

Discover Flexible Working at its Best



The ability to work flexibly is one of the most significant benefits of superfast broadband.

There are many ways of working flexibly, including working from home, on the move, in different locations, or having flexible hours. Flexible working can benefit both employers and employees, helping your business grow and helping you and your staff enjoy a better work-life balance.

Top 6 benefits

1 Cost Savings

Whether it is reduced office overheads, reduced travel costs, or the ability to work when and where necessary, flexible working can help your business reduce costs.



"We have clients all over the country and superfast broadband has enabled us to undertake regular meetings without the travel. We regularly use video conferencing and screen sharing. With the savings made on travel alone, we potentially save £25,000 per annum."

Stafford Sumner, Jarrang

2 Recruitment

Flexible working enables you to cast your recruitment net wider, yet not increase the need for staff to relocate. Allowing staff to work from home, or other remote locations, means you can get the best person for the job and don't need to be constrained by geography.

3 Carbon Savings

By reducing travel to work, or business travel, you can make a real impact on your carbon footprint. You could also see savings operating 'hot desking', or moving systems away from carbon hungry servers into the cloud.

4 Increased Productivity

Managing by results rather than time can lead to big increases in productivity. You can also use flexible working to allow your staff to work when they are at their most productive, e.g. some people work best in the morning and some are night owls. By looking at what works for you, your staff and your customers, you can use flexible working to help your business become more productive.



"With superfast broadband, remote working is so much easier and more efficient. The whole family can now be online at the same time without the frustrating reductions in connection speeds which used to cause me so many problems when working from home."

**Tim Goldburn,
Preston Goldburn**

5 Motivated Workforce and Improved Staff Retention

Allowing staff to improve their work life balance leads to a motivated workforce and helps improve retention as staff feel trusted and valued.

6 Improved Customer Service

Setting up a flexible working solution for your business and having staff who can work outside of core hours means you can be available to your customers / suppliers for longer. This will help improve customer service, increase customer loyalty and can help you meet the demands of the developing global economy.

Although there are many benefits to adopting a flexible working culture, there can be challenges too.



Challenges

1 Communication

Maintaining excellent communication routes with employees who are working flexibly is essential. It is important to keep in regular contact whether it is on the phone, meeting face to face or using video conferencing to make sure issues are addressed, concerns aired and people don't feel isolated. It is also crucial to make sure employees still feel valued, so even if you're not there to say thank you in person, say it through some other medium.

2 Management by Output

As a manager, you will need to manage by outputs and results, not just time spent in the office. Employees need to have clear targets, and understand what is expected of them. It will also be important to have processes in place to track performance and make sure that staff working remotely are meeting the requirements expected of them.

3 It's Not All Work

It is essential that everybody realises that flexible working doesn't mean that you are working 24/7. Make sure that you use the 'off' button and don't let work intrude into your personal life.

4 Suitability of Role

Clearly not all roles will be suitable for a flexible working arrangement. Care must be taken to ensure employees are not discouraged if they are not able to work flexibly.

5 Duty of Care

Even if your employees are working from home or other locations, you will still have a duty of care. You will need to consider Health and Safety, insurance and tax issues.

Key Technologies

1 Cloud Computing

Moving data and applications into the 'cloud' means that you and your company can access information from wherever you are working through a broadband connection. See our Cloud Computing factsheet for more info.

2 Other Remote Access

A Virtual Private Network (VPN) will provide secure access to internal networks. Other 'remote desktop' solutions (like GoToMyPC, LogMeIn, Citrix) will allow you to access central services.

3 Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP)

A way of making calls over the Internet rather than through the usual landline or mobile routes. VoIP calls are often free, and can allow you to make calls from wherever you can get an Internet connection. Systems include Swyx and IP Cortex.

4 Video Conferencing

Video conferencing allows people working in different locations to 'meet' up. There are several platforms that you can use, with the most popular applications being Skype and Face Time, as well as higher end multi-user services.

Further info

Take a look at our flexible working website www.flexible-working.org for more details on the benefits and challenges of flexible working, and lots more case studies.

superfastcornwall.org

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