requests for flexible working in a reasonable manner and can only refuse a request for flexible working if they can show that there are valid business reasons for doing so; This could be additional business costs, a detrimental impact on performance alongside other reasons, including insufficient work for the time/periods the employee has proposed to work. Either way, whether a member of staff has requested it or not, Flexible working should be on your radar.

Recent studies show improved employee job satisfaction and well-being.

The same research has proven that flexible workers have a higher level of job satisfaction and commitment, they are also more likely to increase discretionary effort compared to those who do not work flexibly.

What is flexible working?

'Flexible working' is a term describing a type of working arrangement which gives some flexibility on how long, when and where employees work. There are many different types of working arrangements which fall under the 'Flexible Working' band, we've listed some of the most common here:

Mobile working: With increased connectivity, the ability to facilitate remote or mobile working has never been so easy. This type of flexible working permits employees to work all or part of their working week at a location of their choice remote from the employer's workplace.





Job-sharing: a form of part-time working where two (*or occasionally more*) people share the responsibility for a job between them. This is particularly good for small businesses who would like more members of staff within a department but can't justify paying for 2 wages.

Flexitime: A very common form of flexible working, this allows employees to choose when to begin and end work. Usually these working hours are structured around fixed working hours which are decided by the company, ensuring that team members are all in or available at the same time for meetings or other working requirements. Flexitime gives employees the flexibility for occasions when they require an earlier start or later finish for appointments etc. without the need to use annual leave.

Compressed hours: Not to be confused with part-time working, compressed working hours mean that employees work fewer, longer days / hours during the week. This is particularly beneficial for employees who do not want to go part time due to financial constraints, but would benefit from an extra day off work each week

Annual hours: The total number of hours to be worked over the year is fixed but there is a flexibility of when these hours are worked. Employees may choose to work weekends and have time off in the week for example. This method of flexible working can be very beneficial to employers who have significant peaks and troughs in work volumes – employees can put in longer days to meet a deadline and then not use holiday allowance to enjoy life away from work.



The Office of National Statistics believes that:

50% of UK employees will be working remotely by next year

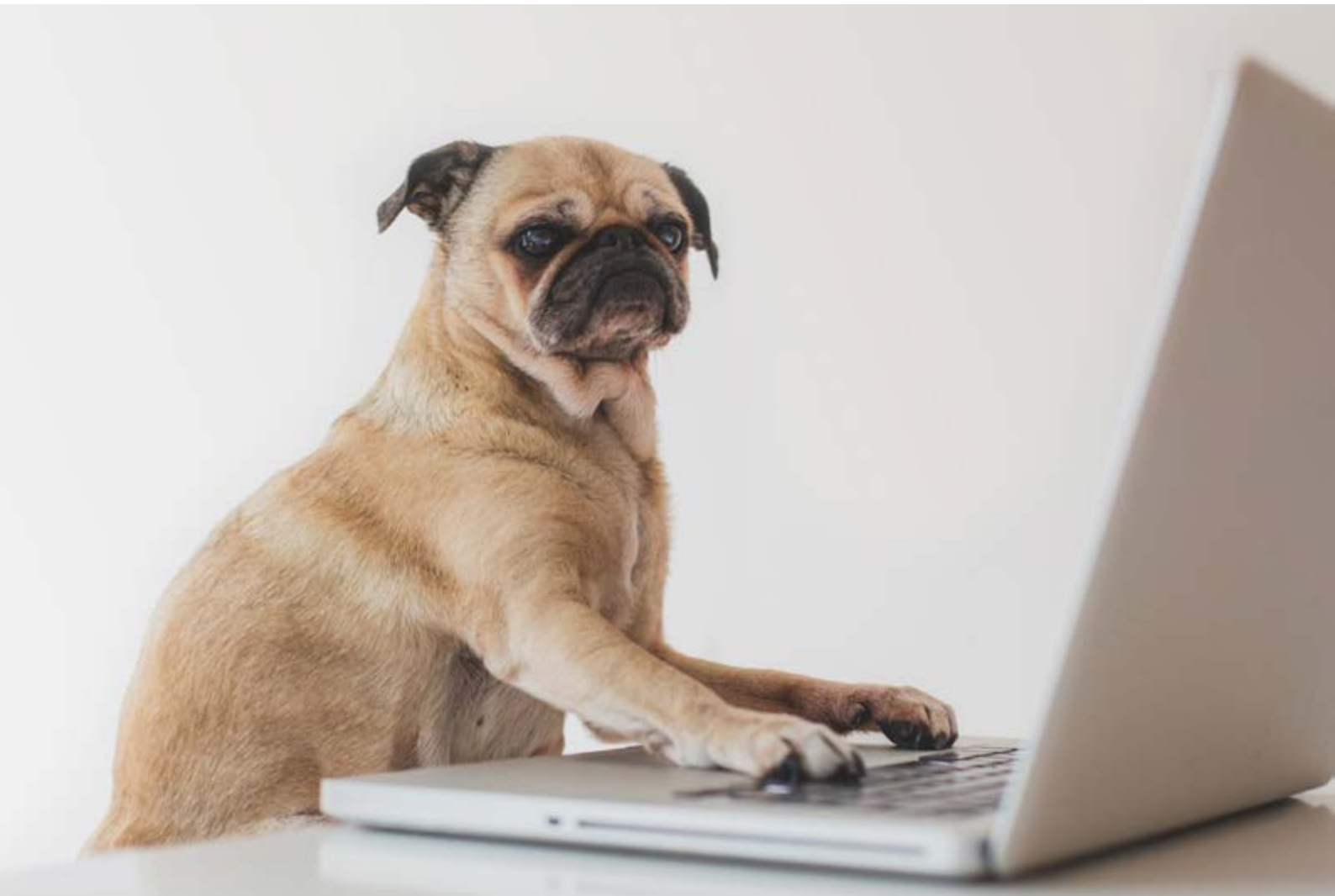
70% of British office workers feel more productive working away from the office,

