

The Growing Popularity of a Four-Day Work Week: Is It Worth Considering?

The HR Digest | Diana Coker | March 19, 2023

Emily had been working at a marketing agency for several years and was feeling burnt out. The long hours and high pressure of meeting client demands had taken a toll on her well-being. One day, she heard that her company was considering a four-day workweek. At first, she was skeptical. How could they get all the work done in four days? But as she thought about it more, she realized that a shorter workweek could be just what she needed.

When her company finally implemented the four-day workweek, Emily was pleasantly surprised by the results. She found that she was able to complete her work in four days and had an extra day to spend time with her family, work on personal projects, and rest. She also noticed that her stress levels had decreased, and she was more focused and productive during her four workdays.

Emily was grateful for the change and felt that the four-day workweek had improved her quality of life.

The traditional nine-to-five, five-day workweek has been the norm for decades. However, with changing times and the pandemic altering work culture, there has been a growing interest in alternative work arrangements. One of the most popular is the four-day workweek. As the name suggests, this involves reducing the number of workdays to four while maintaining the same level of productivity. The idea is not new, but it has gained momentum in recent years as businesses seek new ways to improve employee satisfaction and productivity.

A four-day workweek means different things to different people. Some companies may offer a shorter workweek with longer workdays, while others may provide a flexible schedule that allows employees to choose their workdays. The key is to find a balance that works for both employees and the business. While a four-day workweek may not be suitable for all industries or jobs, it can be an effective way to improve work-life balance, reduce stress, and boost productivity.



PROS:

Improved work-life balance

One of the primary benefits of a four-day workweek is that it allows employees to achieve a better work-life balance. With an extra day off, employees can spend more time with their families, pursue hobbies or other interests, or simply rest and recharge. This can lead to reduced stress, better mental health, and increased job satisfaction.

Increased productivity

Contrary to what some may believe, reducing the number of workdays can actually increase productivity. With fewer days to get work done, employees tend to be more focused, efficient, and motivated. Additionally, the extra day off can provide an opportunity for employees to recharge and return to work with renewed energy and enthusiasm.

Cost savings

A four-day workweek can also result in cost savings for both employees and businesses. For example, employees may save on commuting, parking, and other work-related expenses. Businesses can save on overhead costs such as electricity, heating, and maintenance. Additionally, with fewer workdays, companies may be able to reduce or eliminate some benefits and perks, which can result in cost savings.

CONS:

Longer workdays

One of the most significant drawbacks of a four-day workweek is that it may require employees to work longer hours to complete their work. For example, a typical eight-hour workday may be extended to ten hours. This can be challenging for some employees, especially those with young children or other responsibilities outside of work.

Reduced availability

Reducing the number of workdays can also reduce the availability of employees. If a customer needs assistance or an emergency arises, the company may not have enough staff available to respond promptly. This can lead to frustration for customers and lost business for the company.

Lower productivity

While a four-day workweek can increase productivity in some cases, it may have the opposite effect in others. For example, if employees are required to work longer hours, they may become fatigued and less productive. Additionally, employees who have more time off may be less motivated to work hard during their four workdays.

CONSIDERATIONS:

Before implementing a four-day workweek, businesses should consider several factors. First, they should assess whether their industry and job requirements allow for a reduced work schedule. For example, companies that require a continuous production cycle or 24/7 customer service may find it difficult to operate on a reduced work schedule. Additionally, businesses should evaluate the potential impact on customer service, productivity, and employee satisfaction.