38% say they are more creative out of the office,

90% say flexible working doesn't impact their ability to collaborate with colleagues.

The Guardian





The benefits of flexible working

Your employees are the heart of your company and should be your most important asset, having the right team around you, and most importantly looking after this team can transform your business.

To get the most out of your employees, a good work-life balance is essential. When work takes over, it can lead to stress, health problems, and absenteeism – all things that, hinder your company productivity, rather than improve it. Flexible working combats this by giving members of your team the ability to step away from work and have control of how it effects their lives.

The CIPD report for Employee Outlook Focus: commuting and flexible working,

“ CLIENTS DO NOT COME FIRST. EMPLOYEES COME FIRST.
IF YOU TAKE CARE OF YOUR EMPLOYEES,
THEY WILL TAKE CARE OF THE CLIENTS

RICHARD BRANSON

describes the top three benefits of flexible working for employees as:

- Better work-life balance.
- Reduced amount of stress/pressure employees feel under.
- Increased employee retention.

Alongside the benefits for current employees, utilisation of remote working techniques gives you a more diverse talent pool to choose from for recruitment, if you lack the right talent you need in your area, remote working enables you to effectively employ people from further afield.

Using new technologies to allow remote working and hot-desking can directly save businesses money on office space.





The Secret to Flexible working success

Adrian Lewis, Director, Activ Absence comments: "Some companies are still fearful of fully embracing flexible working in case their productivity levels plummet. Yet the Vodaphone research highlights the opposite – flexible working has a positive impact on the bottom line and keeps people happier and more engaged. However, managing the practicalities and administration of flexible working is still a big challenge for companies. Some worry they might end up with no one in the office at certain times or it won't benefit their company culture. They are failing to realise that successful flexible working isn't only about trusting employees, it relies on having good support systems, processes and technology in place to ensure everyone knows where everyone is at any one time."



COMMUNICATION IS BOTH THE BIGGEST OBSTACLE AND THE SOLUTION TO DEVELOPING TRUST WITHIN REMOTE TEAMS

SARA SUTTON FELL, CEO FLEXJOBS



Here are our top 4 tips to making flexible working really WORK:

1. Make sure that your employees are completely on-board with what's expected of them, whether that's in regards to performance or activity when they are working remotely. Make sure you discuss exactly how they can be contacted and set expectations around communication.
2. Some people can start to become fragmented from the team if they spend too long away from the office. Arrange for people to be in the office (even if it's only once a week) or arrange team meetings so they can stay focused and still feel like part of the team.
3. Communicate!!! Use technology to your advantage. The only reason that remote working particularly is becoming possible is due to advances in technology, you should utilise as many tools as you need to ensure that communication is both effective and efficient.
4. Be proactive in creating schedules and managing expectations of your team. This helps to make sure that everyone stays on-track.

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Unit 1 Martin's Court
West Street, Congleton
Cheshire CW12 1JR

01260 280001

info@bluespotcomputers.com
www.bluespotcomputers.com

